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Afghanistan

Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement

Hasan Mahsum

Hasan Mahsum was born in 1964 in China's Xinjiang province.¹ Between 1984 and 1989, Mahsum was reportedly a student at an Islamic school in Karghalik established by Abdul Hakeem Makhdoom.² An ethnic Uyghur, Mahsum was arrested on multiple occasions during the 1990s³ for engaging in militant activities and was sentenced on one occasion to three years to "re-education through labor."⁴ In 1997, Mahsum reportedly fled from China to Afghanistan after being accused of planning a bombing attack in 1995.⁵ Mahsum founded the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement in the late 1990s,⁶ with the organization conducting its first attack in 1998.⁷ Mahsum denied any links to al-Qaida and the Taliban, claiming his group did not seek to target the United States.⁸ However, internal al-Qaida documents show that Mahsum participated in a thirty-day advanced security course in Kabul during September 1999 in the capacity of "Emir of the Turkestani brothers."⁹ The United States sanctioned the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement under Executive Order 13224 in 2002.¹⁰ However, this designation was revoked in 2020.¹¹ Mahsum was killed by Pakistani armed forces during a firefight in South Waziristan in late 2003.¹²

¹ People's Daily Online, "FM Spokesman Confirms Death of Wanted Terrorist," December 25, 2003, https://en.people.cn/200312/25/eng20031225_131190.shtml.

² Mona and Vineet, "TIP in Their Own Words – An Interview with Abdusalam At-Turkistani, Deputy Leader of Turkistan Islamic Party," February 18, 2023.

³ Mona and Vineet, "TIP in Their Own Words – An Interview with Abdusalam At-Turkistani, Deputy Leader of Turkistan Islamic Party," February 18, 2023.

⁴ People's Daily Online, "FM Spokesman Confirms Death of Wanted Terrorist," December 25, 2003, https://en.people.cn/200312/25/eng20031225_131190.shtml.

⁵ Al Jazeera, "Pakistan Kills Uighur Independence Fighters," December 23, 2003, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/12/23/pakistan-kills-ughur-independence-fighters>.

⁶ Council on Foreign Relations, "The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)," September 4, 2014, [https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/east-turkestan-islamic-movement-etim#:~:text=The%20East%20Turkestan%20Islamic%20Movement%20\(ETIM\)%20is%20a%20Muslim%20separatist,in%20northwest%20China's%20Xinjiang%20province](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/east-turkestan-islamic-movement-etim#:~:text=The%20East%20Turkestan%20Islamic%20Movement%20(ETIM)%20is%20a%20Muslim%20separatist,in%20northwest%20China's%20Xinjiang%20province).

⁷ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, "Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)," (2015).

⁸ Chris Zambelis, "Uighur Dissent and Militancy in China's Xinjiang Province," 3, no. 1 (January 2010): 16-19.

⁹ Anne Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press 2017).

¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Executive Order 13224," <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224>.

¹¹ Federal Register, "In the Matter of the Designation of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement Also Known as ETIM as a "Terrorist Organization" Pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(B)(vi)(II) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended," November 5, 2020, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/11/05/2020-24620/in-the-matter-of-the-designation-of-the-eastern-turkistan-islamic-movement-also-known-as-etim-as-a>.

¹² BBC, "Chinese Militant 'Shot Dead,'" December 23, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3343241.stm>.

Abdul Haq al-Turkistani

Abdul Haq al-Turkistani was born on October 10, 1971, in the Khuttan area, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China.¹³ Alongside Hasan Mahsum, al-Turkistani reportedly helped run a training camp for several months in 2001 in the Tora Bora mountains.¹⁴ Al-Turkistani succeeded Mahsum as leader of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement following the latter's death.¹⁵ The United States designated al-Turkistani as the leader of a terrorist organization in 2009 for commanding "a terror group that sought to sow violence and fracture international unity at the 2008 Olympic Games in China."¹⁶ Al-Turkistani was thought to have been killed in a U.S. drone strike in Pakistan in 2010. However, videos published years later showcased al-Turkistani.¹⁷ In 2025, al-Turkistani reportedly remained emir of the organization.¹⁸

Abdul Shakoor Turkistani

Abdul Shakoor Turkistani took command of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement/Turkistan Islamic Party in 2010 after Abdul Haq al-Turkistani was reportedly killed in a U.S. strike.¹⁹ According to information released by the Chinese government, Turkistani (Emeti Yakuf) was born in China in March 1965.²⁰ He reportedly became involved with the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement in 1996 and "received terrorist training" after leaving China for "a South Asian country."²¹ By 2001, Turkistani was reportedly in charge of "recruiting new members, organizing terrorism training, as well as planning and carrying out terrorist attacks," acting as the organization's military commander.²² In August 2012, Turkistani was killed in a U.S. air strike on his training camp in the Shawal Valley in Pakistan.²³

¹³ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Leader of Group Tied to Al Qaida," April 20, 2009, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg92>.

¹⁴ Thomas Joscelyn, "The Uighurs, In Their Own Words," *Long War Journal*, April 21, 2009.

¹⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement," https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/qa_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/eastern-turkistan-islamic-movement.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Leader of Group Tied to Al Qaida," April 20, 2009, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg92>.

¹⁷ Jacob Zenn, "Back from the Dead: The Turkistan Islamic Party's Abdul Haq al-Turkistani," *Jamestown Foundation*, August 31, 2016.

¹⁸ South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), "Detail of Terrorism Update," February 15, 2025, <https://www.satp.org/terrorism-update/turkistan-islamic-party-leader-directs-syrian-fighters-from-afghanistan-says-report>.

¹⁹ Bill Roggio, "Turkistan Islamic Party Leader Thought Killed in U.S. Drone Strike," *Long War Journal*, August 25, 2012, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/turkistan_islamic_pa_1.php.

²⁰ Airwars, "Emeti Yakuf," <https://airwars.org/wp-content/themes/airwars-new/archives/bij-drone-war/namingthedeath/people/nd513/index-lang=en.html>.

²¹ Analysts note that this suggests he likely traveled to Pakistan and/or Afghanistan. Bill Roggio, "Turkistan Islamic Party Leader Thought Killed in U.S. Drone Strike," *Long War Journal*, August 25, 2012, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/turkistan_islamic_pa_1.php.

²² Airwars, "Emeti Yakuf," <https://airwars.org/wp-content/themes/airwars-new/archives/bij-drone-war/namingthedeath/people/nd513/index-lang=en.html>.

²³ Jacob Zenn, "September 2012 Briefs," *Jamestown Foundation*, September 28, 2012, <https://jamestown.org/september-2012-briefs/>; Zia Ur Rehman, "ETIM's Presence in Pakistan and China's Growing Pressure," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre* (August 2014); Airwars, "Emeti Yakuf,"

Abdullah Mansour

Abdullah Mansour succeeded Abdul Shakoor Turkistani following the latter's death in 2012.²⁴ While Mansour is noted to be "a relative novice among more experienced international jihadists," he brought significant media experience after serving as the editor of the *Islamic Turkistan* publication.²⁵ This quarterly publication highlighted Uyghur grievances against China and linked Xinjiang to other jihadist conflict zones.²⁶ Mansour continued to lead Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement/Turkistan Islamic Party until Abdul Haq al-Turkistani retook command of the organization in the spring of 2014.²⁷

Tawhid and Jihad

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, also known as Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah, was born in October 1966 in Zarqa, Jordan.²⁸ A high school dropout,²⁹ al-Zarqawi joined the military in 1984 for two years under Jordan's mandatory conscription laws.³⁰ During the 1980s, al-Zarqawi reportedly spent time in prison and was described by people who knew him during his teenage years as "a bully and a thug, a bootlegger and a heavy drinker, and even, allegedly, a pimp in Zarqa's underworld."³¹ In 1989, al-Zarqawi left for Afghanistan and "is believed to have taken part in some fighting, but he mainly worked as a correspondent for a radical Islamist magazine during this period."³² In Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi used this time "to begin the process of cultivating friendships that would eventually lead to the formation of an international support network for his activities."³³ Al-Zarqawi returned to Jordan in 1993 and was subsequently arrested.³⁴ Working with Abu

<https://airwars.org/wp-content/themes/airwars-new/archives/bij-drone-war/namingthedead/people/nd513/index-lang=en.html>.

²⁴ Mona and Vineet, "TIP IN THEIR OWN WORDS – AN INTERVIEW WITH ABDUSALAM AT-TURKISTANI, DEPUTY LEADER OF TURKISTAN 'ISLAMIC PARTY,'" February 18, 2023, <https://dreyfus1894.substack.com/p/tip-in-their-own-words-an-interview>.

²⁵ Jacob Zenn, "Beijing, Kunming, Urumqi and Guangzhou: The Changing Landscape of Anti-Chinese Jihadists," *Jamestown Foundation* 14, no. 10 (2014), <https://jamestown.org/beijing-kunming-urumqi-and-guangzhou-the-changing-landscape-of-anti-chinese-jihadists/>.

²⁶ Jacob Zenn, "Beijing, Kunming, Urumqi and Guangzhou: The Changing Landscape of Anti-Chinese Jihadists," *Jamestown Foundation* 14, no. 10 (2014), <https://jamestown.org/beijing-kunming-urumqi-and-guangzhou-the-changing-landscape-of-anti-chinese-jihadists/>.

²⁷ Bill Roggio, "Turkistan Islamic Party Emir Thought Killed in 2010 Reemerged to Lead Group in 2014," *Long War Journal*, June 1, 2015, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/06/turkistan-islamic-party-emir-thought-killed-in-2010-reemerged-to-lead-group-in-2014.php>.

²⁸ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

²⁹ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

³⁰ Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Haniyeh, *The Islamic Solution in Jordan* (2012), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/09373.pdf>.

³¹ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

³² Gary Gambill, "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch," *Jamestown Foundation*, May 5, 2005.

³³ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

³⁴ Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Haniyeh, *The Islamic Solution in Jordan* (2012), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/09373.pdf>.

Muhammad al-Maqdisi, al-Zarqawi “flourished” in prison, building his militant network and jihadist credentials.³⁵ Al-Maqdisi was released from prison in 1999 under a general amnesty and returned to Afghanistan.³⁶ Reportedly receiving a small amount of seed money from al-Qaida’s leaders,³⁷ al-Zarqawi set up a training camp in Herat and became the leader of Jama’at al-Tawhid wal Jihad.³⁸ Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi operated in Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan and, by 2003, had established his organization's presence in Arab cities in Iraq.³⁹ In 2004, al-Zarqawi pledged fealty to al-Qaida and changed his organization’s name to al-Qaida in Iraq.⁴⁰ Al-Zarqawi died following a U.S. airstrike in 2006.⁴¹ The United States had previously designated al-Zarqawi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2003⁴² and al-Qaida in Iraq as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2004.⁴³

Algeria

Armed Islamic Group

Abd al-Haqq Layada

Abd al-Haqq Layada, also known as Abu Adlan, became the first emir of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in 1992, the year of the organization’s announcement.⁴⁴ Layada was born in 1959 in Algeria.⁴⁵ Layada worked as an auto mechanic and had little experience in armed operations before his appointment as the GIA’s leader.⁴⁶ Layada’s appointment reportedly did not sit well with some members of the nascent group who had participated in the Afghan jihad.⁴⁷ At the same time, the organization “stepped up its paramilitary activity and clarified its ideology” under Layada’s

³⁵ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

³⁶ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

³⁷ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

³⁸ Mapping Militants Project. “Islamic State.” Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

³⁹ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁴⁰ Mapping Militants Project. “Islamic State.” Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

⁴¹ Fred Barbash and Daniela Deane, “U.S. Says Zarqawi Died from Blast,” *The Washington Post*, June 11, 2006, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/business/technology/2006/06/12/us-says-zarqawi-died-from-blast/61897968-c052-4a3a-bce3-c1e41d5e2285/?isMobile=1>.

⁴² U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Designates Six Al-Qaida Terrorists,” September 24, 2003, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js757>.

⁴³ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁴⁴ Camille Tawil, “Secrets and Internal Liquidations Part III,” October 30, 2007, <https://camilletawil.blogspot.com/2007/10/secrets-and-internal-liquidations-part.html>.

⁴⁵ S. Doukalli, “عبد الحق لعيدة: مخبر الجيش الذي تزعم الجيا,” <https://www.maghribtimes.com/2023/02/blog-post.html>.

⁴⁶ Mohammad Moukaddem, “لقاء المغرب ومحاوله انقلاب "الأفغان" على أمير , الجماعة المسلحة الحلقة الثالثة” <https://www.sauress.com/alhayat/31070377>.

⁴⁷ Mohammad Moukaddem, “لقاء المغرب ومحاوله انقلاب "الأفغان" على أمير , الجماعة المسلحة الحلقة الثالثة” <https://www.sauress.com/alhayat/31070377>.

leadership.⁴⁸ According to Abu Hamza al-Masri, “When Abu Adlan took over control of the group, this caused the formation of the core of the GIA, although it didn’t have the name yet. This group then did quite a few difficult operations that annoyed the government and... forced other groups to reunite and others to join them or to try to unite the other groups into one mass in other areas.”⁴⁹ Layada remained the leader of the GIA until 1993, when Algerian intelligence tracked him down in Morocco.⁵⁰ He was subsequently extradited to Algeria and sentenced to death; however, he was later released in 2006 under Algeria’s amnesty agreement.⁵¹

Benameur Benaissa

Benameur Benaissa succeeded Abd al-Haqq Layada as leader of the GIA in 1993.⁵² However, Benaissa, who was also known as “the executioner,” lasted only a month in charge of the organization before Djafar al-Afghani took command of the GIA in August 1993.⁵³

Djafar al-Afghani

Djafar al-Afghani, also known as Seif Allah, led the GIA from August 1993 to February 1994.⁵⁴ He was reportedly 30 years old in 1993 and “had not been educated beyond primary school and had made his living from trading in contraband. Like his predecessors and successors, he was an underprivileged youth from the city.”⁵⁵ Al-Afghani was a member of Dawa’a wa Tabligh in 1982 before traveling to Afghanistan to fight in 1989.⁵⁶ In 1992, he returned to Algeria as “a high-caliber fighter.”⁵⁷ After taking control of the GIA, al-Afghani’s time in power “was distinguished by an escalation of violence.”⁵⁸ In February 1994, Algerian security forces announced that al-Afghani died during a firefight.⁵⁹

⁴⁸ Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi, 2011).

⁴⁹ Quoted in Evan F. Kohlmann, “Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: The GIA, the GSPC, and Al-Qaida,” *The NEFA Foundation* (May 2007).

⁵⁰ Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi, 2011).

⁵¹ BBC, “Islamist Leader Freed in Algeria,” March 13, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4801318.stm>.

⁵² Yahia H. Zoubir, “Civil Strife, Politics, and Religion in Algeria,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (February 2019).

⁵³ Yahia H. Zoubir, “Civil Strife, Politics, and Religion in Algeria,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (February 2019).

⁵⁴ Anneli Botha, *Terrorism in the Maghreb: The Transnationalisation of Domestic Terrorism* (ISS Monograph Series, June 2008).

⁵⁵ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 263.

⁵⁶ Anneli Botha, *Terrorism in the Maghreb: The Transnationalisation of Domestic Terrorism* (ISS Monograph Series, June 2008).

⁵⁷ Camille Tawil, “Secrets and Internal Liquidations Part III,” October 30, 2007, <https://camilletawil.blogspot.com/2007/10/secrets-and-internal-liquidations-part.html>.

⁵⁸ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 263.

⁵⁹ Los Angeles Times, “World IN BRIEF : ALGERIA : Leader of Extremist Algeria Group Slain,” February 28, 1994, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-02-28-mn-28263-story.html>.

Cherif Gousmi

Cherif Gousmi, also known as Abu Abdullah Ahmed, succeeded Djafar al-Afghani as the leader of the GIA in 1994.⁶⁰ Gousmi began his career as an imam in the Birkhadem suburb of Algeria.⁶¹ Gousmi was also “a graduate of Arab mujahideen training camps in Afghanistan” and was “considered a charismatic figure.”⁶² “Although only in his twenties,” Barak Mendelsohn writes that Gousmi “already had a strong reputation as religiously knowledgeable and a skillful operator. His previous links with FIS and his experiences as a detainee in one of the regime’s notorious Sahara prisons put him in a good position to advance unity beyond the confines of the *Salafi-jihadist* milieu.”⁶³ Gousmi was killed following an ambush by Algerian security forces in September 1994⁶⁴ at the age of 26.⁶⁵

Djamel Zitouni

Djamel Zitouni became the GIA’s leader in 1994 following Cherif Gousmi’s death.⁶⁶ Zitouni was born in 1964 in the Birkhadem suburb of Algiers.⁶⁷ Zitouni reportedly received “a francophone secondary education” and was potentially “the best French-speaker of any GIA leader.”⁶⁸ Zitouni also worked as a chicken vendor.⁶⁹ Zitouni became involved with the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) but later joined the jihadist movement following his imprisonment in 1991.⁷⁰ Within the GIA, Zitouni rose to prominence within the Green Battalion: “By fall 1994, Zitouni and the Green Battalion had gained widespread fame among the GIA rank and file as daring operators.”⁷¹ As Evan Kohlmann contends: “Zitouni’s two-year reign of power would see some of the most impressive achievements by the GIA—such as the unprecedented Air France hijacking. However, Zitouni’s rise to power also marked the beginning of the end for the GIA, which had become

⁶⁰ Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi, 2011).

⁶¹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁶² Evan F. Kohlmann, “Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: The GIA, the GSPC, and Al-Qaida,” *The NEFA Foundation* (May 2007).

⁶³ Barak Mendelsohn, “The Battle for Algeria: Explaining Fratricide among Armed Nonstate Actors,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 44, no. 9 (2021): 776-798.

⁶⁴ Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi, 2011).

⁶⁵ Los Angeles Times, “Algerian Forces Kill Extremist Leader,” September 27, 1994.

⁶⁶ Mapping Militants Project. “Groupe Islamique Armé.” Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/382/>.

⁶⁷ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁶⁸ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 266-267.

⁶⁹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁷⁰ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁷¹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 42.

ideologically strained and a target for Islamist competitors.”⁷² Zitouni was killed in 1996 by rival non-state actors.⁷³

Antar Zouabri

Antar Zouabri was born in 1970 in Algeria’s Blida Province.⁷⁴ Before becoming involved in the jihadist movement in the early 1990s, Zouabri reportedly did not express Islamist leanings or signs of religious devotion.⁷⁵ Zouabri also had few military credentials and relied on the fame of his brother, Ali, who was one of the GIA’s founders.⁷⁶ In the GIA, Zouabri was a junior member of the organization’s Shura council⁷⁷ and part of the GIA’s Green Battalion, with some reports indicating he founded this group.⁷⁸ Zouabri’s rise to power led to greater violence by the GIA: “Zitouni’s death only served to push the GIA towards ever greater excesses. He was succeeded by Antar Zouabri, commander of the Green Battalion; and no sooner had he taken over the helm of the GIA than he began to surpass his predecessor’s bloodstained record. It was under Zouabri that the GIA declared the entire Algerian people infidels, paving the way for acts of wholesale carnage in which thousands of ordinary civilians died in 1997 and 1998.”⁷⁹ Shortly after Zouabri rose to power, the United States designated the GIA as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997.⁸⁰ Algerian security forces killed Zouabri in February 2002 during a two-and-a-half-hour gun battle in Boufarik, 15 miles south of Algiers.⁸¹ As Alexander Thurston notes, Zouabri was “the GIA’s last major leader.”⁸²

Rachid Oukali

Rachid Oukali, also known as Abou Tourab, succeeded Antar Zouabri as the leader of the Armed Islamic Group in 2002.⁸³ Oukali remained the GIA’s leader until July 2004, when he was allegedly

⁷² Evan F. Kohlmann, “Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: The GIA, the GSPC, and Al-Qaida,” *The NEFA Foundation* (May 2007), 8.

⁷³ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 50.

⁷⁴ Hussam Haddad, “عنتر زوابري.. ذبّاح جماعة ‘جيا’ الجزائرية,” <https://www.islamist-movements.com/28316>.

⁷⁵ Hussam Haddad, “عنتر زوابري.. ذبّاح جماعة ‘جيا’ الجزائرية,” <https://www.islamist-movements.com/28316>.

⁷⁶ Evan F. Kohlmann, “Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: The GIA, the GSPC, and Al-Qaida,” *The NEFA Foundation* (May 2007).

⁷⁷ Barak Mendelsohn, “The Battle for Algeria: Explaining Fratricide among Armed Nonstate Actors,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 44, no. 9 (2021): 776-798.

⁷⁸ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁷⁹ Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi, 2011), 131.

⁸⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁸¹ Abdelmalek Touati, “Algerian Terrorist Reported Slain: Leader of Radical Islamic Group Was Nation’s ‘Most Wanted,’” *The Washington Post*, February 10, 2002.

⁸² Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 31.

⁸³ Mapping Militants Project. “Groupe Islamique Armé.” Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/382/>.

killed by close associates.⁸⁴ However, a video surfaced in 2005 of Oukali stating that reports of his death were mistaken and that Algerian intelligence had confused him with another militant.⁸⁵

Nourredine Boudiafi

Nourredine Boudiafi succeeded Rachid Oukali as the GIA's leader in 2004.⁸⁶ However, in January 2005, Algerian authorities announced that Algerian security services had detained Boudiafi in November 2004 in the eastern Algiers suburb of Bab Ezzouar.⁸⁷ Boudiafi is recognized as the last known GIA leader.⁸⁸

Jund al-Khilafa - Algeria/Wilayat Jazair

Abdelmalek Gouri

Abdelmalek Gouri was the founding leader of Jund al-Khilafa in Algeria. Gouri was born in 1977 in Si-Mustapha, Algeria.⁸⁹ Gouri joined the Armed Islamic Group during the Algerian Civil War, fighting for the organization until his arrest in 1997.⁹⁰ Gouri was released from prison in 1999 under Bouteflika's amnesty program and joined the recently created Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.⁹¹ Gouri also reportedly traveled to Lebanon and fought with Fatah al-Islam in 2007 before returning to Algeria later that year.⁹² Within the rebranded al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Gouri rose to prominence and became the leader of AQIM's "Central" sector; however, Jason Warner and co-authors write that Gouri grew "dissatisfied with Droukdel's leadership and disagreed with him over how to pursue the increasingly difficult fight with security forces in northern Algeria. Believing Droukdel was presiding over AQIM's decline and was incapable of reversing it, Gouri thought himself the man to revive the insurgency in northern Algeria, perhaps

⁸⁴ Le Monde, "Selon Alger, le chef du GIA Abou tourab a été tué par ses proches en juillet," January 3, 2005, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2005/01/03/selon-alger-le-chef-du-gia-abou-tourab-a-ete-tue-par-ses-proches-en-juillet_392799_1819218.html.

⁸⁵ Kyle Orton, "Algeria's 'Years of Blood': Not Quite What They Seem," March 21, 2014, <https://kyleorton.co.uk/2014/03/21/algerias-years-of-blood-not-quite-what-they-seem/>; Jamestown Foundation, "Algerian GIA Group Decapitated," May 5, 2005, <https://jamestown.org/algerian-gia-group-decapitated/>.

⁸⁶ Kyle Orton, "Algeria's 'Years of Blood': Not Quite What They Seem," March 21, 2014, <https://kyleorton.co.uk/2014/03/21/algerias-years-of-blood-not-quite-what-they-seem/>.

⁸⁷ BBC, "Algeria Reveals Rebel Crackdown," January 4, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4144265.stm>.

⁸⁸ Kyle Orton, "Algeria's 'Years of Blood': Not Quite What They Seem," March 21, 2014, <https://kyleorton.co.uk/2014/03/21/algerias-years-of-blood-not-quite-what-they-seem/>.

⁸⁹ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁹⁰ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁹¹ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁹² Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

by aligning with a transnational movement whose ideology was not predicated on the rejection of the GIA's bloody tactics, as AQIM's had become."⁹³ In September 2014, Gouri, alongside approximately 30 militants from AQIM, defected from the organization and announced their allegiance to the Islamic State.⁹⁴ Shortly thereafter, Jund al-Khilafa released a video in which it beheaded a recently kidnapped French citizen, Herve Gourdel.⁹⁵ In December 2014, the Algerian military announced that it had killed "the dangerous murderer Gouri" in the Boumerdès region during an ambush.⁹⁶

Abdullah al-Asimi

Abdullah al-Asimi succeeded Abdelmalek Gouri as the leader of Jund al-Khilafa.⁹⁷ Al-Asimi was born in 1974 in Algiers and participated in the Algerian civil war with the Armed Islamic Group.⁹⁸ Al-Asimi later joined the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat and was the chief jurist for al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb's "Central" sector.⁹⁹ Following Gouri's lead, al-Asimi splintered from AQIM to join Jund al-Khilafa; he was reportedly the executioner of Herve Gourdel.¹⁰⁰ In May 2015, Algerian security forces killed al-Asimi during a firefight in the Boumerdès region.¹⁰¹ The United States sanctioned Jund al-Khilafa/Wilayat Jazair in October 2015 under Executive Order 13224.¹⁰²

⁹³ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021), 71-72.

⁹⁴ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, "Neither Remaining Nor Expanding: The Islamic State's Global Expansion Struggles," *War on the Rocks*, February 23, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/02/neither-remaining-nor-expanding-the-islamic-states-global-expansion-struggles/>.

⁹⁵ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, "Neither Remaining Nor Expanding: The Islamic State's Global Expansion Struggles," *War on the Rocks*, February 23, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/02/neither-remaining-nor-expanding-the-islamic-states-global-expansion-struggles/>.

⁹⁶ Amir Jalal Zerdoumi, "Algerian Army Kills Militant Leader Linked to Beheading of French Hostage," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/24/world/africa/algerian-army-kills-militant-leader-linked-to-beheading-of-french-hostage.html>.

⁹⁷ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, "Neither Remaining Nor Expanding: The Islamic State's Global Expansion Struggles," *War on the Rocks*, February 23, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/02/neither-remaining-nor-expanding-the-islamic-states-global-expansion-struggles/>.

⁹⁸ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁹⁹ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹⁰⁰ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹⁰¹ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹⁰² Federal Register, "In the Matter of the Designation of Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria, aka Jak-A, aka Jund al-Khalifa fi Ard al-Jazayer, aka Jund al-Khilafah fi Ard al-Jaza'ir, aka Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria, aka Caliphate Soldiers of Algeria, aka Soldiers of the Caliphate in the Land of Algeria, aka Jund al Khalifa-Algeria, aka Jund al-Khalifa, aka Jund al-Khilafa Group as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Pursuant to Section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224, as Amended," October 1, 2015, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/10/01/2015-25004/in-the-matter-of-the-designation-of-jund-al-khilafah-in-algeria-aka-jak-a-aka-jund-al-khalifa-fi-ard>.

Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat/al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

Hassan Hattab

Hassan Hattab became the founding leader of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) after splintering from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria. Hattab was born in 1967 in Algeria.¹⁰³ After receiving some university education, Hattab reportedly joined the Algerian Armed Forces.¹⁰⁴ Hattab received formal military training, serving as a paratrooper before becoming a mechanic.¹⁰⁵ After serving as the GSPC's leader for years, the Council of Notables mobilized against Hattab in 2003. As Alexander Thurston states: "The coup against Hattab was organized by the very structures meant to ensure that the organization ran smoothly."¹⁰⁶ During Hattab's time in power, the GSPC had no pledge of allegiance to al-Qaida.

Nabil Sahrawi

Nabil Sahrawi, also known as Abu Ibrahim, succeeded Hassan Hattab as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat's (GSPC) leader in August 2003.¹⁰⁷ Sahrawi was born in 1966 in Batna, Algeria.¹⁰⁸ Sahrawi attained a post-secondary degree in engineering, with a specialization in thermal energy.¹⁰⁹ Sahrawi served as commander of "Zone 5" in the GIA before splintering to join the GSPC.¹¹⁰ In the GSPC, Sahrawi served in various positions, including being assigned a military command, serving as head of external relations, and participating as a member of the Council of Notables (*majlis al-A'yan*).¹¹¹ Sahrawi pledged the GSPC's loyalty to al-Qaida, Taliban, and jihadists in other conflict zones in 2003, indicating the group's expanding external ties. However, this Arabic-language statement was not a formal pledge of allegiance (*bay'a*) but rather a statement

¹⁰³ Hussam Haddad, "حسن خطاب المؤسس "التائب" للجماعة السلفية للدعوة والقتال بالجزائر," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/33033>.

¹⁰⁴ Hussam Haddad, "حسن خطاب المؤسس "التائب" للجماعة السلفية للدعوة والقتال بالجزائر," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/33033>.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory A. Smith, "Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb," *Journal of Strategic Security* 2, no. 2 (May 2009).

¹⁰⁶ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 70.

¹⁰⁷ Mapping Militants Project. "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb." Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

¹⁰⁸ Hussam Haddad, "أبو إبراهيم مصطفى (الأمير الثاني) للجماعة السلفية للدعوة والقتال بالجزائر," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/31421>.

¹⁰⁹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

¹¹⁰ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

¹¹¹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

of broad solidarity (*wala'*).¹¹² In June 2004, Sahrawi was killed in a firefight with the Algerian army.¹¹³

Abdelmalek Droukdel

Abdelmalek Droukdel, also known as Abu Musab ‘Abd al-Wadud, replaced Sahrawi in June 2004 as the GSPC’s third leader.¹¹⁴ Droukdel was born in the Blid Province of Algeria in 1970.¹¹⁵ Droukdel attained a post-secondary degree in mathematics,¹¹⁶ becoming an engineer by trade.¹¹⁷ Droukdel reportedly traveled to Afghanistan before returning to fight in Algeria.¹¹⁸ In the early 1990s, Droukdel joined the Movement for the Islamic State and later became the GIA’s commander of “Zone 2” and a distinguished bombmaker.¹¹⁹ In the GSPC, he joined the Council of Notables and replaced Sahrawi as the head of the Council.¹²⁰ Droukdel formally pledged the GSPC’s allegiance to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida in 2006, with the organization changing its name to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in January 2007.¹²¹ Droukdel oversaw the organization’s expansion into Mali and other regional states.¹²² In 2020, Droukdel was killed during a raid by French forces in Mali.¹²³

¹¹² For a link to the statement, see Aaron Zelin’s jihadology.net. Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, “Statement from al-Jama’ah al-Salafiyyah Li-l-Da’wah Wa-l-Qital: Support for the Jihadi Groups,” September 11, 2003, <https://jihadology.net/2003/09/11/statement-from-al-jamaah-al-salafiyyah-li-l-dawah-wa-l-qital-support-for-the-jihadi-groups/>.

¹¹³ Jean-Pierre Filiu, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Algerian Challenge or Global Threat?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 104 (October 2009).

¹¹⁴ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.” Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

¹¹⁵ Sidi Ahmed Ould Al Amir, “تداعيات مقتل عبد المالك دروكدل على منطقة الساحل,” <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/4717>.

¹¹⁶ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

¹¹⁷ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.” Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

¹¹⁸ BBC, “Al-Qaeda Chief in North Africa Abdelmalek Droukdel Killed - France,” June 5, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-52943692>.

¹¹⁹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

¹²⁰ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

¹²¹ Jean-Pierre Filiu, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Algerian Challenge or Global Threat?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 104 (October 2009).

¹²² Mapping Militants Project. “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.” Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

¹²³ Wassim Nasr, “Implications of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s New Leadership,” *News Lines Institute*, February 8, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/transnational-criminal-networks/implications-of-al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghrebs-new-leadership/>.

Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Annabi

In November 2020, AQIM announced Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Annabi as the successor to Droukdel.¹²⁴ Al-Annabi was born in January or February 1969 in Annaba, Algeria.¹²⁵ Al-Annabi holds a university degree in economics.¹²⁶ Al-Annabi reportedly became an active member at the age of 19 in the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) before participating in the Algerian Civil War.¹²⁷ There is little information to suggest that al-Annabi traveled to Afghanistan like other Algerian jihadists. As Wassim Nasr writes: “It is improbable that he participated in the Afghan jihad or visited Afghanistan or Pakistan in those early years. Instead, he likely joined one of the very small, local groups active in his native region that orbited around” the GIA.¹²⁸ Within AQIM, al-Annabi served as the organization's media chief and head of the Council of Notables.¹²⁹ As of October 2024, al-Annabi remains AQIM’s leader.

Bangladesh

Ansarullah Bangla Team

Muhammad Jasimuddin Rahmani

Muhammad Jasimuddin Rahmani was the founding leader of Ansarullah Bangla Team. Born in Bangladesh,¹³⁰ Rahmani reportedly received religious education in Bangladesh and abroad.¹³¹ Rahmaji taught at numerous madrasas across Bangladesh¹³² and gathered followers as a “fiery local preacher” in Dhaka’s Basile neighborhood.¹³³ In early 2013, organizational militants inspired

¹²⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi,” <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/abu-ubaydah-yusuf-al-anabi/>.

¹²⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi,” <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/abu-ubaydah-yusuf-al-anabi/>.

¹²⁶ The North Africa Journal, “Profile: Abu Ubaidah Youssef al-Annabi,” March 20, 2023, https://north-africa.com/profile-abu_ubaidah_youssef_al-annabi/.

¹²⁷ Akram Kharief, “Qui est le nouveau chef d’Aqmi, Abou Obeida Yousouf al-Annabi?” November 24, 2020, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1079608/politique/qui-est-le-nouveau-chef-daqmi-abou-obeida-yousouf-al-annabi/>.

¹²⁸ Wassim Nasr, “Implications of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s New Leadership,” *News Lines Institute*, February 8, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/transnational-criminal-networks/implications-of-al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghrebs-new-leadership/>.

¹²⁹ Wassim Nasr, “Implications of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s New Leadership,” *News Lines Institute*, February 8, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/transnational-criminal-networks/implications-of-al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghrebs-new-leadership/>.

¹³⁰ Counter Extremism Project, “Jasimuddin Rahmani,” <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/jasimuddin-rahmani>.

¹³¹ Julfikar Ali Manik, “Preaching Militancy, Building Network,” *The Daily Star*, August 14, 2013, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/preaching-militancy-building-network>.

¹³² Cage International, “Religious Scholar Jasimuddin Rahmani released in Bangladesh after 11 Years imprisonment,” August 29, 2024, <https://www.cage.ngo/articles/religious-scholar-jasimuddin-rahmani-released-in-bangladesh-after-11-years-imprisonment>.

¹³³ International Crisis Group, “Countering Jihadist Militancy in Bangladesh,” *Asia Report* 295 (2018).

by Rahmani hacked to death a secular blogger, Ahmed Rajib Haider.¹³⁴ Rahmani was 43 in August 2013 when Bangladeshi authorities arrested him in connection with the killings.¹³⁵ Around this period, Ansarullah Bangla Team started to refer to itself as Ansar al-Islam in public statements.¹³⁶ Rahmani was a follower of Anwar al-Awlaki, and, in mid-2015, Ansar al-Islam began referring to itself as the Bangladeshi wing of al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent.¹³⁷

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)

Abdur Rahman

Shaikh Abdur Rahman was born in January 1959 in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.¹³⁸ Rahman attended his father's madrasa for early schooling and later received a scholarship to study at Medina University in Saudi Arabia from 1980 to 1985.¹³⁹ In Saudi Arabia, he developed a business renting apartments to Bangladeshi pilgrims to Mecca.¹⁴⁰ Rahman also established close contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia and reportedly fought in Afghanistan against the USSR.¹⁴¹ Becoming more interested in politics, Rahman joined a chapter of the Islamic Chatra Shabir but became disillusioned with working through a democratic system to achieve an Islamic state.¹⁴² He subsequently joined Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B) but was expelled in 1997 following disputes with the organization's leadership.¹⁴³ Rahman subsequently traveled to Pakistan and met with leaders of Lashkar-e-Taiba, receiving training in explosives, strategy, and intelligence.¹⁴⁴ He then formed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh in April 1998.¹⁴⁵ A.S.M. Ali Ashraf and Mohammed Islam note that Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh is the organization that introduced suicide bombings to Bangladesh.¹⁴⁶ Bangladeshi security forces arrested Rahman in

¹³⁴ Animesh Roul, "How Bangladesh Became Fertile Ground for al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State," 9, no. 5 (2016): 27-34.

¹³⁵ Julfikar Ali Manik, "Ansarulla Bangla Team: Preaching Militancy, Building Network," August 14, 2013, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/preaching-militancy-building-network>.

¹³⁶ Animesh Roul, "How Bangladesh Became Fertile Ground for al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State," 9, no. 5 (2016): 27-34.

¹³⁷ Animesh Roul, "How Bangladesh Became Fertile Ground for al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State," 9, no. 5 (2016): 27-34.

¹³⁸ International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹³⁹ International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁴⁰ International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁴¹ International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁴² International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁴³ International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁴⁶ A.S.M. Ali Ashraf and Mohammed Saiful Islam, "Islamist Militant Groups and Crime-Terror Nexus in Bangladesh," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 46, no. 9 (2023): 1678-1701.

Sylhet city on March 2, 2006, following a siege of more than 24 hours.¹⁴⁷ Rahman was executed in jail on March 30, 2007.¹⁴⁸

Maulana Saidur Rahman

Maulana Saidur Rahman succeeded Abdur Rahman as leader of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh.¹⁴⁹ Saidur Rahman was a cleric by profession,¹⁵⁰ working as a madrasa teacher.¹⁵¹ He was also reportedly a leader for Jamaat-e-Islami, which was legally established in 1979 and grew into Bangladesh's largest and most influential Islamist party, in the Habiganj district, but was expelled in 1989 for his "extremist" views.¹⁵² After taking control of the organization in 2007, Saidur Rahman cooperated with Indian arms smugglers and stockpiled hand grenades.¹⁵³ Bangladeshi authorities arrested Saidur Rahman on May 26, 2010.¹⁵⁴

Burkina Faso

Ansaroul Islam

Ibrahim Malam Dicko

Ibrahim Malam Dicko founded Ansaroul Islam in Burkina Faso in 2016. Dicko was reportedly born around 1970 in a Fulani community in Burkina Faso.¹⁵⁵ Dicko first attended a traditional public school before undertaking religious studies in Burkina Faso and abroad.¹⁵⁶ Utilizing his

¹⁴⁷ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Incidents and Statements involving JMB: 2005-2012,"

<https://www.satp.org/satporctp/countries/bangladesh/terroristoutfits/jmb12.htm>.

¹⁴⁸ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Incidents and Statements involving JMB: 2005-2012,"

<https://www.satp.org/satporctp/countries/bangladesh/terroristoutfits/jmb12.htm>.

¹⁴⁹ Md. Nurul Momen, "Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh: Analysis of Organizational Design and Activities," *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways Toward Terrorism and Genocide* 13, no. 3 (2020): 245-257.

¹⁵⁰ A.S.M. Ali Ashraf and Mohammed Saiful Islam, "Islamist Militant Groups and Crime-Terror Nexus in Bangladesh," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 46, no. 9 (2023): 1678-1701.

¹⁵¹ Kailash Sarkar and Mukhlesur Rahman, "From Jamaat Dist Ammer to JMB Boss," *The Daily Star*, May 26, 2010, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-140107>.

¹⁵² International Crisis Group, "The Threat from Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh," *Asia Report* 187 (2010).

¹⁵³ A.S.M. Ali Ashraf and Mohammed Saiful Islam, "Islamist Militant Groups and Crime-Terror Nexus in Bangladesh," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 46, no. 9 (2023): 1678-1701.

¹⁵⁴ Animesh Roul, "Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh: Weakened, But Not Destroyed," 4, no. 11 (2011): 16-18.

¹⁵⁵ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>; Koudbi Kaboré, "The Modernity of Islam in Burkina Faso: Contrasting Strategies in Two Emergent Movements," in Abdoulaye Sounaye and André Chappatte (eds.), *Islam and Muslim Life in West Africa: Practices, Trajectories and Influences* (De Gruyter, 2022): 39-62.

¹⁵⁶ Morgane Le Cam, "Comment est né Ansaroul Islam, premier groupe djihadiste de l'Histoire du Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, April 11, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/04/11/comment-est-ne-ansaroul-islam-premier-groupe-djihadiste-de-l-histoire-du-burkina-faso_5109520_3212.html; Koudbi Kaboré, "The Modernity of Islam in Burkina Faso: Contrasting Strategies in Two Emergent Movements," in Abdoulaye Sounaye

religious education to become a cleric, Dicko taught as an Imam in Niger before returning to Burkina Faso in 2009.¹⁵⁷ In 2012, Dicko reportedly joined the jihadist struggle in Mali before being arrested by French troops in 2013 and subsequently transported to Bamako.¹⁵⁸ He was released in 2015 due to a lack of incriminating evidence and returned to Burkina Faso to form Ansaroul Islam.¹⁵⁹ According to *Le Monde*, Dicko died of natural causes in 2017.¹⁶⁰

Jafar Dicko

Jafar Dicko succeeded his brother as the leader of Ansaroul Islam.¹⁶¹ Born in Soboulé, Dicko was reportedly 38 years old when he assumed power in 2017.¹⁶² In a similar fashion to his brother, Jafar was influenced by Amadou Koufa, the leader of the Macina Liberation Front.¹⁶³ However, Jafar reportedly lacked his brother's leadership skills: "Known for his brutal temper...Jafar purportedly lacks his brother's charisma."¹⁶⁴ The United States designated Ansaroul Islam as a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224 in 2018 and sanctioned Dicko in 2024.¹⁶⁵

and André Chappatte (eds.), *Islam and Muslim Life in West Africa: Practices, Trajectories and Influences* (De Gruyter, 2022): 39-62.

¹⁵⁷ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

¹⁵⁸ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

¹⁵⁹ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

¹⁶⁰ Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html.

¹⁶¹ Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html; Hédi Nsaibia and Caleb Weiss, "Ansaroul Islam and the Growing Terrorist Insurgency in Burkina Faso," *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 3 (2018): 21-26; Mapping Militants Project. "Ansaroul Islam." Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/2980/>; Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

¹⁶² Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html.

¹⁶³ Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html.

¹⁶⁴ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

¹⁶⁵ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "U.S. Targets West African Hostage Takers," April 23, 2024, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2293>.

China

Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement

Hasan Mahsum

Hasan Mahsum was born in 1964 in China's Xinjiang province.¹⁶⁶ Between 1984 and 1989, Mahsum was reportedly a student at an Islamic school in Karghalik established by Abdul Hakeem Makhdoom.¹⁶⁷ An ethnic Uyghur, Mahsum was arrested on multiple occasions during the 1990s¹⁶⁸ for engaging in militant activities and was sentenced on one occasion to three years to "re-education through labor."¹⁶⁹ In 1997, Mahsum reportedly fled from China to Afghanistan after being accused of planning a bombing attack in 1995.¹⁷⁰ Mahsum founded the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement in the late 1990s,¹⁷¹ with the organization conducting its first attack in 1998.¹⁷² Mahsum denied any links to al-Qaida and the Taliban, claiming his group did not seek to target the United States.¹⁷³ However, internal al-Qaida documents show that Mahsum participated in a thirty-day advanced security course in Kabul during September 1999 in the capacity of "Emir of the Turkestani brothers."¹⁷⁴ The United States sanctioned the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement under Executive Order 13224 in 2002.¹⁷⁵ However, this designation was revoked in 2020.¹⁷⁶ Mahsum was killed by Pakistani armed forces during a firefight in South Waziristan in late 2003.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁶ People's Daily Online, "FM Spokesman Confirms Death of Wanted Terrorist," December 25, 2003, https://en.people.cn/200312/25/eng20031225_131190.shtml.

¹⁶⁷ Mona and Vineet, "TIP in Their Own Words – An Interview with Abdusalam At-Turkistani, Deputy Leader of Turkistan Islamic Party," February 18, 2023.

¹⁶⁸ Mona and Vineet, "TIP in Their Own Words – An Interview with Abdusalam At-Turkistani, Deputy Leader of Turkistan Islamic Party," February 18, 2023.

¹⁶⁹ People's Daily Online, "FM Spokesman Confirms Death of Wanted Terrorist," December 25, 2003, https://en.people.cn/200312/25/eng20031225_131190.shtml.

¹⁷⁰ Al Jazeera, "Pakistan Kills Uighur Independence Fighters," December 23, 2003, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/12/23/pakistan-kills-ughur-independence-fighters>.

¹⁷¹ Council on Foreign Relations, "The East Turkestani Islamic Movement (ETIM)," September 4, 2014, [https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/east-turkestan-islamic-movement-etim#:~:text=The%20East%20Turkestan%20Islamic%20Movement%20\(ETIM\)%20is%20a%20Muslim%20separatist,in%20northwest%20China's%20Xinjiang%20province](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/east-turkestan-islamic-movement-etim#:~:text=The%20East%20Turkestan%20Islamic%20Movement%20(ETIM)%20is%20a%20Muslim%20separatist,in%20northwest%20China's%20Xinjiang%20province).

¹⁷² National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, "Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)," (2015).

¹⁷³ Chris Zambelis, "Uighur Dissent and Militancy in China's Xinjiang Province," 3, no. 1 (January 2010): 16-19.

¹⁷⁴ Anne Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press 2017).

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Executive Order 13224," <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224>.

¹⁷⁶ Federal Register, "In the Matter of the Designation of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement Also Known as ETIM as a "Terrorist Organization" Pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(B)(vi)(II) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended," November 5, 2020, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/11/05/2020-24620/in-the-matter-of-the-designation-of-the-eastern-turkistan-islamic-movement-also-known-as-etim-as-a>.

¹⁷⁷ BBC, "Chinese Militant 'Shot Dead,'" December 23, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3343241.stm>.

Abdul Haq al-Turkistani

Abdul Haq al-Turkistani was born on October 10, 1971, in the Khuttan area, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China.¹⁷⁸ Alongside Hasan Mahsum, al-Turkistani reportedly helped run a training camp for several months in 2001 in the Tora Bora mountains.¹⁷⁹ Al-Turkistani succeeded Mahsum as leader of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement following the latter's death.¹⁸⁰ The United States designated al-Turkistani as the leader of a terrorist organization in 2009 for commanding "a terror group that sought to sow violence and fracture international unity at the 2008 Olympic Games in China."¹⁸¹ Al-Turkistani was thought to have been killed in a U.S. drone strike in Pakistan in 2010. However, videos published years later showcased al-Turkistani.¹⁸² In 2025, al-Turkistani reportedly remained emir of the organization.¹⁸³

Abdul Shakoor Turkistani

Abdul Shakoor Turkistani took command of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement/Turkistan Islamic Party in 2010 after Abdul Haq al-Turkistani was reportedly killed in a U.S. strike.¹⁸⁴ According to information released by the Chinese government, Turkistani (Emeti Yakuf) was born in China in March 1965.¹⁸⁵ He reportedly became involved with the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement in 1996 and "received terrorist training" after leaving China for "a South Asian country."¹⁸⁶ By 2001, Turkistani was reportedly in charge of "recruiting new members, organizing terrorism training, as well as planning and carrying out terrorist attacks," acting as the organization's military commander.¹⁸⁷ In August 2012, Turkistani was killed in a U.S. air strike on his training camp in the Shawal Valley in Pakistan.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Leader of Group Tied to Al Qaida," April 20, 2009, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg92>.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Joscelyn, "The Uighurs, In Their Own Words," *Long War Journal*, April 21, 2009.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement," https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/eastern-turkistan-islamic-movement.

¹⁸¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Leader of Group Tied to Al Qaida," April 20, 2009, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg92>.

¹⁸² Jacob Zenn, "Back from the Dead: The Turkistan Islamic Party's Abdul Haq al-Turkistani," *Jamestown Foundation*, August 31, 2016.

¹⁸³ South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), "Detail of Terrorism Update," February 15, 2025, <https://www.satp.org/terrorism-update/turkistan-islamic-party-leader-directs-syrian-fighters-from-afghanistan-says-report>.

¹⁸⁴ Bill Roggio, "Turkistan Islamic Party Leader Thought Killed in U.S. Drone Strike," *Long War Journal*, August 25, 2012, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/turkistan_islamic_pa_1.php.

¹⁸⁵ Airwars, "Emeti Yakuf," <https://airwars.org/wp-content/themes/airwars-new/archives/bij-drone-war/namingthedeath/people/nd513/index-lang=en.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Analysts note that this suggests he likely traveled to Pakistan and/or Afghanistan. Bill Roggio, "Turkistan Islamic Party Leader Thought Killed in U.S. Drone Strike," *Long War Journal*, August 25, 2012, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/turkistan_islamic_pa_1.php.

¹⁸⁷ Airwars, "Emeti Yakuf," <https://airwars.org/wp-content/themes/airwars-new/archives/bij-drone-war/namingthedeath/people/nd513/index-lang=en.html>.

¹⁸⁸ Jacob Zenn, "September 2012 Briefs," *Jamestown Foundation*, September 28, 2012, <https://jamestown.org/september-2012-briefs/>; Zia Ur Rehman, "ETIM's Presence in Pakistan and China's Growing Pressure," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre* (August 2014); Airwars, "Emeti Yakuf,"

Abdullah Mansour

Abdullah Mansour succeeded Abdul Shakoor Turkistani following the latter's death in 2012.¹⁸⁹ While Mansour is noted to be “a relative novice among more experienced international jihadists,” he brought significant media experience after serving as the editor of the *Islamic Turkistan* publication.¹⁹⁰ This quarterly publication highlighted Uyghur grievances against China and linked Xinjiang to other jihadist conflict zones.¹⁹¹ Mansour continued to lead Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement/Turkistan Islamic Party until Abdul Haq al-Turkistani retook command of the organization in the spring of 2014.¹⁹²

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Allied Democratic Forces

Jamil Mukulu

In 1995, Jamil Mukulu became the founding leader of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).¹⁹³ Mukulu was born in 1964 in Uganda.¹⁹⁴ Mukulu was reportedly a Christian cleric before converting to Islam.¹⁹⁵ Mukulu received a diploma in Business Management in Kenya and studied Islamic theology in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Sudan.¹⁹⁶ He later returned home to Uganda and became involved in the Tabligh movement.¹⁹⁷ In 1991, Mukulu reportedly led as many as a thousand Tabligh activists and stormed the offices of the Ugandan Muslim Supreme Council.

<https://airwars.org/wp-content/themes/airwars-new/archives/bij-drone-war/namingthedead/people/nd513/index-lang=en.html>.

¹⁸⁹ Mona and Vineet, “TIP IN THEIR OWN WORDS – AN INTERVIEW WITH ABDUSALAM AT-TURKISTĀNĪ, DEPUTY LEADER OF TURKISTĀN ‘ISLĀMIC PARTY,” February 18, 2023, <https://dreyfus1894.substack.com/p/tip-in-their-own-words-an-interview>.

¹⁹⁰ Jacob Zenn, “Beijing, Kunming, Urumqi and Guangzhou: The Changing Landscape of Anti-Chinese Jihadists,” *Jamestown Foundation* 14, no. 10 (2014), <https://jamestown.org/beijing-kunming-urumqi-and-guangzhou-the-changing-landscape-of-anti-chinese-jihadists/>.

¹⁹¹ Jacob Zenn, “Beijing, Kunming, Urumqi and Guangzhou: The Changing Landscape of Anti-Chinese Jihadists,” *Jamestown Foundation* 14, no. 10 (2014), <https://jamestown.org/beijing-kunming-urumqi-and-guangzhou-the-changing-landscape-of-anti-chinese-jihadists/>.

¹⁹² Bill Roggio, “Turkistan Islamic Party Emir Thought Killed in 2010 Reemerged to Lead Group in 2014,” *Long War Journal*, June 1, 2015, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/06/turkistan-islamic-party-emir-thought-killed-in-2010-reemerged-to-lead-group-in-2014.php>.

¹⁹³ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, “*The Islamic state in Congo* (GW Program on Extremism, 2021).

¹⁹⁴ Daily Monitor, “Who is ADF’s Jamil Mukulu?” August 7, 2015,

https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/who-is-adf-s-jamil-mukulu--1620396#google_vignette.

¹⁹⁵ Daily Monitor, “Who is ADF’s Jamil Mukulu?” August 7, 2015,

https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/who-is-adf-s-jamil-mukulu--1620396#google_vignette.

¹⁹⁶ Daily Monitor, “Who is ADF’s Jamil Mukulu?” August 7, 2015,

https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/who-is-adf-s-jamil-mukulu--1620396#google_vignette.

¹⁹⁷ Jason Warner, Ryan O’Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

Mukulu was subsequently imprisoned until 1993.¹⁹⁸ After his release, Mukulu formed his own armed group, the Salafi Foundation, and clashed with the clerical establishment and former Tabligh colleagues.¹⁹⁹ After leading the ADF since 1995, Mukulu was arrested in 2015 by Tanzanian authorities and extradited to Uganda.²⁰⁰

Seka Baluku

Seka Bakulu, also known as Seka Musa Baluku or Musa Baluku, was born between 1975 and 1977 in Uganda.²⁰¹ Baluku reportedly received little formal education in Uganda's schooling system.²⁰² However, he completed studies at the Bugembe Islamic Institute and worked as an Imam at a Tabligh mosque.²⁰³ Baluku was an early member of the Allied Democratic Forces: "While it is not known how Baluku became connected to the ADF, he joined the rebel outfit in 1994 and soon after departed for their camps. This makes Baluku part of the first wave of ADF members who joined in the 1990s and was with the group when it moved from Uganda to DRC in the late 1990s." After serving as Mukulu's second in command, Baluku took over the ADF following Mukulu's arrest in 2015.²⁰⁴ Under Baluku's rule, the ADF pledged fealty to the Islamic State's leaders.²⁰⁵ In 2021, the United States designated Baluku as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist and also designated ISIS-DRC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁸ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹⁹⁹ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

²⁰⁰ Jared Thompson, "Examining Extremism: Allied Democratic Forces," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, July 29, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-allied-democratic-forces>.

²⁰¹ The U.S. State Department notes that Baluku was born sometime between 1975 and 1976 while the U.N. Security Council estimates that Bakulu was born around 1977. Adopting the middle ground, we coded Bakulu's year of birth as 1976. U.S. Department of State, "Seka Musa Baluku," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/seka-musa-baluku/>; United Nations Sanctions Committee, "Sanctions Committee Concerning Democratic Republic of Congo Adds One Individual to Its Sanctions List," <https://press.un.org/en/2020/sc14101.doc.htm>.

²⁰² NTVUganda, "Who is Musa Baluku? - ADF Commander Took Over After Mukulu's Arrest," December 2, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsaF8Xpei0s>.

²⁰³ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, "The Islamic state in Congo (GW Program on Extremism, 2021).

²⁰⁴ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, "The Islamic state in Congo (GW Program on Extremism, 2021).

²⁰⁵ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, "The Islamic state in Congo (GW Program on Extremism, 2021); Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

²⁰⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Seka Musa Baluku," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/seka-musa-baluku/>.

Egypt

Ajnad Misr

Hamam Attiya

Hamam Attiya was the founding leader of Ajnad Misr in Egypt. While reports vary surrounding his exact age, Attiya was reportedly in his mid-30s by 2015.²⁰⁷ Attiya was born in the El Marg district of Cairo.²⁰⁸ Attiya reportedly traveled as a teenager to France to be with his father, who had moved to France in the 1970s to work as a cook.²⁰⁹ Also working as a cook, Attiya later met al-Qaida's followers who convinced him to travel to Afghanistan.²¹⁰ In Afghanistan, Attiya reportedly joined al-Qaida officially and received explosives and weapons manufacturing training.²¹¹ Attiya would later travel to Iraq in 2011, working with the nascent Islamic State before deciding to return to Egypt in 2012.²¹² In Egypt, Attiya reportedly joined Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, later leaving the organization to establish Ajnad Misr.²¹³ Officially announcing its formation in January 2014, Ajnad Misr claimed attacks dating back to 2013.²¹⁴ Such attacks would lead the United States to designate Ajnad Misr as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2014.²¹⁵ Attiya was later killed during a firefight with Egyptian police forces in 2015.²¹⁶

²⁰⁷ While some reports place Attiya at 36 at the time of his death in 2015, others claim that he was younger. However, his father reportedly traveled to France in the late 1970s to live for work. Given this, we followed reporting that claimed Attiya was 36 at the time of his death. For information on different reporting dates, see Yousry Elbadry and Hamdy Dabash, “مصر من هو همام عطية في مسلسل «الاختيار 2».. وقصة 26 عملية إرهابية لـ«أجناد»,” Al-Masry Al-Youm (2021) <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2311409>; همام محمد أحمد عطية.. مؤسس تنظيم “Zatmasr (2020), “ذات مصر # (من الداخل) أجناد مصر (الحلقة 24 من برنامج من هو زعيم تنظيم “أجناد مصر” الإرهابي,” Al Arabiya <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/egypt/2015/04/06/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%9F>.

²⁰⁸ Yousry Elbadry and Hamdy Dabash, “مصر من هو همام عطية في مسلسل «الاختيار 2».. وقصة 26 عملية إرهابية لـ«أجناد»,” Al-Masry Al-Youm (2021) <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2311409>.

²⁰⁹ Yousry Elbadry and Hamdy Dabash, “مصر من هو همام عطية في مسلسل «الاختيار 2».. وقصة 26 عملية إرهابية لـ«أجناد»,” Al-Masry Al-Youm (2021) <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2311409>.

²¹⁰ Yousry Elbadry and Hamdy Dabash, “مصر من هو همام عطية في مسلسل «الاختيار 2».. وقصة 26 عملية إرهابية لـ«أجناد»,” Al-Masry Al-Youm (2021) <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2311409>.

²¹¹ Yousry Elbadry and Hamdy Dabash, “مصر من هو همام عطية في مسلسل «الاختيار 2».. وقصة 26 عملية إرهابية لـ«أجناد»,” Al-Masry Al-Youm (2021) <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2311409>.

²¹² Yousry Elbadry and Hamdy Dabash, “مصر من هو همام عطية في مسلسل «الاختيار 2».. وقصة 26 عملية إرهابية لـ«أجناد»,” Al-Masry Al-Youm (2021) <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2311409>.

²¹³ Ahram Online, “Founder of Islamist Militant Group Ajnad Misr Killed: Police Spokesman,” April 5, 2015, <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/126984/Egypt/Politics-/Founder-of-Islamist-militant-group-Ajnad-Misr-kill.aspx>.

²¹⁴ The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, “Ajnad Misr,” (2014), <https://timep.org/2014/07/22/ajnad-misr/>.

²¹⁵ <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/12/235386.htm>.

²¹⁶ Yousry Elbadry and Hamdy Dabash, “مصر من هو همام عطية في مسلسل «الاختيار 2».. وقصة 26 عملية إرهابية لـ«أجناد»,” Al-Masry Al-Youm (2021) <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2311409>.

al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya

Omar Abdel Rahman

Omar Abdel Rahman was born in El-Gamaleya City along the Niger Delta in 1938.²¹⁷ He lost his eyesight due to diabetes at ten months old.²¹⁸ Abdel Rahman focused on religious studies, receiving an undergraduate degree as well as a doctorate from al-Azhar University.²¹⁹ After graduation, Abdel Rahman was appointed as an imam in a village of al-Faiyum, southwest of Cairo.²²⁰ In 1973, Abdel Rahman began teaching in the Department of Theology at the University of Aysut in Upper Egypt,²²¹ staying for four years in the position.²²² Subsequently, he taught at the Girls' College in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, returning to Egypt in 1980.²²³ Abdel Rahman spent time in Egyptian prisons on multiple occasions. He was arrested in 1970 after the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser, spending months in prison.²²⁴ Abdel Rahman later spent three years in prison following the death of Anwar al-Sadat.²²⁵ In the late 1980s, reportedly using a body double to escape house

²¹⁷ BBC Arabic, "عمر عبد الرحمن: أشهر إسلامي في السجون الأمريكية," <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-39016271>.

²¹⁸ Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

²¹⁹ Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

²²⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, "عمر عبد الرحمن.. الزعيم الروحي للجماعة الإسلامية بمصر," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2017/2/19/%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9>.

²²¹ Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

²²² Al Jazeera Arabic, "عمر عبد الرحمن.. الزعيم الروحي للجماعة الإسلامية بمصر," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2017/2/19/%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9>.

²²³ Al Jazeera Arabic, "عمر عبد الرحمن.. الزعيم الروحي للجماعة الإسلامية بمصر," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2017/2/19/%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9>.

²²⁴ Sky News Arabic, "عمر عبد الرحمن.. الزعيم الروحي لـ الإرهاب," <https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/919747-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%80%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8>.

²²⁵ Sky News Arabic, "عمر عبد الرحمن.. الزعيم الروحي لـ الإرهاب," <https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/919747-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%80%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8>.

arrest, Abdel Rahman traveled to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Sudan, and Afghanistan, with these travels bringing him “into contact not only with several influential Islamist activists and thinkers but also with what has been described as a CIA-sponsored ‘pipeline’ funneling training, arms, and financial support to Afghan fighters.”²²⁶ While there are debates over the organization’s top leadership position, sources indicate that Abdel Rahman was appointed as the leader of the group.²²⁷ Fawaz Gerges also writes that Abdel Rahman was the emir of the organization.²²⁸ However, other jihadists, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, opposed Abdel Rahman’s leadership and the “rule of the blind” on operational and doctrinal grounds.²²⁹ Abdel Rahman was arrested in 1993 and is serving a life sentence in the United States for his role in plotting to bomb landmarks in New York.²³⁰

Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis/Wilayat Sinai

Mohamed Freij

Mohamed Freij was reportedly the founding leader of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis.²³¹ Freij, an Egyptian jihadist,²³² engaged in militant activities during the 2000s. According to his obituary published by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, Freij had “unique fingerprints in the history of the jihadi work in Sinai.”²³³ Sources indicate that Freij “likely” received militant training in Gaza and masterminded the tactic of targeting gas pipelines between Israel and Egypt.²³⁴ Reports differ over Freij’s death. In December 2013, the Egyptian military claimed it had killed Freij during an operation in the

[%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%80%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8.](#)

²²⁶ Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 347.

²²⁷ Ashraf Abdel Hamed, “تجل عمر عبدالرحمن للعربية: والدي أوصى أن يدفن في مصر,” *Al Arabiya*, <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/egypt/2017/02/18/%D9%86%D8%AC%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%80-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%AA-%D9%87%D8%B0%D9%87-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D9%81%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D9%88%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%87>.

²²⁸ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²²⁹ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²³⁰ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²³¹ Zack Gold, “Salafi Jihadist Violence in Egypt’s North Sinai: From Local Insurgency to Islamic State Province,” *ICCT Research Paper* (April 2016).

²³² Zack Gold, “Salafi Jihadist Violence in Egypt’s North Sinai: From Local Insurgency to Islamic State Province,” *ICCT Research Paper* (April 2016).

²³³ David Barnett, “Ansar Jerusalem Confirms Death of 2 Members, Including Founder,” *Long War Journal*, March 16, 2014.

²³⁴ Zack Gold, “Salafi Jihadist Violence in Egypt’s North Sinai: From Local Insurgency to Islamic State Province,” *ICCT Research Paper* (April 2016).

northern Sinai.²³⁵ However, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis claims that Freij died months later when a bomb he was transporting detonated prematurely.²³⁶

Shadi al-Meneai

Shadi al-Meneai reportedly assumed leadership of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis following Freij's death.²³⁷ Al-Meneai was born in a military hospital in Amman, Jordan, to an Egyptian father and Palestinian mother.²³⁸ Al-Meneai moved with his father to the Sinai and completed his early education in southern Rafah.²³⁹ He started at the al-Farabi High School but did not finish his studies due to his living situation.²⁴⁰ Al-Meneai worked for years smuggling goods into Gaza and later moved to Palestine for two years.²⁴¹ After returning to the Sinai, Egyptian intelligence services captured him and transferred him to Cairo to question him over his participation in attacks launched by the Tawhid and Jihad group against Israel inside the Sinai.²⁴² His time in prison reportedly influenced al-Meneai's road to militancy.²⁴³ Al-Meneai played a key role in the early operations of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, including the kidnapping of 25 Chinese cement workers in Egypt in 2012.²⁴⁴ While disputes exist over his death,²⁴⁵ the Egyptian military announced the death

²³⁵ https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2013/12/131209_sinai_abu_sohaib.

²³⁶ David Barnett, "Ansar Jerusalem Confirms Death of 2 Members, Including Founder," *Long War Journal*, March 16, 2014.

²³⁷ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic State - Sinai Province." Last modified June 17, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/408/>.

²³⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شادي المنيعي" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/1/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A>.

²³⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شادي المنيعي" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/1/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A>.

²⁴⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شادي المنيعي" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/1/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A>.

²⁴¹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شادي المنيعي" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/1/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A>.

²⁴² Al Jazeera Arabic, "شادي المنيعي" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/1/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A>.

²⁴³ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شادي المنيعي" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/1/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A>.

²⁴⁴ Zack Gold, "Salafi Jihadist Violence in Egypt's North Sinai: From Local Insurgency to Islamic State Province," *ICCT Research Paper* (April 2016).

²⁴⁵ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شادي المنيعي" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/1/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A>.

of al-Meneai during a firefight in 2014.²⁴⁶ Prior to al-Meneai's death, the United States designated Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on April 10, 2014.²⁴⁷

Abu Duaa Al-Ansari

There are debates surrounding Abu Duaa al-Ansari's role in Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, with the organization often keeping the identity of its leader secret.²⁴⁸ According to the Egyptian military, al-Ansari was the leader of the group until 2016.²⁴⁹ While "there is a dearth of information in public news accounts" about al-Ansari,²⁵⁰ he reportedly played a key role in the organization's oath of allegiance to the Islamic State in November 2014.²⁵¹ In 2016, the Egyptian military stated that it killed al-Ansari in a series of airstrikes in Arish.²⁵²

Abu Osama al-Masri

Abu Osama al-Masri reportedly took command of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, which had rebranded to Wilayat Sinai, in 2016.²⁵³ Al-Masri was born to a prominent family in Arish, Egypt.²⁵⁴ While there is uncertainty surrounding his exact age,²⁵⁵ an *Asharq al-Awsat* article stated that al-Masri was 42

²⁴⁶ BBC, "Egypt: Sinai Islamist Leader Shadi al-Menei Shot Dead," May 23, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27533169>.

²⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

²⁴⁸ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic State - Sinai Province." Last modified June 17, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/408/>.

²⁴⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic State - Sinai Province." Last modified June 17, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/408/>.

²⁵⁰ Steve Visser, "ISIS Leader Killed in Sai, Egypt Says," CNN, August 6, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/08/04/middleeast/egypt-kills-isis-leader>.

²⁵¹ Muhammad Reda, "وسائل إعلام داعش تتكلم على خبر سقوط أبو دعاء الأنصاري.. على حفظة: ضربة قاسمة للإرهاب في سيناء.. تامر" 2016 الشهاوى: التنظيم يلفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة.. وتطهير سيناء بالكامل من الإرهاب نهاية" <https://www.youm7.com/story/2016/8/5/%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%AA%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B7-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%89/2830561>.

²⁵² France 24, "Egyptian Military 'Kills Leader of Islamic State Group in Sinai,'" (2016), <https://www.france24.com/en/20160804-egypt-military-says-killed-leader-islamic-state-group-sinai>.

²⁵³ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

²⁵⁴ Al Jazeera Arabic, "أبو أسامة المصري.. المتهم بإسقاط الطائرة الروسية," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/11/9/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

²⁵⁵ Al Jazeera Arabic, "أبو أسامة المصري.. المتهم بإسقاط الطائرة الروسية," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/11/9/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

years of age in 2015.²⁵⁶ Al-Masri reportedly enrolled in courses at al-Azhar University²⁵⁷ and worked as a preacher.²⁵⁸ Al-Masri was also noted to have received military training in Gaza and Syria.²⁵⁹ Internally, he was the spokesperson for Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis before taking control of the organization.²⁶⁰ Al-Masri also reportedly traveled to Syria to meet with the Islamic State about allying with the organization.²⁶¹ The United States designated al-Masri as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2017.²⁶² In 2018, Wilayat Sinai announced al-Masri's death in an airstrike.²⁶³

²⁵⁶ Mohamed Elshafey, “مصادر بريطانية: أبو أسامة المصري العقل المدبر والمخطط لإسقاط الطائرة”،

<https://aawsat.com/home/article/492896/%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%B7-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D8%A9>.

²⁵⁷ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أبو أسامة المصري.. المتهم بإسقاط الطائرة الروسية”،

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/11/9/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

²⁵⁸ Mohamed Elshafey, “مصادر بريطانية: أبو أسامة المصري العقل المدبر والمخطط لإسقاط الطائرة”،

<https://aawsat.com/home/article/492896/%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%B7-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D8%A9>.

²⁵⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أبو أسامة المصري.. المتهم بإسقاط الطائرة الروسية”،

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/11/9/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

²⁶⁰ Jason Warner, Ryan O’Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

²⁶¹ Jason Warner, Ryan O’Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

²⁶² Federal Register, “E.O. 13224 Designation of Muhammad Ahmad ‘Ali al-Isawi, aka Abu Osama al-Masri, aka Abu Usamah al-Masri as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist,” May 26, 2017,

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/26/2017-10939/eo-13224-designation-of-muhammad-ahmad-ali-al-isawi-aka-abu-osama-al-masri-aka-abu-usamah-al-masri>.

²⁶³ Mada Masr, “Province of Sinai Video Claims Former Police and Military Personnel among Its Ranks, Confirms Death of Islamic State Sinai Leader,” November 17, 2018,

<https://www.madamasr.com/en/2018/11/17/news/u/province-of-sinai-video-claims-former-police-and-military-personnel-among-its-ranks-confirms-death-of-islamic-state-sinai-leader/>.

Egyptian Islamic Jihad

Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj

Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj was born in the early 1950s in Egypt.²⁶⁴ Faraj graduated from the College of Engineering at the University of Cairo²⁶⁵ and worked as an electrical engineer.²⁶⁶ Faraj also reportedly worked as an imam in the Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz Mosque in his spare time.²⁶⁷ Faraj is noted to have been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood who formed Egyptian Islamic Jihad in response to the Muslim Brotherhood's pledge of nonviolence in 1979.²⁶⁸ Faraj was influenced by the writing of ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb and Abu al-Al'a al-Mawdudi.²⁶⁹ Following the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat, he was arrested and later executed by the Egyptian regime in 1982. Although Faraj had not assassinated al-Sadat, his recently published *The Absent Duty* provided ideological justifications for the utilization of violence to overthrow apostate Muslim rulers.²⁷⁰

Aboud El-Zomor

Aboud El-Zomor succeeded Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj as the leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad following the latter's execution in 1982.²⁷¹ El-Zomor was born in the village of Nahya in 1947.²⁷² After high school, El-Zomor enrolled in the Egyptian Military College in 1965, graduating in 1967.²⁷³ Subsequently, El-Zomor joined the military intelligence and participated in the 1973 October War, rising eventually to the rank of Major.²⁷⁴ El-Zomor later joined the Egyptian jihadist

²⁶⁴ There are disputes surrounding al-Faraj's date of birth, with some sources listing it as 1942, 1952, and 1954. For instance, see Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009); Hussam Haddad, "محمد عبد السلام فرج.. قاتل", <https://www.islamist-movements.com/3613>; and Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof, eds. *Encyclopedia of Global Religion* (Sage Publications, 2011).

²⁶⁵ Hussam Haddad, "محمد عبد السلام فرج.. قاتل بدرجة مفتي", <https://www.islamist-movements.com/3613>.

²⁶⁶ Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

²⁶⁷ Hussam Haddad, "محمد عبد السلام فرج.. قاتل بدرجة مفتي", <https://www.islamist-movements.com/3613>.

²⁶⁸ Mapping Militants Project. "Egyptian Islamic Jihad." <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/371/>.

²⁶⁹ Hussam Haddad, "محمد عبد السلام فرج.. قاتل بدرجة مفتي", <https://www.islamist-movements.com/3613>.

²⁷⁰ Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

²⁷¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Egyptian Islamic Jihad." <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/371/>.

²⁷² Al Jazeera Arabic, "عبود الزمر"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/10/2/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%B1>.

²⁷³ Al Jazeera Arabic, "عبود الزمر"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/10/2/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%B1>.

²⁷⁴ Al Jazeera Arabic, "عبود الزمر"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/10/2/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%B1>.

movement and was arrested for his role in the 1981 assassination of Anwar al-Sadat.²⁷⁵ El-Zomor remained in prison until 2011.²⁷⁶

Abd al-Qadir Ibn Abd al-Aziz

Abd al-Qadir Ibn Abd al-Aziz, also known as Sayyid Imam al-Sharif and Dr. Fadl, reportedly became the leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad during the 1980s.²⁷⁷ Abd al-Aziz was born in 1950 in the city of Beni Suef in Upper Egypt.²⁷⁸ He went to a traditional school (*kuttab*) and enrolled as a medical student at Cairo University after high school, graduating in 1974 and joining the surgery department of the Qasr al-‘Ayni Faculty of Medicine.²⁷⁹ Abd al-Aziz also joined Maadi Group, which was a thirteen-member group created by Ayman al-Zawahiri that is considered to be a precursor to al-Jihad.²⁸⁰ In 1981, Abd al-Aziz was tried in absentia and acquitted in a trial of Islamist suspects following the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat.²⁸¹ He subsequently spent time in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.²⁸² In 1986, Abd al-Aziz reportedly left Saudi Arabia²⁸³ to offer his medical expertise to the Afghan jihad.²⁸⁴ In Pakistan, he worked for a Kuwaiti Red Crescent hospital in Peshawar.²⁸⁵ According to Lawrence Wright, “the jihadis who came to Peshawar revered Fadl for his encyclopedic knowledge of the Koran and the Hadith—the sayings of the Prophet. Usama Ayub, who was in Peshawar at the time, remembered, ‘He would say, Get this book, volume so-and-so, and he would quote it perfectly—without the book in his hand!’”²⁸⁶

²⁷⁵ Mahmoud Sami, “أين من قتلوا السادات.. أيبين الإعدام والسجن والمطاردة..” Al Jazeera Arabic,

<https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2021/10/5/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86>.

²⁷⁶ Dina Samak, “Q&A: Aboud El-Zomor on Sadat, Mubarak and the Future of Egypt,” *Ahram Online*, October 6, 2011. <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/1/23436/Egypt/QA-Aboud-ElZomor-on-Sadat,-Mubarak-and-the-future-.aspx>.

²⁷⁷ Mapping Militants Project. “Egyptian Islamic Jihad.” <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/371/>.

²⁷⁸ Khalil Al-Anani, “Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?” *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* no. 35 (2009).

²⁷⁹ Khalil Al-Anani, “Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?” *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* no. 35 (2009).

²⁸⁰ Khalil Al-Anani, “Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?” *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* no. 35 (2009).

²⁸¹ Human Rights Watch, “The Rendition to Egypt of Sayyid Imam al-Sharif,” (2005), https://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/egypt0505/10.htm#_ftn154.

²⁸² Human Rights Watch, “The Rendition to Egypt of Sayyid Imam al-Sharif,” (2005), https://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/egypt0505/10.htm#_ftn154.

²⁸³ Al Jarida, “سيد إمام... أخطر الشخصيات في تاريخ حركات العنف الإسلامي أعضاء الجهاد بايعوا د. فضل وهم يظنونهم الظواهري,” <https://www.aljarida.com/articles/1461158815924505400>.

²⁸⁴ Khalil Al-Anani, “Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?” *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* no. 35 (2009).

²⁸⁵ Tom Kellogg and Hossam el-Hamalawy, “The Rendition to Egypt of Sayyid Imam al-Sharif,” *Human Rights Watch* (May 2005), https://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/egypt0505/10.htm#_ftn154.

²⁸⁶ Lawrence Wright, “The Rebellion Within,” *The New Yorker*, May 23, 2008.

Although reports differ over the exact year Abd al-Aziz left Egyptian Islamic Jihad,²⁸⁷ Khalil Al-Anani states: “The initial ideological rupture between him [Abd al-Aziz] and al-Zawahiri occurred in 1993, when al-Sharif left his command of al-Jihad to protest the killings carried out by the group in Egypt.”²⁸⁸ Abd al-Aziz later went on to publish significant revisionist work criticizing the behavior of jihadists.²⁸⁹

Ayman al-Zawahiri

Ayman al-Zawahiri was born in Cairo in 1951.²⁹⁰ Al-Zawahiri came from a well-respected family that consisted of doctors, politicians, and senior religious figures. For instance, al-Zawahiri’s grandfather was the grand imam of al-Azhar, and one of his uncles was the first secretary-general of the Arab League.²⁹¹ Al-Zawahiri graduated from Cairo University’s medical school.²⁹² He also obtained a master’s degree in general surgery²⁹³ and later earned a PhD in Pakistan.²⁹⁴ Al-Zawahiri was engaged in militant activities in his youth. As a teenager, he was reportedly arrested for joining the Muslim Brotherhood.²⁹⁵ Al-Zawahiri stated that the execution of Sayyid Qutb and the crackdown by Gamal Abdel Nasser’s regime were “the first spark to ignite the jihadi movement in Egypt against the government.”²⁹⁶ Supporting his militant efforts, al-Zawahiri reportedly formed the Maadi group, which was “considered to be the first kernel of al-Jihad.”²⁹⁷ In 1981, al-Zawahiri was arrested and remained in prison until 1984²⁹⁸ or 1985.²⁹⁹ “The prison years left deep scars on Zawahiri and changed him forever...In their attempt to make sense of Zawahiri’s subsequent descent into confrontation with the Egyptian regime, his former associates say that ultimately the

²⁸⁷ The Mackenzie Institute, “Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ),” <https://mackenzieinstitute.com/terrorism-profile-egyptian-islamic-jihad-eij/>.

²⁸⁸ Khalil Al-Anani, “Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?” *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* no. 35 (2009), 3.

²⁸⁹ Khalil Al-Anani, “Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?” *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* no. 35 (2009).

²⁹⁰ BBC, “Ayman al-Zawahiri: Who Was al-Qaeda Leader Kill by US?” August 2, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13789286>.

²⁹¹ BBC, “Ayman al-Zawahiri: Who Was al-Qaeda Leader Kill by US?” August 2, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13789286>.

²⁹² BBC, “Ayman al-Zawahiri: Who Was al-Qaeda Leader Kill by US?” August 2, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13789286>.

²⁹³ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أيمن الظواهري.. الطبيب المصري الذي خلف بن لادن في زعامة القاعدة واغتالته واشنطن,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/4/20/%D8%A3%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

²⁹⁴ Donald Holbrook (ed.), *Al-Qaeda 2.0: A Critical Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

²⁹⁵ Al Jazeera, “Who Was al-Qaeda’s Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri,” August 2, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/2/al-zawahiri-from-cairo-doctor-to-al-qaeda-leader>.

²⁹⁶ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 91.

²⁹⁷ Khalil Al-Anani, “Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?” *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* no. 35 (2009), 3.

²⁹⁸ Donald Holbrook (ed.), *Al-Qaeda 2.0: A Critical Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

²⁹⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أيمن الظواهري.. الطبيب المصري الذي خلف بن لادن في زعامة القاعدة واغتالته واشنطن,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/4/20/%D8%A3%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

prison experience, particularly the abuse and torture, had a lasting effect on his future conduct.”³⁰⁰ After his release, al-Zawahiri traveled to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and also spent time in Sudan and Afghanistan.³⁰¹ Al-Zawahiri eventually took control of Egyptian Islamic Jihad and led the organization as it grew increasingly closer to al-Qaida. In early 2001, al-Zawahiri formally merged his group with Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaida,³⁰² as the “merger formally sealed a well-cemented alliance.”³⁰³ Al-Zawahiri was sanctioned by the United States under Executive Order 13224 on September 23, 2001.³⁰⁴

India

Hizb-ul Mujahideen

Muhammad Ahsan Dar

Muhammad Ahsan Dar was born in India during the early 1950s.³⁰⁵ Dar was a former Jamaat schoolteacher³⁰⁶ before reportedly turning to militancy in the mid-1980s and joining Ansar-ul-Islam.³⁰⁷ He was arrested by Indian authorities in 1988 but escaped after eight months of incarceration. Hizb-ul Mujahideen was established in the Kashmir Valley in 1989, with Dar serving as its founding leader.³⁰⁸ In 1991, Dar was expelled from the organization “in favor of imposing the command of a JI-dominated shura council.”³⁰⁹

Syed Salahuddin

Syed Salahuddin, also known as Muhammad Yusuf Shah, was born in 1946 in Jammu and Kashmir, India.³¹⁰ Salahuddin graduated from SP College in Srinagar and subsequently attained a

³⁰⁰ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 93.

³⁰¹ Donald Holbrook (ed.), *Al-Qaeda 2.0: A Critical Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

³⁰² Donald Holbrook (ed.), *Al-Qaeda 2.0: A Critical Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

³⁰³ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 142.

³⁰⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Executive Order 13224,” <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224>.

³⁰⁵ We estimated Dar’s birth year as 1952 as a new article published in December 2012 stated that he was sixty years old. Kashmir Times (India), “From Guns to Peaceful Resistance,” December 26, 2012.

³⁰⁶ Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

³⁰⁷ Yelena Biberman, *Gambling with Violence: State Outsourcing of War in Pakistan and India* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

³⁰⁸ Surinder Kumar Sharma and Anshuman Behera, *Militant Groups in South Asia* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2014); South Asia Terrorism Portal, “Hizb-ul-Mujahideen,”

https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/hizbul_mujahideen.htm.

³⁰⁹ Paul Staniland, “Organizing Insurgency: Networks: Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia,” *International Security*, 37, no. 1 (2012), 167.

³¹⁰ Animesh Roul, “Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad,” *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

master's degree in political science from the Kashmir University in 1971.³¹¹ Salahuddin worked as a teacher and preacher and was an active member of Jamaat-e-Islami.³¹² Salahuddin's "knowledge of Islamic religious scriptures and command of English, Urdu and various local languages earned him much popularity among college and university students."³¹³ Salahuddin lost his election bid as a candidate for the Muslim United Front in assembly elections in Kashmir 1987.³¹⁴ He reportedly became "more disgruntled and radical" and was jailed for anti-India activities and hate speeches.³¹⁵ In 1991, Salahuddin traveled to Afghanistan to make arrangements to train Kashmiri fighters.³¹⁶ In Afghanistan, Salahuddin met with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who reportedly advised Salahuddin "to eliminate all of Hizbul Mujahideen's rivals."³¹⁷ Salahuddin became the second leader of Hizb-ul Mujahideen in 1991.³¹⁸ Salahuddin's time in Afghanistan was critical to subsequent actions: "His training in Afghanistan and Pakistan and knowledge of the local geography helped him immensely in many attacks on communication networks and bridges as well as ambushes on Indian security force convoys in Kashmir."³¹⁹ The United States designated Salahuddin as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in June 2017, coinciding with a visit by Indian Prime Minister Modi to Washington;³²⁰ Hizb-ul Mujahideen was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in August 2017.³²¹

³¹¹ Abhishek Saha, "Syed Salahuddin: From Political Science Student in Kashmir to 'Global Terrorist,'" *Hindustan Times*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/syed-salahuddin-kashmiri-islamic-preacher-to-global-terrorist/story-IJuoHxTv5Tvd1SKpeIJDeP.html>.

³¹² Abhishek Saha, "Syed Salahuddin: From Political Science Student in Kashmir to 'Global Terrorist,'" *Hindustan Times*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/syed-salahuddin-kashmiri-islamic-preacher-to-global-terrorist/story-IJuoHxTv5Tvd1SKpeIJDeP.html>; The Indian Express, "Syed Salahuddin: Teacher to Terror Commander," June 28, 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/salahuddin-teacher-to-terror-commander-4725290/>.

³¹³ Animesh Roul, "Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad," *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

³¹⁴ Aijaz Hussain, "AP Explains: Who is Salahuddin, Rebel Named Terrorist by US?" *Associated Press*, June 27, 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/35475eceb25e40a3b08f61bcaf530536>.

³¹⁵ Animesh Roul, "Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad," *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

³¹⁶ Arif Jamal, *Shadow War: The Untold Story of Jihad in Kashmir* (New York: Melville House, 2009).

³¹⁷ Arif Jamal, *Shadow War: The Untold Story of Jihad in Kashmir* (New York: Melville House, 2009).

³¹⁸ Abhishek Saha, "Syed Salahuddin: From Political Science Student in Kashmir to 'Global Terrorist,'" *Hindustan Times*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/syed-salahuddin-kashmiri-islamic-preacher-to-global-terrorist/story-IJuoHxTv5Tvd1SKpeIJDeP.html>; Aijaz Hussain, "AP Explains: Who is Salahuddin, Rebel Named Terrorist by US?" *Associated Press*, June 27, 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/35475eceb25e40a3b08f61bcaf530536>.

³¹⁹ Animesh Roul, "Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad," *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

³²⁰ Aijaz Hussain, "AP Explains: Who is Salahuddin, Rebel Named Terrorist by US?" *Associated Press*, June 27, 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/35475eceb25e40a3b08f61bcaf530536>.

³²¹ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)

Masood Azhar

Masood Azhar was born in July 1968 in Pakistan's Punjab Province.³²² Azhar received his education at Jamia Uloom-i-Islami, a prominent religious university in Pakistan.³²³ Despite reportedly failing to complete his 40-day military training in Afghanistan due to physical weakness, Azhar joined the war against the USSR.³²⁴ After suffering injuries, he began editing Urdu and Arabic jihadist magazines.³²⁵ Azhar reportedly taught classes and worked as a preacher,³²⁶ giving sermons as far as the United Kingdom during the 1990s.³²⁷ He also traveled across multiple regions on recruitment and fund-raising missions.³²⁸ Due to his growing prominence, he assumed a high-ranking position in Harkat ul-Ansar, which was led by Maulana Saadatullah Khan. In 1994, Indian authorities arrested Azhar for being a member of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen.³²⁹ Azhar was eventually released in 1999 in exchange for 155 individuals being held hostage on an Indian Airlines flight that was hijacked to Afghanistan.³³⁰ After being released from prison, Azhar created Jaish-e-Mohammad in 2000.³³¹ Azhar was held under house arrest in 2002 but was released after the Lahore High Court stated there were insufficient grounds to keep him detained.³³² The United States designated Jaish-e-Mohammad as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2001 and Azhar as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2010.³³³

³²² U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Pakistan-Based Terrorist Organizations Lashkar-E Tayyiba and Jaish-E Mohammed," November 4, 2010, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg944>.

³²³ Hindustan Times, "A Profile of Maulana Masood Azhar," December 9, 2008, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/a-profile-of-maulana-masood-azhar/story-SgfdaU2uSP7iOi6GH0UGqM.html>.

³²⁴ Kashmir Herald, "Maulana Masood Azhar," (January 2002), <https://web.archive.org/web/20081211065030/http://www.kashmirherald.com/profiles/masoodazhar.html>.

³²⁵ Kashmir Herald, "Maulana Masood Azhar," (January 2002), <https://web.archive.org/web/20081211065030/http://www.kashmirherald.com/profiles/masoodazhar.html>.

³²⁶ Hindustan Times, "A Profile of Maulana Masood Azhar," December 9, 2008, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/a-profile-of-maulana-masood-azhar/story-SgfdaU2uSP7iOi6GH0UGqM.html>.

³²⁷ BBC, "Masood Azhar: The Man Who Brought Jihad to Britain," April 5, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35959202>.

³²⁸ Kashmir Herald, "Maulana Masood Azhar," (January 2002), <https://web.archive.org/web/20081211065030/http://www.kashmirherald.com/profiles/masoodazhar.html>.

³²⁹ Hindustan Times, "A Profile of Maulana Masood Azhar," December 9, 2008, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/a-profile-of-maulana-masood-azhar/story-SgfdaU2uSP7iOi6GH0UGqM.html>.

³³⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Mohammed Masood Azhar Alvi," <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/mohammed-masood-azhar-alvi>.

³³¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Jaish-e-Mohammad." Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/411/>.

³³² BBC, "Indian Fury over Freed Militant," December 14, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2575199.stm.

³³³ U.S. Department of State, "United Nations 1267 Sanctions Committee Designation of Masood Azhar," May 1, 2019, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/united-nations-1267-sanctions-committee-designation-of-masood-azhar/>.

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

Hafiz Muhammad Saeed

Hafiz Muhammad Saeed was born in 1950 to a Punjabi family in Sargodha, Pakistan.³³⁴ Saeed pursued graduate education at Lahore University and also studied at King Saud University in Riyadh.³³⁵ He also reportedly taught in higher education and received an appointment to Lahore's University of Engineering and Technology.³³⁶ Saeed traveled to Afghanistan in the late 1970s or early 1980s to receive military training³³⁷ and became close contacts with Abdullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden.³³⁸ Saeed formed Lashkar-e-Taiba in 1990, with the organization being linked to numerous militant operations, such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks.³³⁹ Over recent decades, Pakistani authorities arrested Saeed on multiple occasions; Saeed was eventually convicted in 2020 and 2022 on charges of terrorism financing.³⁴⁰ The United States designated Lashkar-e-Taiba as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2001³⁴¹ and Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2008.³⁴²

³³⁴ The Times of India, "Who is Hafiz Saeed?" April 4, 2012,

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Who-is-Hafiz-Saeed/articleshow/12529918.cms>.

³³⁵ Suhasini Haidar, "Hafiz Saeed: The 'Professor' Who Runs Terrorist Networks," November 29, 2020,

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/hafiz-saeed-the-professor-who-runs-terrorist-networks/article33201614.ece>.

³³⁶ Praveen Swami, "Pakistan and the Lashkar's Jihad in India," *The Hindu*, December 9, 2008,

<https://web.archive.org/web/20081212111914/http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/09/stories/2008120955670800.htm>.

³³⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Hafiz Muhammad Saeed," December 19, 2023,

https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/hafiz-muhammad-saeed.

³³⁸ Bruce Riedel, Hafiz Saeed, Pakistani Extremist with a \$10 Million Price on his Head, Is al Qaeda's Ally," *Brookings*, April 3, 2012.

³³⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Lashkar-e-Taiba." Last modified November 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/440/>.

³⁴⁰ Al Jazeera, "Pakistan: Hafiz Saeed Gets 31 Years in Jail for Terror Financing," April 9, 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/9/pakistan-hafiz-saeed-gets-31-years-in-jail-for-terror-financing>.

³⁴¹ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

³⁴² U.S. Department of State, "Hafiz Saeed," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/hafiz-saeed/>.

Indonesia

Islamic Defenders' Front (FPI)

Habib Rizieq Shihab

Habib Rizieq Shihab was born in 1965 in Jakarta.³⁴³ He studied at the Saudi-funded Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic in Jakarta, where he was exposed to “true Islamic teachings.”³⁴⁴ Shihab subsequently earned a scholarship to continue his religious studies at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia.³⁴⁵ He later reportedly pursued doctoral studies at the Islamic University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.³⁴⁶ During the 1990s, he was the principal of the Aliyah Jam’iat Kheir Madrasah and taught in the fields of jurisprudence and inheritance.³⁴⁷ After the fall of the Suharto regime, Shihab founded the Islamic Defenders' Front (FPI) in 1998.³⁴⁸ In 2002, Shihab was arrested and sentenced to seven months in jail; he was also re-arrested in April 2003 and released again in 2003.³⁴⁹ He was arrested again in 2020 for holding large public gatherings during pandemic lockdowns.³⁵⁰

Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD)

Aman Abdurrahman

Aman Abdurrahman, also known as Oman Rochman, was born in January 1972 in West Java.³⁵¹ After elementary school, Abdurrahman enrolled in Islamic *pesantren* boarding schools in Sumedang, West Java.³⁵² He also graduated from the Arabic-language Institute for the Study of

³⁴³ Siti Chuzaemah, JM. Muslimin, and Hamka Hasan, “The Concept of *Nahy Munkar* and *Islam*; Study on Habib Rizieq’s Legal Thought,” *International Colloquium on Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* (2019).

³⁴⁴ Ihsan Yilmaz and Greg Barton, “Populism, Violence, and Vigilantism in Indonesia: Rizieq Shihab and His Far-Right Islamist Populism,” *European Center for Populism Studies* (2021), 7.

³⁴⁵ Ihsan Yilmaz and Greg Barton, “Populism, Violence, and Vigilantism in Indonesia: Rizieq Shihab and His Far-Right Islamist Populism,” *European Center for Populism Studies* (2021).

³⁴⁶ Siti Chuzaemah, JM. Muslimin, and Hamka Hasan, “The Concept of *Nahy Munkar* and *Islam*; Study on Habib Rizieq’s Legal Thought,” *International Colloquium on Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* (2019).

³⁴⁷ Siti Chuzaemah, JM. Muslimin, and Hamka Hasan, “The Concept of *Nahy Munkar* and *Islam*; Study on Habib Rizieq’s Legal Thought,” *International Colloquium on Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* (2019).

³⁴⁸ Ihsan Yilmaz and Greg Barton, “Populism, Violence, and Vigilantism in Indonesia: Rizieq Shihab and His Far-Right Islamist Populism,” *European Center for Populism Studies* (2021).

³⁴⁹ Chaider S. Bamualim, “Islamic Militancy and Resentment Against Hadhramis in Post-Suharto Indonesia: A Case Study of Habib Rizieq Syihab and His Islamic Defenders Front,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31, no. 2 (2011): 267-281.

³⁵⁰ Ihsan Yilmaz and Greg Barton, “Populism, Violence, and Vigilantism in Indonesia: Rizieq Shihab and His Far-Right Islamist Populism,” *European Center for Populism Studies* (2021).

³⁵¹ Kumar Ramakrishna, *Extremist Islam: Recognition and Response in Southeast Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

³⁵² Kumar Ramakrishna, *Extremist Islam: Recognition and Response in Southeast Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

Islam and Arabic in Jakarta, which was set up via Saudi funding and served as a branch of the Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh.³⁵³ After graduation, Abdurrahman was appointed as an imam and taught religious classes in Jakarta.³⁵⁴ In 2004, Abdurrahman was arrested for arranging a bomb-making class.³⁵⁵ This time in prison marked a critical juncture: “Imprisonment was a turning point, transforming Abdurrahman from an unknown jihadist cell leader to the most sought after jihadist intellectual in the country.”³⁵⁶ Following his release in 2008, he briefly joined Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid, but was viewed as a *takfiri* by Abu Bakar Ba’asyir.³⁵⁷ Abdurrahman was re-arrested in 2010 and sentenced to nine years in prison for setting up a training camp in Aceh.³⁵⁸ In 2014, Abdurrahman reportedly pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State.³⁵⁹ Under Abdurrahman’s leadership, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah was established in 2015 as an umbrella organization for numerous pro-Islamic State organizations in Indonesia.³⁶⁰

Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT)

Abu Bakar Ba’asyir

Ba’asyir was born in East Java in August 1938.³⁶¹ In a similar fashion to Abdullah Sungkar, Ba’asyir’s family was of Yemeni/Hadramauti descent.³⁶² Ba’asyir received religious education at an early age and continued his studies at al-Irsyad Islamic University in Surakarta, graduating in 1963.³⁶³ Alongside Abdullah Sungkar, Ba’asyir created a religious seminary (*pesantren*) in Ngruki and was an active supporter of the Darul Islam movement.³⁶⁴ In 1978, Ba’asyir was arrested and remained in prison until 1982.³⁶⁵ Reports indicate that “it was in prison that Baasyir and Sungkar

³⁵³ Kumar Ramakrishna, *Extremist Islam: Recognition and Response in Southeast Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

³⁵⁴ Navhat Nuraniyah, “Aman Abdurrahman: Indonesia's Most Influential Extremist,” *Jamestown Foundation* 6, no. 12 (2015).

³⁵⁵ Sidney Jones, “The Ongoing Extremist Threat in Indonesia,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2011): 91-104.

³⁵⁶ Navhat Nuraniyah, “Aman Abdurrahman: Indonesia's Most Influential Extremist,” *Jamestown Foundation* 6, no. 12 (2015).

³⁵⁷ Sidney Jones, “The Ongoing Extremist Threat in Indonesia,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2011): 91-104.

³⁵⁸ Kumar Ramakrishna, *Extremist Islam: Recognition and Response in Southeast Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

³⁵⁹ Navhat Nuraniyah, “Aman Abdurrahman: Indonesia's Most Influential Extremist,” *Jamestown Foundation* 6, no. 12 (2015).

³⁶⁰ United Nations Security Council, “Jamaah Ansharut Daulah,” March 4, 2020, <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/jamaah-ansharut-daulah>.

³⁶¹ Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁶² Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁶³ Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁶⁴ Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁶⁵ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, “Jemaah Islamiyah,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

grew even more radical in their thinking and ambitions.”³⁶⁶ After being released, Ba’asyir traveled with Sungkar to Malaysia to avoid future arrests in Indonesia.³⁶⁷ Ba’asyir helped co-found Jemaah Islamiya while in exile.³⁶⁸ The fall of President Suharto’s regime in 1998 allowed Sungkar and Ba’asyir to return to Indonesia.³⁶⁹ However, Sungkar’s death in 1999 left Jemaah Islamiya “in the hands of Ba’asyir, whom many saw as a weak leader.”³⁷⁰ Ba’asyir reportedly served as Jemaah Islamiya’s leader until his arrest in 2002³⁷¹ due to his connections to the 2002 Bali bombings.³⁷² In 2006, Ba’asyir was released from prison and reportedly formed Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid in 2008.³⁷³ Ba’asyir was arrested again in 2010 over his connection to a militant training camp in Aceh and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.³⁷⁴ Two years later, the United States designated Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.³⁷⁵ According to the United Nations Security Council, Ba’asyir pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State.³⁷⁶

Jemaah Islamiya

Abdullah Sungkar

Abdullah Sungkar was born in 1937 to a prominent family of traders of Yemeni descent in Solo.³⁷⁷ Sungkar received early religious education from his father, a religious teacher in Solo, and later

³⁶⁶ Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007), 3.

³⁶⁷ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, “Jemaah Islamiyah,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

³⁶⁸ Mapping Militants Project. “Jemaah Islamiyah.” Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

³⁶⁹ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, “Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihad in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 41, no. 1 (2019): 1-13.

³⁷⁰ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, “Jemaah Islamiyah,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011), 3.

³⁷¹ Mapping Militants Project. “Jemaah Islamiyah.” Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

³⁷² Al Jazeera, “Indonesian Leader Behind 2002 Bali Bombings to be Freed: Lawyer,” January 18, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/1/18/indonesian-leader-behind-2002-bali-bombings-to-be-freed-lawyer>.

³⁷³ BBC, “Abu Bakar Ba’asyir: The Radical Indonesian Cleric Linked to Bali Bombings,” January 8, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-10912588#:~:text=Following%20the%20Bali%20bombings%20in,Megawati%20Sukarnoputri%2C%20Indonesia's%20former%20president>.

³⁷⁴ BBC, “Abu Bakar Ba’asyir: The Radical Indonesian Cleric Linked to Bali Bombings,” January 8, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-10912588#:~:text=Following%20the%20Bali%20bombings%20in,Megawati%20Sukarnoputri%2C%20Indonesia's%20former%20president>.

³⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

³⁷⁶ United Nations Security Council, “Abu Bakar Ba’asyir,” April 6, 2021, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abu-bakar-ba%27asyir.

³⁷⁷ International Crisis Group, “Indonesia Backgrounder: How the *Jemaah Islamiyah* Terrorist Network Operations,” December 11, 2002.

graduated from the Muhamadiyah Islamic University of Surakarta in 1957.³⁷⁸ After graduating, Sungkar reportedly worked as a religious teacher and preacher and also became increasingly active in politics.³⁷⁹ Sungkar was briefly detained in 1977 and was arrested again in 1978 on subversion charges for his alleged involvement in Darul Islam.³⁸⁰ Sungkar was released from prison in 1982 and fled to Malaysia with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir in 1985.³⁸¹ In Malaysia, Sungkar and Ba'asyir set up a religious school called Pondok Pesantren Lukmantul Hakiem.³⁸² This time in Malaysia witnessed the growth of their militant activities: "In exile, they expanded their network and began sending men to wage guerrilla war against the Soviet army in Afghanistan... Those who traveled to the training camps of Pakistan and the battlefields of Afghanistan gained important military skills, including instruction on explosives, mines, maps, and infantry tactics. The men were also exposed to new ideologies through their contact with Abdullah Azzam, the man most responsible for catalyzing the foreign fighter migration to Afghanistan."³⁸³ During the 1990s, Sungkar and Ba'asyir co-founded Jemaah Islamiyah, with Sungkar serving as the organization's top leader.³⁸⁴ The fall of President Suharto's regime in 1998 allowed Sungkar to return to Indonesia.³⁸⁵ Shortly after this return, however, Sungkar died of natural causes in 1999.³⁸⁶

Abu Bakar Ba'asyir

Abu Bakar Ba'asyir succeeded Abdullah Sungkar as leader of Jemaah Islamiyah.³⁸⁷ Ba'asyir was born in East Java in August 1938.³⁸⁸ In a similar fashion to Abdullah Sungkar, Ba'asyir's family was of Yemeni/Hadramauti descent.³⁸⁹ Ba'asyir received religious education at an early age and

³⁷⁸ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁷⁹ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁸⁰ International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the *Jemaah Islamiyah* Terrorist Network Operations," December 11, 2002.

³⁸¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

³⁸² Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁸³ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011), 2-3.

³⁸⁴ The International Crisis Groups dates Jemaah Islamiyah's formation to 1995. International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the *Jemaah Islamiyah* Terrorist Network Operations," December 11, 2002.

³⁸⁵ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, "Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihad in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 41, no. 1 (2019): 1-13.

³⁸⁶ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

³⁸⁷ Scott Atran, "The Emir: An Interview with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Alleged Leader of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah Organization," December 16, 2005; David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

³⁸⁸ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁸⁹ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

continued his studies at al-Irsyad Islamic University in Surakarta, graduating in 1963.³⁹⁰ Alongside Abdullah Sungkar, Ba'asyir created a religious seminary (*pesantren*) in Ngruki and was an active supporter of the Darul Islam movement.³⁹¹ In 1978, Ba'asyir was arrested and remained in prison until 1982.³⁹² Reports indicate that “it was in prison that Baasyir and Sungkar grew even more radical in their thinking and ambitions.”³⁹³ After being released, Ba'asyir traveled with Sungkar to Malaysia to avoid future arrests in Indonesia.³⁹⁴ Ba'asyir helped co-found Jemaah Islamiya while in exile.³⁹⁵ The fall of President Suharto's regime in 1998 allowed Sungkar and Ba'asyir to return to Indonesia.³⁹⁶ However, Sungkar's death in 1999 left Jemaah Islamiya “in the hands of Ba'asyir, whom many saw as a weak leader.”³⁹⁷ Ba'asyir reportedly served as Jemaah Islamiya's leader until his arrest in 2002³⁹⁸ due to his connections to the 2002 Bali bombings.³⁹⁹ The United States designated Jemaah Islamiya as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2002.⁴⁰⁰

Abu Rusydan

Abu Rusydan, also known as Thoriquddin, succeeded Abu Bakar Ba'asyir as leader of Jemaah Islamiya. Abu Rusydan was born in 1960 in Central Java, Indonesia.⁴⁰¹ He was reportedly inducted into the Darul Islam organization at 15 years of age⁴⁰² and was university-educated.⁴⁰³ Abu Rusydan is also thought to have fought in Afghanistan.⁴⁰⁴ According to the United Nations Security Council, Abu Rusydan traveled to Afghanistan for paramilitary training in 1986 and stayed until 1989.⁴⁰⁵ As stated by the United Nations Security Council, Abu Rusydan became emir

³⁹⁰ Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁹¹ Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007).

³⁹² David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, “Jemaah Islamiyah,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

³⁹³ Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” No. 139 (October 2007), 3.

³⁹⁴ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, “Jemaah Islamiyah,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

³⁹⁵ Mapping Militants Project. “Jemaah Islamiyah.” Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

³⁹⁶ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, “Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihad in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 41, no. 1 (2019): 1-13.

³⁹⁷ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, “Jemaah Islamiyah,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011), 3.

³⁹⁸ Mapping Militants Project. “Jemaah Islamiyah.” Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

³⁹⁹ Al Jazeera, “Indonesian Leader Behind 2002 Bali Bombings to be Freed: Lawyer,” January 18, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/1/18/indonesian-leader-behind-2002-bali-bombings-to-be-freed-lawyer>.

⁴⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁴⁰¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Designates Jemaah Islamiyah's Emir, Top Bomb Maker and Military Comma,” May 12, 2005, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js2441>.

⁴⁰² Julie Chernov Hwang and Kirsten E. Schulze, “Why They Join: Pathways into Indonesia Jihadist Organizations,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 6 (2018): 911-932.

⁴⁰³ Sian Powell, “New JI Terror Boss Tagged as ‘Very Dangerous,’” *The Australian* (2003).

⁴⁰⁴ Julie Chernov Hwang and Kirsten E. Schulze, “Why They Join: Pathways into Indonesia Jihadist Organizations,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 6 (2018): 911-932.

⁴⁰⁵ United Nations Security Council, “Abu Rusdan,” February 2, 2023, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/faq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abu-rusdan.

of Jemaah Islamiya after Ba'asyir's 2002 arrest.⁴⁰⁶ In 2003, he was arrested in Indonesia on charges of harboring one of the masterminds of the 2002 Bali bombings and sentenced in February 2004 to three and a half years in prison.⁴⁰⁷ Muhammad Naim reportedly took over the position of "caretaker" emir in 2004.⁴⁰⁸

Zarkasih

Zarkasih, also known as Muhammad Naim, succeeded Abu Rusdyan as Jemaah Islamiya's leader.⁴⁰⁹ Naim was reportedly born in December 1962.⁴¹⁰ While little information is available about his life, Naim is believed to have joined the mujahideen in Afghanistan.⁴¹¹ Naim reportedly served as Jemaah Islamiya's "caretaker" emir until his arrest in Indonesia in 2007.⁴¹²

Para Wijayanto

Para Wijayanto reportedly succeeded Zarkasih as leader of Jemaah Islamiya.⁴¹³ Wijayanto was born in August 1964 and is the son of an Indonesian Air Force officer.⁴¹⁴ Wijayanto studied at the Faculty of Technology at Diponegoro University in Central Java and subsequently worked in the civil engineering division of the PT Pura Group.⁴¹⁵ Sources highlight that Wijayanto may have studied in Malaysia as well as traveled to Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁴¹⁶ In 2019, Indonesian authorities arrested Wijayanto in Bekasi, Indonesia.⁴¹⁷

⁴⁰⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Abu Rusdan," February 2, 2023, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abu-rusdan.

⁴⁰⁷ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁴⁰⁸ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁴⁰⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁴¹⁰ Detik News, "Sidang Perdana Tersangka Teroris Zarkasih Digelar," <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-867868/sidang-perdana-tersangka-teroris-zarkasih-digelar>.

⁴¹¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7140846.stm>.

⁴¹² Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁴¹³ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁴¹⁴ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, "Indonesian Website Provides Info on Jemaah Islamiyah's Para Wijayanto," September 3, 2009.

⁴¹⁵ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, "Indonesian Website Provides Info on Jemaah Islamiyah's Para Wijayanto," September 3, 2009.

⁴¹⁶ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, "Indonesian Website Provides Info on Jemaah Islamiyah's Para Wijayanto," September 3, 2009.

⁴¹⁷ ABC News, "Indonesia Arrests Alleged Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Leader Para Wijayanto," July 1, 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-02/indonesian-police-arrest-jemaah-islamiyah-network-leader/11269286>.

Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia

Zainon Ismail

Zainon Ismail was the founding leader of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia upon the organization's formation in October 1995.⁴¹⁸ Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia emerged from Halaqa Pakinda and had links to the Malaysian Islamist party Parti Islam Se-Malaysia.⁴¹⁹ The organization was established to "seek religious purity among Malay-Muslims" and implement "*syariah* laws in Malaysia and subsequently to establish an Islamic state."⁴²⁰ Ismail is noted to be a Malaysian from the state of Kedah who fought against the USSR in Afghanistan.⁴²¹ Ismail was reportedly replaced as leader of the group by Nik Adli Abdul Aziz in 1999 following internal organizational deliberations.⁴²²

Nik Adli Abdul Aziz

Nik Adli Abdul Aziz reportedly assumed control of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia in 1999.⁴²³ Abdul Aziz was born in the late 1960s⁴²⁴ and was the son of Nik Aziz Nik Mat, the spiritual leader of Parti Islam Se-Malaysia.⁴²⁵ Abdul Aziz received madrasa education in Pakistan and also fought against the USSR in Afghanistan.⁴²⁶ In terms of employment, he was noted to be "a religious

⁴¹⁸ Amira Jadoon, Nakissa Jahanbani, Elina Noor, Marley Carroll, and William Frangia, "Risks, Recruits, and Plots: Understanding and Mitigating the Influence of the Islamic State in Malaysia," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2022).

⁴¹⁹ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, "Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

⁴²⁰ Amira Jadoon, Nakissa Jahanbani, Elina Noor, Marley Carroll, and William Frangia, "Risks, Recruits, and Plots: Understanding and Mitigating the Influence of the Islamic State in Malaysia," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2022), 10.

⁴²¹ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009).

⁴²² Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, "Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

⁴²³ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, "Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

⁴²⁴ Los Angeles Times, "Son of Opposition Leader is Arrested in Sweep," August 5, 2001, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-aug-05-mn-30840-story.html>.

⁴²⁵ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, "Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

⁴²⁶ Therese Lee, "Malaysia and the International Security Act: The Insecurity of Human Rights After September 11," *Singapore Journal of Legal Studies* (2002): 56-72.

teacher.”⁴²⁷ In 2001, Malaysian authorities arrested Abdul Aziz and other suspected militants on the basis of the Internal Security Act that allowed for detention without trial.⁴²⁸

Zulkifli Abdhir

Zulkifli Abdhir was born in January 1996 in Muar, Johor, Malaysia.⁴²⁹ Zulkifli completed his secondary education in 1983 and subsequently secured a Malaysian government scholarship to study engineering in the United States.⁴³⁰ Zulkifli gained expertise in explosives while fighting in Afghanistan for three years before returning to Malaysia.⁴³¹ In 2007, the United States designated Zulkifli as a Specifically Designated Global Terrorist.⁴³² Zulkifli reportedly succeeded Nik Adli Abdul Aziz as the leader of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia following the latter’s arrest.⁴³³ In 2015, Zulkifli was killed during an assault by the Special Action Forces in the Philippines.⁴³⁴

Mujahidin Indonesia Timur

Santoso

Santoso, Abu Wardah, was born in August 1976⁴³⁵ in central Sulawesi.⁴³⁶ While little is known about Santoso’s childhood, reports indicate that he only completed junior high school.⁴³⁷ Santoso is also noted to have received military training in Afghanistan and styled himself as the Indonesian Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi.⁴³⁸ In the late 1990s, Santoso was reportedly detained by police following

⁴²⁷ Los Angeles Times, “Son of Opposition Leader is Arrested in Sweep,” August 5, 2001, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-aug-05-mn-30840-story.html>.

⁴²⁸ Los Angeles Times, “Son of Opposition Leader is Arrested in Sweep,” August 5, 2001, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-aug-05-mn-30840-story.html>.

⁴²⁹ Zachary Abuza, “Zulkifli bin Hir: JI’s U.S.-Trained Engineer,” *Jamestown Monitor*, April 5, 2007.

⁴³⁰ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009). Within this volume, see Ronan Gunaratna, “The Current and Emerging Extremist Threat in Malaysia,” (2009): 12-29.

⁴³¹ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009).

⁴³² U.S. Department of Justice, “Specially Designated Global Terrorist and His Brother Indicted for Providing Material Support to Terrorists,” August 3, 2007, https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2007/August/07_nsd_578.html.

⁴³³ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009).

⁴³⁴ Tim Hume, “FBI Confirms ‘Most Wanted’ Terror Suspect Marwan Killed after Philippines Raid,” *CNN*, April 3, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/04/03/world/philippines-marwan-confirmed-dead/index.html>.

⁴³⁵ Herdi Sahrasad dan Al Chaidar, “Terorisme, Akhir Sejarah Santoso Dan Masa Depan Teror Di Indonesia,” *Jurnal Review Politik* 6, no. 2 (2016).

⁴³⁶ Robi Sugara, “Santoso: The Terrorist Leader from Nowhere,” *Counter Terrorist Rends and Analyses* 6, no. 10 (2014): 23-26.

⁴³⁷ Robi Sugara, “Santoso: The Terrorist Leader from Nowhere,” *Counter Terrorist Rends and Analyses* 6, no. 10 (2014): 23-26.

⁴³⁸ Robi Sugara, “Santoso: The Terrorist Leader from Nowhere,” *Counter Terrorist Rends and Analyses* 6, no. 10 (2014): 23-26.

a robbery.⁴³⁹ Santoso also engaged in rebel activity while being part of Jemaah Islamiyah and Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid.⁴⁴⁰ Mujahidin Indonesia Timur was created under Santoso's command in 2012.⁴⁴¹ Two years later, Santoso became the first Indonesian leader to publicly pledge fealty to the Islamic State in 2014.⁴⁴² In July 2016, Indonesian authorities killed Santoso during a jungle gun battle.⁴⁴³

Ali Kalora

Ali Kalora succeeded Santoso as leader of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur.⁴⁴⁴ While little information is available regarding his background, Kalora was born in May 1981 in the Central Sulawesi province of Indonesia.⁴⁴⁵ After assuming command of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur in 2016, Ali Kalora evaded capture for years. In 2021, however, he was killed during a jungle shootout by Indonesian security forces.⁴⁴⁶ According to Central Sulawesi's regional military chief Brig. Gen. Farid Makruf, "Ali Kalora was the most wanted terrorist and leader of MIT."⁴⁴⁷

⁴³⁹ Herdi Sahrasad dan Al Chaidar, "Terorisme, Akhir Sejarah Santoso Dan Masa Depan Teror Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Review Politik* 6, no. 2 (2016).

⁴⁴⁰ Robi Sugara, "Santoso: The Terrorist Leader from Nowhere," *Counter Terrorist Rends and Analyses* 6, no. 10 (2014): 23-26.

⁴⁴¹ Iris Malone, "Unmasking Militants: Organizational Trends in Armed Groups, 1970–2012," *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2022): sqac050.

⁴⁴² BBC, "Santoso: Indonesia Police 'Kill Most Wanted Militant,'" July 19, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36833933>.

⁴⁴³ BBC, "Santoso: Indonesia Police 'Kill Most Wanted Militant,'" July 19, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36833933>.

⁴⁴⁴ Al Jazeera, "Indonesia Police Kill ISIL-Linked Leader in Sulawesi Shoot-Out," September 19, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/19/indonesia-police-kill-is-linked-leader-in-sulawesi-shootout>.

⁴⁴⁵ Ahmad Zuhad, "Profil Ali Kalora, Pimpinan Kelompok Teroris MIT yang Tewas usai Perburuan Bertahun-Tahun," *Kompas TV*, September 19, 2021, kompas.tv/nasional/213070/profil-ali-kalora-pimpinan-kelompok-teroris-mit-yang-tewas-usai-perburuan-bertahun-tahun.

⁴⁴⁶ NPR, "Security Forces Kill Indonesia's Most Wanted Militant in a Jungle Shootout," September 18, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/18/1038563859/indonesias-most-wanted-militant-killed-islamic-state>.

⁴⁴⁷ NPR, "Security Forces Kill Indonesia's Most Wanted Militant in a Jungle Shootout," September 18, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/18/1038563859/indonesias-most-wanted-militant-killed-islamic-state>.

Iran

Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development

Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim

Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim was born in 1939 in Najaf, Iraq.⁴⁴⁸ Al-Hakim began his religious education at an early age and later taught various topics, such as *tafsir*.⁴⁴⁹ He became a key opposition figure in the 1970s⁴⁵⁰ and was first arrested by Iraqi authorities in 1972.⁴⁵¹ He was later arrested in 1977 and released in 1978 during a general amnesty.⁴⁵² Al-Hakim would leave Iraq in 1980, traveling to the newly formed Islamic Republic of Iran.⁴⁵³ During the Iran-Iraq War, al-Hakim reportedly founded the Badr Organization in 1983 as the military branch of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) with the support of Iranian intelligence.⁴⁵⁴ As Guido Steinberg states: “The unit was founded as the Badr Corps...the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). It was an organization made up of Iraqi exiles who fled to Iran when the regime of Saddam Hussein intensified its persecution of Shiites in 1979. The leader of the Corps was the cleric Muhmmad Baqir al-Hakim whose family still dominates the Supreme Council today.”⁴⁵⁵ In 2003, al-Hakim returned to Iraq and was killed by non-state actors in a car bombing outside the Imam Ali Mosque.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁴⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁴⁴⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁴⁵⁰ Muhammad Baqir al- Hakim. *Oxford Reference*. Retrieved 12 July. 2024,

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095915975>.

⁴⁵¹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁴⁵² Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁴⁵³ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁴⁵⁴ Hogr Tarkhani, “The Thin Line Between Militia and Terror Groups: The Case of Iraq’s Badr Organization,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (2024): 1-27.

⁴⁵⁵ Guido Steinberg, “The Badr Organization: Iran’s Most Important Instrument in Iraq,” *SWP Comments* 26 (2017).

⁴⁵⁶ CBS News, “Iraq Mosque Blast Kills 85,” August 29, 2003, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iraq-mosque-blast-kills-85/>.

Hadi al-Amiri

Hadi al-Amiri was born in 1954 in the Diyala province of Iraq.⁴⁵⁷ He reportedly joined the Shi'i Islamic Movement in Iraq at an early age and was among the followers of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr.⁴⁵⁸ Al-Amiri received a college education at Baghdad University, graduating with a degree in the mid-1970s.⁴⁵⁹ He then worked in the Ministry of Education as a research assistant.⁴⁶⁰ Al-Amiri left this job and reportedly spent two years among the ranks of Kurdish forces in northern Iraq before traveling to Syria and then Iran following the execution of al-Sadr.⁴⁶¹ Al-Amiri participated in the Iran-Iraq War on the side of Iran during the 1980s and became the military commander of the Badr Organization in the 1990s.⁴⁶² During the 1990s, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim also tasked al-Amiri with overseeing resistance operations within Iraq.⁴⁶³ Al-Amiri returned to Iraq in 2003 and later became the leader of the Badr Organization. As Tarkhani states: "Under Amiri's leadership, the Badr Organization carried out brutal massacres against Iraqi Sunnis in several cities, including Samarra, Diyala, Hawija, Al-Qaim, and Fallujah."⁴⁶⁴ Al-Amiri has also held various posts in the Iraqi government, including Minister of Transportation and a member of the Iraqi parliament.⁴⁶⁵

Jundallah

Abdolmalek Rigi

While there are disputes in reporting surrounding his date of birth, Abdolmalek Rigi was reportedly 20 years of age when he launched Jundallah in 2003.⁴⁶⁶ A member of the Baluch tribe, Rigi studied

⁴⁵⁷ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁴⁵⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁴⁵⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁴⁶⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁴⁶¹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁴⁶² Guido Steinberg, "The Badr Organization: Iran's Most Important Instrument in Iraq," *SWP Comments* 26 (2017).

⁴⁶³ Al Khanadeq, "رئيس تحالف الفتح في العراق هادي العامري," <https://alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=38>.

⁴⁶⁴ Hogr Tarkhani, "The Thin Line Between Militia and Terror Groups: The Case of Iraq's Badr Organization," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (2024): 1-27.

⁴⁶⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/342/>.

⁴⁶⁶ Fatemeh Shayan, "A Critical Perspective on Terrorism: Case Study of Jundallah and Jeish ul-Adl in Iran," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 13, no. 3 (2020): 441-463.

in a Pakistani madrasa and came into contact with various Islamist militants.⁴⁶⁷ Rigi also gained experience in armed combat and terrorism by participating in Mola Baksh Derakhshan's Lashkar Rasool'ulallah.⁴⁶⁸ Rigi reportedly served time in prison for participating in a knife fight.⁴⁶⁹ Rigi also reportedly traveled to Afghanistan, but the Afghan Taliban reportedly refused to deal with him over concerns that he was linked with U.S. intelligence.⁴⁷⁰ In 2009, Rigi met with al-Qaida leaders in the Turbat district of Pakistani Baluchistan, receiving an agreement for al-Qaida support.⁴⁷¹ In 2010, Iranian authorities arrested Rigi and his deputy, Abu Hamza.⁴⁷² He was reportedly arrested while on a flight from Dubai to Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁷³ Rigi was killed during a highly publicized execution.⁴⁷⁴ The United States designated Jundallah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in November 2010.⁴⁷⁵

Muhammad Dhahrir Baluch

Muhammad Dhahrir Baluch reportedly took control of Jundallah following Rigi's arrest and execution.⁴⁷⁶ However, as Cappuccino writes, there is "very little" information about Baluch.⁴⁷⁷ Baluch's reign was short-lived, with Jundallah becoming defunct in 2012.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁶⁷ Sonia Ghaffari, "Baluchistan's Rising Militancy," *Middle East Report* 50 (2009).

⁴⁶⁸ Fatemeh Shayan, "A Critical Perspective on Terrorism: Case Study of Jundallah and Jeish ul-Adl in Iran," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 13, no. 3 (2020): 441-463.

⁴⁶⁹ BBC Monitoring Middle East, "Iran Website Gives Background on 'Terrorist' Jondollah Group," December 22, 2008.

⁴⁷⁰ Zia Ur Rehman, "The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre* (May 2014).

⁴⁷¹ Zia Ur Rehman, "The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre* (May 2014).

⁴⁷² Zia Ur Rehman, "The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre* (May 2014).

⁴⁷³ BBC, "Iran Hangs Sunni Militant Leader Abdolmalek Rigi," June 20, 2010, <https://www.bbc.com/news/10359415>.

⁴⁷⁴ Nicholas Cappuccino, "Baluch Insurgents in Iran," *The Iran Primer*, April 27, 2017.

⁴⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁴⁷⁶ Nicholas Cappuccino, "Baluch Insurgents in Iran," *The Iran Primer*, April 27, 2017.

⁴⁷⁷ Nicholas Cappuccino, "Baluch Insurgents in Iran," *The Iran Primer*, April 27, 2017.

⁴⁷⁸ Matthew G. Elliott, *Counterinsurgency in Sistan-Baluchistan: Evaluating Iranian Effectiveness in Countering Ethnic Insurgency*, Naval Postgraduate School (2020).

Iraq

Ansar al-Islam

Najmuddin Faraj Ahmad

Najmuddin Faraj Ahmad, more popularly known as Mullah Krekar, was the founding leader of Ansar al-Islam in Iraq.⁴⁷⁹ Krekar was born in 1956 in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, and received his early education in Sulaymaniyah before completing his secondary education in Erbil.⁴⁸⁰ He later studied in the Arabic Language Department at the University of Salah al-Din and earned his master's degree in Islamic jurisprudence and Hadith studies in Pakistan.⁴⁸¹ Krekar also studied in Pakistan under Abdullah Azzam and taught at the Islamic Studies University in Karachi.⁴⁸² In the early 1970s, he was a member of the Kurdistan Students Union, which was affiliated with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).⁴⁸³ Between 1974 and 1975, Krekar enrolled in a KDP military training camp and briefly joined the Peshmerga forces.⁴⁸⁴ In the early 1980s, Krekar fled to Iran and worked as an Imam after failing to complete his studies in sociology at the University of Tehran.⁴⁸⁵ In 1985, Krekar moved to Pakistan.⁴⁸⁶ Following the Halabja attacks, Krekar sought donations in Pakistan to aid survivors of the attacks and reportedly met with Osama bin Laden.⁴⁸⁷ In 1991, Krekar and his family left Iraq, receiving refugee status in Norway.⁴⁸⁸ Krekar is also noted to have led the Reformist Group, which was a splinter of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan,⁴⁸⁹ and fought

⁴⁷⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Islam." Last modified December 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/325/>.

⁴⁸⁰ European Observatory to Combat Radicalization, "من هو الملا كركار" <https://eocr.eu/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%9F/>.

⁴⁸¹ European Observatory to Combat Radicalization, "من هو الملا كركار" <https://eocr.eu/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%9F/>.

⁴⁸² Nathanael Johnson, "Norway's Dilemma: How to Deal With Mullah Krekar," *Frontline*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/map/krekar.html>.

⁴⁸³ European Observatory to Combat Radicalization, "من هو الملا كركار" <https://eocr.eu/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%9F/>.

⁴⁸⁴ European Observatory to Combat Radicalization, "من هو الملا كركار" <https://eocr.eu/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%9F/>.

⁴⁸⁵ Ashraf al-Khadra, "الملا كريكار يروي أمام القضاء النرويجي علاقته بالقاعدة والزندان وعمر عبدالرحمن," <https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2005/06/09/13803>.

⁴⁸⁶ Ashraf al-Khadra, "الملا كريكار يروي أمام القضاء النرويجي علاقته بالقاعدة والزندان وعمر عبدالرحمن," <https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2005/06/09/13803>.

⁴⁸⁷ Nathanael Johnson, "Norway's Dilemma: How to Deal With Mullah Krekar," *Frontline*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/map/krekar.html>.

⁴⁸⁸ Nathanael Johnson, "Norway's Dilemma: How to Deal With Mullah Krekar," *Frontline*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/map/krekar.html>.

⁴⁸⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Islam." Last modified December 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/325/>.

in Afghanistan.⁴⁹⁰ In 2001, he returned to Iraq and became the leader of Ansar al-Islam: “Krekar clearly wanted to distance the new organization from the violent excesses associated with the previous Jund al-Islam, and stressed in media interviews and in his autobiography that AI was a quite different organisation, not simply a continuation of Jund al-Islam with some cosmetic changes.”⁴⁹¹ In September 2002, Krekar was arrested in Iran and deported to the Netherlands.⁴⁹² However, he was released in January 2003 after Dutch attorneys could not find proof of any crimes and Jordan could not provide enough evidence for their extradition request.⁴⁹³ Norwegian police would arrest Krekar in March 2003 and again in January 2004.⁴⁹⁴ Abu Abdallah al-Shafi’i likely replaced Krekar as the leader of Ansar al-Islam in early 2003.⁴⁹⁵

Abu Abdallah al-Shafi’i

Abu Abdallah al-Shafi’i became the second leader of Ansar al-Islam in 2003.⁴⁹⁶ Al-Shafi’i is from the Erbil Governorate of Iraq⁴⁹⁷ and was reportedly in his thirties when he took command of Ansar al-Islam.⁴⁹⁸ Al-Shafi’i was also reportedly a member of a light infantry unit that Saddam Hussein used to combat Kurdish forces before leaving Iraq to join the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in 1988.⁴⁹⁹ He returned to Iraq in the 1990s and joined the Kurdistan Democratic Party before participating in the Kurdish Islamic Movement.⁵⁰⁰ Al-Shafi’i was the leader of Jund al-Islam before becoming second in command of Ansar al-Islam following its formation in 2001.⁵⁰¹ Al-Shafi’i took command of Ansar al-Islam in 2003; he was later captured by Iraqi security forces in

⁴⁹⁰ David Romano, “Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq,” *Jamestown Foundation* (2007).

⁴⁹¹ Brynjar Lia, “A Kurdish al-Qaida? Making Sense of the Ansar al-Islam Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan in the Early 2000s,” *Religions* 13, no. 3 (2022): 203.

⁴⁹² Brynjar Lia, “A Kurdish al-Qaida? Making Sense of the Ansar al-Islam Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan in the Early 2000s,” *Religions* 13, no. 3 (2022): 203.

⁴⁹³ Nathanael Johnson, “Norway’s Dilemma: How to Deal With Mullah Krekar,” *Frontline*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/map/krekar.html>.

⁴⁹⁴ Nathanael Johnson, “Norway’s Dilemma: How to Deal With Mullah Krekar,” *Frontline*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/map/krekar.html>.

⁴⁹⁵ Brynjar Lia, “A Kurdish al-Qaida? Making Sense of the Ansar al-Islam Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan in the Early 2000s,” *Religions* 13, no. 3 (2022): 203.

⁴⁹⁶ Brynjar Lia, “A Kurdish al-Qaida? Making Sense of the Ansar al-Islam Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan in the Early 2000s,” *Religions* 13, no. 3 (2022): 203.

⁴⁹⁷ Shirzad Sheikhani, “زعيم «أنصار الإسلام» ينتهي في قبضة الجيش الأميركي” <https://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?issueno=11700&article=568211>.

⁴⁹⁸ Buratha News Agency, “«أنصار الإسلام» الكردية.. من التأسيس حتى داعش” <https://burathanews.com/arabic/antipathy/281312>.

⁴⁹⁹ Shirzad Sheikhani, “زعيم «أنصار الإسلام» ينتهي في قبضة الجيش الأميركي” <https://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?issueno=11700&article=568211>.

⁵⁰⁰ Shirzad Sheikhani, “زعيم «أنصار الإسلام» ينتهي في قبضة الجيش الأميركي” <https://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?issueno=11700&article=568211>.

⁵⁰¹ Brynjar Lia, “A Kurdish al-Qaida? Making Sense of the Ansar al-Islam Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan in the Early 2000s,” *Religions* 13, no. 3 (2022): 203.

May 2010.⁵⁰² Ansar al-Islam announced al-Shafi'i's successor in December 2011.⁵⁰³ The United States had previously designated Ansar al-Islam as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2004.⁵⁰⁴

Abu Hashim al-Ibrahim

Abu Hashim al-Ibrahim became the third leader of Ansar al-Islam in 2011.⁵⁰⁵ Al-Ibrahim is from Baghdad and was born to a Shi'a family, though he later converted.⁵⁰⁶ Al-Tamimi writes that al-Ibrahim "has great Shari'i knowledge. He studied Shari'i knowledge at the hands of a number of sheikhs of Baghdad, and studied hadith at the hands of the distinguished scholar Sabhi al-Samarra'i."⁵⁰⁷ Al-Ibrahim joined Ansar al-Islam in 2006 and rose through the organization's ranks, eventually taking over the Sharia Committee.⁵⁰⁸ Al-Ibrahim was announced as Ansar al-Islam's leader on December 5, 2011.⁵⁰⁹ Al-Ibrahim was arrested in 2014,⁵¹⁰ the year that significant numbers of the organization's leaders and members in Iraq merged with the Islamic State.⁵¹¹

Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq

Qais al-Khazali

Qais al-Khazali founded Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) in 2006.⁵¹² Al-Khazali was born in 1974 in Iraq.⁵¹³ He completed his primary and secondary education in Baghdad and studied geology in the

⁵⁰² Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Islam." Last modified December 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/325/>.

⁵⁰³ Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Islam." Last modified December 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/325/>.

⁵⁰⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁵⁰⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Islam." Last modified December 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/325/>.

⁵⁰⁶ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Complete History of Jamaat Ansar al-Islam – Translation," *Middle East Forum*, December 15, 2015, <https://www.meforum.org/jamaat-ansar-alislam>.

⁵⁰⁷ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Complete History of Jamaat Ansar al-Islam – Translation," *Middle East Forum*, December 15, 2015, <https://www.meforum.org/jamaat-ansar-alislam>.

⁵⁰⁸ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Complete History of Jamaat Ansar al-Islam – Translation," *Middle East Forum*, December 15, 2015, <https://www.meforum.org/jamaat-ansar-alislam>.

⁵⁰⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Islam." Last modified December 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/325/>.

⁵¹⁰ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Complete History of Jamaat Ansar al-Islam – Translation," *Middle East Forum*, December 15, 2015, <https://www.meforum.org/jamaat-ansar-alislam>.

⁵¹¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Islam." Last modified December 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/325/>.

⁵¹² Mapping Militants Project. "Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq." Last modified June 1, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/336/>.

⁵¹³ Salih Humayd, "من هو قيس الخزعلي عراب 'البدر الشيعي' - الإيراني," <https://www.alarabiya.net/iran/2017/12/11/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%9F>.

College of Sciences in the Iraqi capital.⁵¹⁴ In the mid-1990s, al-Khazali grew more interested in religious pursuits and traveled to Najaf to study in the city's Hawza.⁵¹⁵ In Najaf, al-Khazali reportedly became a devout student of Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr until the latter's execution in 1999.⁵¹⁶ Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq, al-Khazali became involved in various rebel activities alongside figures such as Akram al-Kabi.⁵¹⁷ After 2003, al-Khazali also became an aide to Muqtada al-Sadr and was a prominent commander in the al-Mahdi Army.⁵¹⁸ However, in 2006, al-Khazali broke with the al-Mahdi Army and formed AAH.⁵¹⁹ A key reason for the split was reportedly al-Khazali's disagreement with a 2004 ceasefire and lack of direct confrontation with coalition forces in subsequent months.⁵²⁰ Following a major attack on the Iraqi-American Provincial Joint Coordination Center in 2007,⁵²¹ al-Khazali was arrested by British forces.⁵²² Al-Khazali was detained at the U.S. Camp Cropper⁵²³ but reportedly retained control of AAH during his time in detention.⁵²⁴ Al-Khazali was released in 2010 as part of a prisoner exchange.⁵²⁵ In 2020,

⁵¹⁴ Salih Humayd, "من هو قيس الخزعلي عراب البدر الشيعي - الإيراني",

<https://www.alarabiya.net/iran/2017/12/11/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%9F>.

⁵¹⁵ <https://www.alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=69>.

⁵¹⁶ Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Qayis Al-Khazali Papers," *American Enterprise Institute*, August 30, 2018, <https://www.aei.org/the-qayis-al-khazali-papers/>.

⁵¹⁷ Salih Humayd, "من هو قيس الخزعلي عراب البدر الشيعي - الإيراني",

<https://www.alarabiya.net/iran/2017/12/11/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%9F>.

⁵¹⁸ Mapping Militants Project. "Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq." Last modified June 1, 2025.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/336/>.

⁵¹⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq." Last modified June 1, 2025.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/336/>.

⁵²⁰ Rafid Jaboor, "Qais al-Khazali—The PMU Militia Leader Challenging the U.S. in Iraq," *Jamestown Foundation*, 2020,

<https://jamestown.org/qais-al-khazali-the-pmu-militia-leader-challenging-the-u-s-in-iraq/>.

⁵²¹ <https://ctc westpoint.edu/iranian-resources-shia-militant-cohesion-insights-khazali-papers/>.

⁵²² Mapping Militants Project. "Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq." Last modified June 1, 2025.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/336/>.

⁵²³ Matthew Hilburn, "One-time US Prisoner Now Key in Battling IS," *VOA News*, March 15, 2015,

<https://www.voanews.com/a/qais-khazali-onetime-us-prisoner-now-key-in-battling-islamic-state/2679431.html>.

⁵²⁴ Rafid Jaboor, "Qais al-Khazali—The PMU Militia Leader Challenging the U.S. in Iraq," *Jamestown Foundation*, 2020,

<https://jamestown.org/qais-al-khazali-the-pmu-militia-leader-challenging-the-u-s-in-iraq/>.

⁵²⁵ Rafid Jaboor, "Qais al-Khazali—The PMU Militia Leader Challenging the U.S. in Iraq," *Jamestown Foundation*, 2020,

<https://jamestown.org/qais-al-khazali-the-pmu-militia-leader-challenging-the-u-s-in-iraq/>.

the United States designated AAH as a Foreign Terrorist Organization⁵²⁶ and al-Khazali as a Special Designated Global Terrorist.⁵²⁷

Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development

Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim

Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim was born in 1939 in Najaf, Iraq.⁵²⁸ Al-Hakim began his religious education at an early age and later taught various topics, such as *tafsir*.⁵²⁹ He became a key opposition figure in the 1970s⁵³⁰ and was first arrested by Iraqi authorities in 1972.⁵³¹ He was later arrested in 1977 and released in 1978 during a general amnesty.⁵³² Al-Hakim would leave Iraq in 1980, traveling to the newly formed Islamic Republic of Iran.⁵³³ During the Iran-Iraq War, al-Hakim reportedly founded the Badr Organization in 1983 as the military branch of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) with the support of Iranian intelligence.⁵³⁴ As Guido Steinberg states: “The unit was founded as the Badr Corps...the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). It was an organization made up of Iraqi exiles who fled to Iran when the regime of Saddam Hussein intensified its persecution of Shiites in 1979. The leader of the Corps was the cleric Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim whose family still dominates the Supreme Council today.”⁵³⁵ In 2003, al-Hakim returned to Iraq and was killed by non-state actors in a car bombing outside the Imam Ali Mosque.⁵³⁶

⁵²⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁵²⁷ U.S. Department of State “State Department Terrorist Designations of Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq and Its Leaders, Qays and Laith al-Khazali,” January 3, 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-asaib-ahl-al-haq-and-its-leaders-qays-and-laith-al-khazali/>.

⁵²⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁵²⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁵³⁰ Muhammad Baqir al- Hakim. *Oxford Reference*. Retrieved 12 July. 2024, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095915975>.

⁵³¹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁵³² Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁵³³ Al Jazeera Arabic, “محمد باقر الحكيم” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/4/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85>.

⁵³⁴ Hogr Tarkhani, “The Thin Line Between Militia and Terror Groups: The Case of Iraq’s Badr Organization,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (2024): 1-27.

⁵³⁵ Guido Steinberg, “The Badr Organization: Iran’s Most Important Instrument in Iraq,” *SWP Comments* 26 (2017).

⁵³⁶ CBS News, “Iraq Mosque Blast Kills 85,” August 29, 2003, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iraq-mosque-blast-kills-85/>.

Hadi al-Amiri

Hadi al-Amiri was born in 1954 in the Diyala province of Iraq.⁵³⁷ He reportedly joined the Shi'i Islamic Movement in Iraq at an early age and was among the followers of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr.⁵³⁸ Al-Amiri received a college education at Baghdad University, graduating with a degree in the mid-1970s.⁵³⁹ He then worked in the Ministry of Education as a research assistant.⁵⁴⁰ Al-Amiri left this job and reportedly spent two years among the ranks of Kurdish forces in northern Iraq before traveling to Syria and then Iran following the execution of al-Sadr.⁵⁴¹ Al-Amiri participated in the Iran-Iraq War on the side of Iran during the 1980s and became the military commander of the Badr Organization in the 1990s.⁵⁴² During the 1990s, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim also tasked al-Amiri with overseeing resistance operations within Iraq.⁵⁴³ Al-Amiri returned to Iraq in 2003 and later became the leader of the Badr Organization. As Tarkhani states: "Under Amiri's leadership, the Badr Organization carried out brutal massacres against Iraqi Sunnis in several cities, including Samarra, Diyala, Hawija, Al-Qaim, and Fallujah."⁵⁴⁴ Al-Amiri has also held various posts in the Iraqi government, including Minister of Transportation and a member of the Iraqi parliament.⁵⁴⁵

Kata'ib Hezbollah

Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis

Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was born in 1954 in Basra to an Iraqi father and an Iranian mother.⁵⁴⁶ Al-Muhandis started his college education in 1973 and began work as a civil engineer after graduating

⁵³⁷ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁵³⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁵³⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁵⁴⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁵⁴¹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "هادي العامري.. جنرال" إيران في العراق, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/2/28/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A>.

⁵⁴² Guido Steinberg, "The Badr Organization: Iran's Most Important Instrument in Iraq," *SWP Comments* 26 (2017).

⁵⁴³ Al Khanadeq, "رئيس تحالف الفتح في العراق هادي العامري," <https://alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=38>.

⁵⁴⁴ Hogr Tarkhani, "The Thin Line Between Militia and Terror Groups: The Case of Iraq's Badr Organization," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (2024): 1-27.

⁵⁴⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/342/>.

⁵⁴⁶ Amira Al Abbas and Walid Badran, "من هو أبو مهدي المهندس الذي قتل مع قاسم سليمان في بغداد," January 3, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/50983574>.

in 1977.⁵⁴⁷ He also reportedly attained a graduate degree in political science.⁵⁴⁸ In terms of religious education, al-Muhandis also enrolled in religious courses at the Hawza in Basra.⁵⁴⁹ Al-Muhandis would also join the Islamic Da'wa Party in the late 1970s in opposition to Saddam Hussein's regime.⁵⁵⁰ Al-Muhandis left Iraq to live in Kuwait and was later sentenced to death by the Kuwaiti judiciary for his involvement in militant activities.⁵⁵¹ Al-Muhandis was accused of playing a key role in attacks against U.S. and French embassies, attempts to hijack a Kuwaiti airliner, and the plot to assassinate Kuwaiti Prince Jaber al-Sabah.⁵⁵² Al-Muhandis, however, had already left Kuwait for Iran, where he would continue his militant activities and become a member of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq.⁵⁵³ After 2003, al-Muhandis returned to Iraq and was elected to parliament.⁵⁵⁴ He would later form Kata'ib Hezbollah in 2007 and serve as the organization's leader until his death in 2020.⁵⁵⁵ The United States designated al-Muhandis and Kata'ib Hezbollah in 2009 for their acts of violence against and security threats to Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.⁵⁵⁶ In January 2020, al-Muhandis was killed in a U.S. drone strike alongside Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) leader Qassem Soleimani.⁵⁵⁷

Ahmad al-Hamidawi

Ahmad al-Hamidawi succeeded al-Muhandis as the secretary-general of Kata'ib Hezbollah. Al-Hamidawi was born in 1974 in Iraq.⁵⁵⁸ As stated by the Mapping Militants Project, al-Hamidawi "was likely trained by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), but very little information is available about his activities before 2007."⁵⁵⁹ The training from the IRGC

⁵⁴⁷ Amira Al Abbas and Walid Badran, "من هو أبو مهدي المهندس الذي قتل مع قاسم سليمان في بغداد?" January 3, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/50983574>.

⁵⁴⁸ Al Khanadeq, "الشهيد أبو مهدي المهندس" <https://alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=70>.

⁵⁴⁹ Al Khanadeq, "الشهيد أبو مهدي المهندس" <https://alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=70>.

⁵⁵⁰ Middle East Eye, "Who Was Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis?" January 3, 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/who-abu-mahdi-al-muhandis-qassem-soleimani-iran-iraq>.

⁵⁵¹ Othman al-Mukhtar, "Fugitive from International Justice Now Militia Leader in Iraq," *The New Arab*, January 4, 2015, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/fugitive-international-justice-now-militia-leader-iraq>.

⁵⁵² Middle East Eye, "Who Was Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis?" January 3, 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/who-abu-mahdi-al-muhandis-qassem-soleimani-iran-iraq>.

⁵⁵³ Middle East Eye, "Who Was Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis?" January 3, 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/who-abu-mahdi-al-muhandis-qassem-soleimani-iran-iraq>.

⁵⁵⁴ Othman al-Mukhtar, "Fugitive from International Justice Now Militia Leader in Iraq," *The New Arab*, January 4, 2015, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/fugitive-international-justice-now-militia-leader-iraq>.

⁵⁵⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Kata'ib Hezbollah." Last modified September 21, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/427/>.

⁵⁵⁶ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Designates Individual, Entity Posing Threat to Stability in Iraq," July 2, 2009, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg195>.

⁵⁵⁷ Matthew S. Schwartz, "Who Was the Iraq Commander Also Killed in the Baghdad Drone Strike," *NPR*, January 4, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/04/793618490/who-was-the-iraqi-commander-also-killed-in-baghdad-drone-strike>.

⁵⁵⁸ Mapping Militants Project. "Kata'ib Hezbollah." Last modified September 21, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/427/>.

⁵⁵⁹ For additional information, see Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>.

reportedly included military and intelligence training.⁵⁶⁰ Al-Hamidawi would join Kata'ib Hezbollah in 2007, the year of the organization's founding.⁵⁶¹ Al-Hamidawi became a member of the organization's Shura Council and played a key role in organizational activities targeting U.S. forces between 2007 and 2011.⁵⁶² Between 2011 and 2014, al-Hamidawi reportedly commanded a brigade in Syria, fighting alongside Bashar al-Asad's forces.⁵⁶³ In February 2020, al-Hamidawi assumed leadership of Kata'ib Hezbollah,⁵⁶⁴ with the United States designating al-Hamidawi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist the same month.⁵⁶⁵

Islamic Movement of Kurdistan

Uthman Abdel Aziz

Uthman Abdel Aziz, also spelled Osman Abdulaziz, was born in 1922 in a village in the Halabja Governorate.⁵⁶⁶ Abdel Aziz received religious education at a young age and also studied Persian.⁵⁶⁷ Abdel Aziz reportedly gave lectures on religious topics⁵⁶⁸ and was noted to be a "traditional small-town mullah with a traditional but thorough madrasa education."⁵⁶⁹ He was also a former member of the Union of Muslim Scholars of Kurdistan⁵⁷⁰ and was active in the Muslim Brotherhood movement.⁵⁷¹ He returned to Iraq in late 1980 but fled in 1984 due to regime repression, seeking refuge in Iran.⁵⁷² Returning to Iraq in 1987, Abdel Aziz formed the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan

⁵⁶⁰ Counter Extremism Project, "Ahmad al-Hamidawi," <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/ahmad-al-hamidawi>.

⁵⁶¹ The Arab Center for Extremism Studies, "أحمد محسن فرج الحميداي," <https://the arabcenter.org/%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A/>.

⁵⁶² The Arab Center for Extremism Studies, "أحمد محسن فرج الحميداي," <https://the arabcenter.org/%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A/>.

⁵⁶³ The Arab Center for Extremism Studies, "أحمد محسن فرج الحميداي," <https://the arabcenter.org/%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A/>.

⁵⁶⁴ Mapping Militants Project. "Kata'ib Hezbollah." Last modified September 21, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/427/>.

⁵⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, "State Department Terrorist Designation of Ahmad al-Hamidawi," February 26, 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designation-of-ahmad-al-hamidawi/>.

⁵⁶⁶ <https://iasj.rdd.edu.iq/journals/uploads/2024/12/08/d02575687431b78228884049e597fbc2.pdf>.

⁵⁶⁷ <https://iasj.rdd.edu.iq/journals/uploads/2024/12/08/d02575687431b78228884049e597fbc2.pdf>.

⁵⁶⁸ "پانۆر اماى شەخسەتەناسى مامۆستای مهلا عوسمان عەبدولعەزیز" <https://web.archive.org/web/20120603024732/http://imkmedia.com/dreje.aspx?id=1166&babet=4>.

⁵⁶⁹ Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurds in the Islamic Movement, Islamists in Kurdistan: The Muslim Brotherhood and Kurdish Islamist Movements," *Études kurdes, Revue Biannuelle de Recherches* 14 (2021): 9-55.

⁵⁷⁰ David Romano, "Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq," *Jamestown Foundation* (2007).

⁵⁷¹ Mapping Militants Project (MMP). "Islamic Movement of Kurdistan." Last modified March 2019. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/405>.

⁵⁷² Mapping Militants Project (MMP). "Islamic Movement of Kurdistan." Last modified March 2019. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/405>.

in 1987 with assistance from Iran⁵⁷³ and Saudi Arabia.⁵⁷⁴ In 1993, the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan clashed with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, leading to Abdel Aziz's arrest and the withdrawal of his organization to Iran.⁵⁷⁵ Abdel Aziz led the organization until his death in 1999.⁵⁷⁶

Ali Abdel Aziz

Ali Abdel Aziz succeeded his brother, Uthman Abdel Aziz, as leader of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK).⁵⁷⁷ Ali Abdel Aziz was born in 1929 in Iraq.⁵⁷⁸ He worked as the director of the Islamic Institute in Halabja and was an imam at the Mohammed Pasha Mosque.⁵⁷⁹ Ali Abdel Aziz reportedly created his own armed Kurdish peshmerga brigade, which was among "the first armed Islamist Kurdish peshmerga in Kurdistan."⁵⁸⁰ In 2003, U.S. forces arrested Ali Abdul Aziz.⁵⁸¹ The same year, the Kurdish Regional Government formally disarmed the IMK.⁵⁸²

Tawhid and Jihad/al-Qaida in Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, also known as Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah, was born in October 1966 in Zarqa, Jordan.⁵⁸³ A high school dropout,⁵⁸⁴ al-Zarqawi joined the military in 1984 for two years under Jordan's mandatory conscription laws.⁵⁸⁵ During the 1980s, al-Zarqawi reportedly

⁵⁷³ Mapping Militants Project (MMP). "Islamic Movement of Kurdistan." Last modified March 2019. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/405>.

⁵⁷⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds and Islam," Working Paper no. 13, Islamic Area Studies Project (1999).

⁵⁷⁵ Al Jazeera Arabic, "الحركة الإسلامية في كردستان العراق," <https://www.aljazeera.net/opinions/2004/10/3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-2>.

⁵⁷⁶ Mapping Militants Project (MMP). "Islamic Movement of Kurdistan." Last modified March 2019. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/405>.

⁵⁷⁷ Mapping Militants Project (MMP). "Islamic Movement of Kurdistan." Last modified March 2019. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/405>.

⁵⁷⁸ Balen Ibrahim "گوزهریک به لایمره کانی ژبانی ماموستا مه لا علی عبدالعزیزدا" <https://web.archive.org/web/20210422180119/https://www.basknet.net/martyrs/2020/1304/>.

⁵⁷⁹ Balen Ibrahim "گوزهریک به لایمره کانی ژبانی ماموستا مه لا علی عبدالعزیزدا" <https://web.archive.org/web/20210422180119/https://www.basknet.net/martyrs/2020/1304/>.

⁵⁸⁰ Mohammed Shareef, "Kurdish Islamists in Iraq: From the Muslim Brotherhood to the So-Called Islamic State: Continuity or Departure?" *King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies* (2015).

⁵⁸¹ Al Jazeera, "US Troops Arrest Kurdish Leader," August 3, 2003, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/8/3/us-troops-arrest-kurdish-leader>.

⁵⁸² Mapping Militants Project (MMP). "Islamic Movement of Kurdistan." Last modified March 2019. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/405>.

⁵⁸³ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁸⁴ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁸⁵ Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Haniyeh, *The Islamic Solution in Jordan* (2012), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/09373.pdf>.

spent time in prison and was described by people who knew him during his teenage years as “a bully and a thug, a bootlegger and a heavy drinker, and even, allegedly, a pimp in Zarqa’s underworld.”⁵⁸⁶ In 1989, al-Zarqawi left for Afghanistan and “is believed to have taken part in some fighting, but he mainly worked as a correspondent for a radical Islamist magazine during this period.”⁵⁸⁷ In Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi used this time “to begin the process of cultivating friendships that would eventually lead to the formation of an international support network for his activities.”⁵⁸⁸ Al-Zarqawi returned to Jordan in 1993 and was subsequently arrested.⁵⁸⁹ Working with Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, al-Zarqawi “flourished” in prison, building his militant network and jihadist credentials.⁵⁹⁰ Al-Maqdisi was released from prison in 1999 under a general amnesty and returned to Afghanistan.⁵⁹¹ Reportedly receiving a small amount of seed money from al-Qaida’s leaders,⁵⁹² al-Zarqawi set up a training camp in Herat and became the leader of Jama’at al-Tawhid wal Jihad.⁵⁹³ Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi operated in Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan and, by 2003, had established his organization’s presence in Arab cities in Iraq.⁵⁹⁴ In 2004, al-Zarqawi pledged fealty to al-Qaida and changed his organization’s name to al-Qaida in Iraq.⁵⁹⁵ Al-Zarqawi died following a U.S. airstrike in 2006.⁵⁹⁶ The United States had previously designated al-Zarqawi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2003⁵⁹⁷ and al-Qaida in Iraq as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2004.⁵⁹⁸

Abu Hamza al-Muhajir

Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri, succeeded Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi as leader of al-Qaida in Iraq.⁵⁹⁹ There is significant controversy surrounding al-Muhajir’s background, given he stole another jihadist’s identity.⁶⁰⁰ Al-Muhajir was born in 1968 in Egypt.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁸⁶ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁸⁷ Gary Gambill, “Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch,” *Jamestown Foundation*, May 5, 2005.

⁵⁸⁸ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁸⁹ Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Haniyeh, *The Islamic Solution in Jordan* (2012),

<https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/09373.pdf>.

⁵⁹⁰ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁹¹ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁹² Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁹³ Mapping Militants Project. “Islamic State.” Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

⁵⁹⁴ Mary Anne Weaver, “The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

⁵⁹⁵ Mapping Militants Project. “Islamic State.” Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

⁵⁹⁶ Fred Barbash and Daniela Deane, “U.S. Says Zarqawi Died from Blast,” *The Washington Post*, June 11, 2006,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/business/technology/2006/06/12/us-says-zarqawi-died-from-blast/61897968-c052-4a3a-bce3-c1e41d5e2285/?isMobile=1>.

⁵⁹⁷ U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Designates Six Al-Qaida Terrorists,” September 24, 2003,

<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js757>.

⁵⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁵⁹⁹ Mapping Militants Project. “Islamic State.” Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

⁶⁰⁰ Thomas Joscelyn, “State Department Designates Founding Member of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,” *Long War Journal*, January 6, 2017.

⁶⁰¹ Kamal Kamal and Ahmed Arafat, “إسلاميون يفجرون مفاجأة: أبو حمزة المهاجر قتل في العراق والمالكي أعلن مقتله.. داعية سلفي: “مكافأة الـ3 ملايين دولار الأميركية حيلة مفضوحة للتدخل في سبئاء.. وخالد الزعفراني يصفه بـ”الجهادي الكبير”

<https://www.youm7.com/story/2014/6/14/%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%88%D>

Al-Masri also reportedly joined Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and trained fighters in EIJ training camps in Yemen and later joined the Faruq training camp in Afghanistan in the late 1990s, specializing in explosives.⁶⁰² Despite taking over leadership of al-Qaida in Iraq in mid-2006, al-Muhajir would hand over control of the group to Abu Umar al-Baghdadi that same year.⁶⁰³

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi was born in 1959 in Iraq.⁶⁰⁴ He reportedly worked for the Iraqi Security Forces and was a Police Brigade General⁶⁰⁵ before being fired due to his Salafist leanings.⁶⁰⁶ Following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, al-Baghdadi commanded Jaish al-Ta'ifa al-Mansoura before pledging bay'a to al-Qaida in Iraq.⁶⁰⁷ He was reportedly briefly detained by U.S. security forces in Iraq, being released after seven months.⁶⁰⁸ Al-Baghdadi took control of al-Qaida in Iraq, which rebranded to the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), in October 2006.⁶⁰⁹ During a joint U.S.-Iraqi raid in 2010, U.S. air forces reportedly bombed a house that contained Abu Hamza al-Muhajir and al-Baghdadi.⁶¹⁰

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, also known as Ibrahim Awad al-Samarrai, was born in 1971 near Samarra, Iraq.⁶¹¹ Al-Baghdadi was from the al-Bu Badri tribe, with his family claiming that they are

[9%86-%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%89/1723940#goog_rewarded](https://www.youm7.com/story/2014/6/14/%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%89/1723940#goog_rewarded).
⁶⁰² Kamal Kamal and Ahmed Arafat, “إسلاميون يفجرون مفاجأة: أبو حمزة المهاجر قتل في العراق والمالكي أعلن مقتله.. داعية سلفي: “مكافأة الـ 3 ملايين دولار للأمريكية حيلة مفضوحة للتدخل في سيناء.. وخالد الزعفراني يصفه بـ”الجهادي الكبير”
https://www.youm7.com/story/2014/6/14/%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%89/1723940#goog_rewarded.

⁶⁰³ Mapping Militants Project. “Islamic State.” Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

⁶⁰⁴ Hussam Haddad, “أبو عمر البغدادي زعيم القاعدة بالعراق” <https://www.islamist-movements.com/26774>.

⁶⁰⁵ Myriam Benraad, “Assessing AQI’s Resilience After April’s Leadership Decapitations,” *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (2010): 4-8.

⁶⁰⁶ Hussam Haddad, “أبو عمر البغدادي زعيم القاعدة بالعراق” <https://www.islamist-movements.com/26774>.

⁶⁰⁷ Hussam Haddad, “أبو عمر البغدادي زعيم القاعدة بالعراق” <https://www.islamist-movements.com/26774>.

⁶⁰⁸ Myriam Benraad, “Assessing AQI’s Resilience After April’s Leadership Decapitations,” *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (2010): 4-8.

⁶⁰⁹ M.J. Kirdar, “Al Qaeda in Iraq,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (June 2011).

⁶¹⁰ Ernesto Londoño, “Two Top Leaders of the Insurgent Group al-Qaeda in Iraq are Killed in Raid,” *Washington Post Foreign Service*, April 20, 2010.

⁶¹¹ MEE Staff, “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: The ‘Loner’ Who Became Leader of Islamic State,” *Middle East Eye*, October 27, 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-loner-who-became-leader-islamic-state>.

descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's Quraysh tribe.⁶¹² Al-Baghdadi graduated from the University of Baghdad in 1996 and enrolled in a master's program in Quranic recitation at the Saddam University for Islamic Studies. After attaining this degree, he enrolled in Saddam University's doctoral program in Quranic studies.⁶¹³ As Paul Kamolnick states: "His specialization across both [degrees] was phonetics and recitation of the Quran. He produced for his Ph.D. project in Quranic Sciences a commentary on a medieval poem on Quran recitation. It was defended March 13, 2007, receiving the grade of 'Very Good.'" Using this religious training, al-Baghdadi taught Quranic recitation⁶¹⁴ and preached at a mosque in Samarra.⁶¹⁵ Al-Baghdadi's nearsightedness reportedly disqualified him from military service.⁶¹⁶ Rather than remain on the sidelines in 2003, al-Baghdadi "founded his own militant group [Jaysh Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a] immediately following the U.S. invasion in 2003."⁶¹⁷ In 2004, al-Baghdadi was arrested by coalition forces and spent time in Camp Bucca, where "he dazzled his comrades—and, no doubt, his jailers—on the soccer field...he was compared to an Argentinian great: his nickname at Camp Bucca was 'Maradona.'"⁶¹⁸ After his release, al-Baghdadi allied with Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and became a member of the Islamic State of Iraq, serving in roles such as the general supervisor of Sharia committees and a member of the organization's senior consultative council.⁶¹⁹ Abu Bakr

⁶¹² Aaron Zelin, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State's Driving Force," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, July 2014.

⁶¹³ William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>.

⁶¹⁴ William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>.

⁶¹⁵ Aaron Zelin, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State's Driving Force," *BBC*, July 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449>.

⁶¹⁶ William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>.

⁶¹⁷ While the JLD codes this as rebel leadership, there is uncertainty surrounding al-Baghdadi's role in the organization. Users of the dataset may wish to make their own decision surrounding this coding. For further information, see Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13; William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>; Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "'Stations of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Life: Translation and Analysis,'" November 7, 2019, <https://www.aymennjawad.org/2019/11/stations-of-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-life-translation>; Kyle Orton, *Profiles of Islamic State Leaders* (Centre for the Response to Radicalisation and Terrorism at the Henry Jackson Society, 2016); Paul Kamolnick Dr., *The Al-Qaeda Organization and the Islamic State Organization: History, Doctrine, Modus Operandi, and U.S. Policy to Degrade and Defeat Terrorism Conducted in the Name of Sunni Islam* (US Army War College Press, 2017).

⁶¹⁸ William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>.

⁶¹⁹ Aaron Zelin, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State's Driving Force," *BBC*, July 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449>; Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "'Stations of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Life: Translation and Analysis,'" November 7, 2019, <https://www.aymennjawad.org/2019/11/stations-of-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-life-translation>.

al-Baghdadi succeeded Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as head of the Islamic State of Iraq after the latter's death in April 2010.⁶²⁰ In 2011, the United States designated al-Baghdadi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, increasing to \$25 million its reward offer for "information leading to the location, arrest, or conviction" of al-Baghdadi.⁶²¹ Al-Baghdadi would oversee the expansion of the organization across Iraq and Syria and its transformation to the Islamic State in subsequent years.⁶²² Al-Baghdadi remained the organization's leader until he detonated a bomb he was wearing in October 2019 during a raid conducted by U.S. forces.⁶²³

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, also known as Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla, was born in October 1976 in al-Muhallabiyah, Iraq.⁶²⁴ Despite being born in an area that is predominantly Turkmen, there is evidence to suggest that al-Qurayshi is ethnically Arab.⁶²⁵ Al-Qurayshi completed compulsory military service in Iraq in 2001-2002 and later attained a master's degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Mosul in 2007.⁶²⁶ An unofficial biography of al-Qurayshi published by Islamic State supporters notes that he joined Jama'at al-Ansar and worked as a member of its military personnel in Tel Afar⁶²⁷ before participating in the battle of Tel Afar under the banner of al-Qaida in Iraq.⁶²⁸ Al-Qurayshi subsequently taught Sharia classes to members of the Islamic State of Iraq and was appointed in July 2007 as the general Sharia leader

⁶²⁰ Aaron Zelin, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State's Driving Force," *BBC*, July 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449>.

⁶²¹ U.S. Department of State, "Rewards for Justice - Increased Reward Offer for Information on ISIL Leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi," December 16, 2016, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/12/265708.htm>.

⁶²² William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (Macmillan, 2015).

⁶²³ BBC, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: US Releases First Images of Raid on Compound," October 31, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50243895>; Patrice Taddonio, "Flashback: How Baghdadi Came to Lead ISIS," *Frontline* October 27, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/trump-raid-baghdadi-killed-isis/>; Jim Garamone, "Central Command Chief Gives Details on Baghdadi Raid," October 31, 2019, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/News-Article-View/Article/2004560/central-command-chief-gives-details-on-baghdadi-raid/>.

⁶²⁴ Much of the information for this biography comes from Tactical Interrogation Reports. These reports contained information that al-Qurayshi provided to U.S. interrogators while in detention in 2008. For further information on these reports and the pros and cons of using such sources, see Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13; Daniel Milton, "The al-Mawla TIRs: An Analytical Discussion with Cole Bunzel, Haroro Ingram, Gina Ligon, and Craig Whiteside," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 14-23.

⁶²⁵ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

⁶²⁶ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

⁶²⁷ This timing differs from the Tactical Interrogation Reports, which note that he only joined the Islamic State of Iraq in February 2007.

⁶²⁸ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Second Caliph," *Middle East Forum*, September 11, 2023, <https://www.meforum.org/a-brief-biography-of-abu-ibrahim-al-hashimi-al->

for the city of Mosul.⁶²⁹ In January 2008, al-Qurayshi was captured by coalition forces.⁶³⁰ After his release, al-Qurayshi reportedly assumed various judicial and administrative roles within the Islamic State, such as serving as a judge for all of the Nineveh Province and as the leader of the Islamic State's treasury department.⁶³¹ On October 31, 2019, al-Qurayshi was announced as the successor to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.⁶³² Al-Qurayshi would remain the Islamic State's leader until he detonated an explosive device, which killed himself, his wife, and two children, during a U.S. raid in northern Syria in February 2022.⁶³³ The United States had previously designated al-Qurayshi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist on March 17, 2020.⁶³⁴

Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi

Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi succeeded Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi as the Islamic State's leader in March 2022.⁶³⁵ There are numerous conflicting reports surrounding Abu al-Hasan's identity.⁶³⁶ Some sources suggest that the new Islamic State leader was likely Bashar Khattab Ghazal a-Sumaidai⁶³⁷ or even Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's brother.⁶³⁸ However, an unofficial biography published by Islamic State supporters suggests that Abu al-Hasan was born in Rawa, Iraq, and briefly studied computer engineering at the University of Baghdad.⁶³⁹ Abu al-Hasan also reportedly spent time as a prisoner at Camp Bucca and Abu Ghraib prison and was a long-established veteran in the Islamic State and its predecessor organizations.⁶⁴⁰ Abu al-Hasan's time in power of the Islamic State was short-lived. While there are disputes surrounding who killed Abu

⁶²⁹ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

⁶³⁰ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

⁶³¹ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Second Caliph," *Middle East Forum*, September 11, 2023, <https://www.meforum.org/a-brief-biography-of-abu-ibrahim-al-hashimi-al->

⁶³² Cole Bunzel, "Caliph Incognito: The Ridicule of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi," *Jihadica*, November 14, 2019, <https://www.jihadica.com/caliph-incognito/>.

⁶³³ BBC, "Islamic State Leader Abu Ibrahim al-Qurayshi Killed in Syria, US Says," February 3, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-60246129>.

⁶³⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designation of ISIS Leader Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla," March 17, 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/terrorist-designation-of-isis-leader-amir-muhammad-said-abdal-rahman-al-mawla/>.

⁶³⁵ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, "Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla," *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

⁶³⁶ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, "Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla," *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

⁶³⁷ Hassan Hassan, "The Next Islamic State Caliph," *New Lines Magazine*, February 16, 2022, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/the-next-islamic-state-caliph/>.

⁶³⁸ Reuters, "'EXCLUSIVE: New Islamic State Leader is Brother of Slain Caliph Baghdadi - Sources," March 11, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/exclusive-new-islamic-state-leader-is-brother-slain-caliph-baghdadi-sources-2022-03-11/>.

⁶³⁹ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Third Caliph," October 3, 2023, <https://www.aymennaltamimi.com/p/a-brief-biography-of-abu-al-hasan>.

⁶⁴⁰ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Third Caliph," October 3, 2023, <https://www.aymennaltamimi.com/p/a-brief-biography-of-abu-al-hasan>.

al-Hasan,⁶⁴¹ Aymenn Al-Tamimi and Charlie Winter write that “the most likely scenario is that Abu al-Hasan was killed in clashes between Islamic State cells and local militiamen from the town of Jasim in the northern countryside of Dera’a province in mid-October 2022.”⁶⁴²

Abu al-Husayn al-Husayni al-Qurayshi

Abu al-Husayn al-Husayni al-Qurayshi took over command of the Islamic State in November 2022.⁶⁴³ While there is little information surrounding Abu al-Husayn’s early life, he was likely born in Iraq.⁶⁴⁴ Turkey’s Anadolu state news agency also claimed that Abu al-Husayn joined the Islamic State in 2013 and quickly rose through the organization’s ranks.⁶⁴⁵ There are disputing reports surrounding Abu al-Husayn’s death, which occurred in 2023 only months after he assumed power. While Turkish sources claim that Abu al-Husayn detonated a suicide vest prior to being captured by Turkish forces,⁶⁴⁶ the Islamic State claimed that Abu al-Husayn was killed during a firefight by Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham forces.⁶⁴⁷

Lebanon

Abdullah Azzam Brigades

Saleh al-Qarawi

The Abdullah Azzam Brigades (AAB) was formed in 2009 under the leadership of Saleh al-Qarawi.⁶⁴⁸ Saudi government sources note that al-Qarawi was born in 1982 in Buraidah, Saudi

⁶⁴¹ U.S. Central Command, “Death of ISIS Leader,” November 30, 2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3232259/death-of-isis-leader/>.

⁶⁴² Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi and Charlie Winter, “The Islamic State in Dera’a: History and Present Situation,” *Hudson: Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, April 24, 2023, <https://www.hudson.org/islamic-state-deraa-history-present-situation>.

⁶⁴³ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, “Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State’s Leaders Post-Mawla,” *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

⁶⁴⁴ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, “Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State’s Leaders Post-Mawla,” *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

⁶⁴⁵ France 24, “Turkey Offers Details of Islamic State Chief’s Death,” January 5, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230501-turkey-offers-details-of-islamic-state-chief-s-death>.

⁶⁴⁶ France 24, “Turkey Offers Details of Islamic State Chief’s Death,” January 5, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230501-turkey-offers-details-of-islamic-state-chief-s-death>.

⁶⁴⁷ We coded Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham as being the most likely actor responsible based on Al-Tamimi’s analysis of the conflicting claims. Aymenn Al-Tamimi, “Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State’s Leaders Post-Mawla,” *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

⁶⁴⁸ The Global Terrorism Database includes attacks conducted by the group before 2009. However, sources list 2009 as the start name for this iteration of the organization. For instance, see United Nations Security Council, “Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB),” September 23, 2014, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aa_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/abdallah-azzam-brigades-%28aab%29.

Arabia.⁶⁴⁹ Al-Qarawi is a graduate of the Scientific Institute in Buraidah, where he specialized in religious studies.⁶⁵⁰ After leaving Saudi Arabia sometime in 2006, al-Qarawi was reportedly arrested by Syrian authorities and handed over to Saudi authorities, spending a few months in jail before being released and leaving the country.⁶⁵¹ During his time abroad, al-Qarawi fought against U.S. forces in Fallujah and reportedly worked with al-Qaida in Iraq and received training in electronics.⁶⁵² Al-Qarawi stated he started AAB as an outgrowth of al-Qaida in Iraq,⁶⁵³ with the organization making it clear that it was openly loyal to al-Qaida's leader.⁶⁵⁴ Al-Qarawi reportedly sustained major injuries in Pakistan, forcing him to return to Saudi Arabia in 2012, where he was detained and subsequently replaced as AAB's leader.⁶⁵⁵

Majid bin Muhammad al-Majid

Majid bin Muhammad al-Majid succeeded al-Qarawi as AAB's leader in 2012.⁶⁵⁶ Al-Majid was born in Saudi Arabia in 1973.⁶⁵⁷ Little information exists surrounding al-Majid's early life in Saudi Arabia. Arabic-language reporting notes that al-Majid traveled to Lebanon in 2006, joining Fatah al-Islam in their struggle against the Lebanese army.⁶⁵⁸ After the Battle of Nahr al-Bared, al-Majid moved to the Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon.⁶⁵⁹ Al-Majid kept AAB in al-Qaida's orbit

⁶⁴⁹ Saudi Ministry of Interior, "85 قائمة المطلوبين",

[https://safiu.moi.gov.sa/wps/portal/Home/sectors/passports/contents!/ut/p/z0/fY4xD4IwFIT_ShfmV0khXQmJCC4aB7ELeYGiVWwLvKA_32pcXBzvet_dgYIalMXFnJGMSzgEfVJpw0shNisRb6XYrXm2j6s8y8tYFikccIIK1P9QaDHXcVQZqNZZ0k-C2thFz_RdYq7vTasj_ut22uNEd22J4RRxumj2wMB3zGvnh5AfzExMJh-weQuZNOGRvxXHF-p0oGs!/.](https://safiu.moi.gov.sa/wps/portal/Home/sectors/passports/contents!/ut/p/z0/fY4xD4IwFIT_ShfmV0khXQmJCC4aB7ELeYGiVWwLvKA_32pcXBzvet_dgYIalMXFnJGMSzgEfVJpw0shNisRb6XYrXm2j6s8y8tYFikccIIK1P9QaDHXcVQZqNZZ0k-C2thFz_RdYq7vTasj_ut22uNEd22J4RRxumj2wMB3zGvnh5AfzExMJh-weQuZNOGRvxXHF-p0oGs!/)

⁶⁵⁰ Gulf Issues Center for Strategic Studies, "الكراهية الدينية، الطائفية، والتحريض على القتل", https://gulffissues.info/m_p_folder/main_div/derasat/derasat_0013.htm.

⁶⁵¹ Gulf Issues Center for Strategic Studies, "الكراهية الدينية، الطائفية، والتحريض على القتل", https://gulffissues.info/m_p_folder/main_div/derasat/derasat_0013.htm.

⁶⁵² Gulf Issues Center for Strategic Studies, "الكراهية الدينية، الطائفية، والتحريض على القتل", https://gulffissues.info/m_p_folder/main_div/derasat/derasat_0013.htm.

⁶⁵³ Thomas Joscelyn, "Online Jihadists Discuss Fate of al Qaeda Operative Held by Saudi Arabia," *Long War Journal*, June 27, 2013, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/06/online_jihadists_dis.php.

⁶⁵⁴ Caleb Weiss, "Abdullah Azzam Brigades Dissolves Itself in Syria," *Long War Journal*, November 22, 2019, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/11/abdullah-azzam-brigades-dissolves-itself-in-syria.php>.

⁶⁵⁵ Thomas Joscelyn, "Online Jihadists Discuss Fate of al Qaeda Operative Held by Saudi Arabia," *Long War Journal*, June 27, 2013, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/06/online_jihadists_dis.php.

⁶⁵⁶ U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, "Abdallah 'Azzam Brigades (AAB)," https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/abdallah_azzam.html.

⁶⁵⁷ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام", <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

⁶⁵⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام", <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

⁶⁵⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام", <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

by pledging fealty to Jabhat al-Nusra's leader, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, in 2013.⁶⁶⁰ Al-Majid was arrested by Lebanese security forces in December 2013 before dying shortly thereafter while in custody in January 2014.⁶⁶¹ Al-Majid reportedly suffered from kidney failure which required dialysis.⁶⁶²

Sirajuddin Zureiqat

Sirajuddin Zureiqat assumed control of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades (AAB) in October 2014.⁶⁶³ Zureiqat was born in 1990 in a hospital outside of Beirut, Lebanon.⁶⁶⁴ Zureiqat completed high school and studied at the College of Sharia.⁶⁶⁵ Zureiqat reportedly opened a store selling phones and also served as an Imam.⁶⁶⁶ In 2011, Zureiqat was reportedly detained and taken to the Lebanese Ministry of Defense and interrogated before being released after questioning.⁶⁶⁷ Shortly thereafter, Zureiqat left home and later joined AAB, becoming a spokesperson for the organization.⁶⁶⁸ After reportedly being based in Syria since 2012,⁶⁶⁹ Zureiqat became AAB's leader in 2014 following the death of al-Majid.⁶⁷⁰ In 2019, the organization issued a statement dissolving its operational units in Syria.⁶⁷¹

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

⁶⁶⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام,"

https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/01/140101_terrorist_arrest_lebanon.
https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/abdallah_azzam.html.

⁶⁶¹ BBC, "القبيص في لبنان على ماجد الماجد زعيم كتائب عبدالله عزام,"

https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/01/140101_terrorist_arrest_lebanon.

⁶⁶² BBC, "القبيص في لبنان على ماجد الماجد زعيم كتائب عبدالله عزام,"

https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/01/140101_terrorist_arrest_lebanon.

⁶⁶³ U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, "'Abdallah 'Azzam Brigades (AAB),"

https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/abdallah_azzam.html.

⁶⁶⁴ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

⁶⁶⁵ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

⁶⁶⁶ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

⁶⁶⁷ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

⁶⁶⁸ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

⁶⁶⁹ Caleb Weiss, "Abdullah Azzam Brigades Dissolves Itself in Syria," *Long War Journal*, November 22, 2019,

<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/11/abdullah-azzam-brigades-dissolves-itself-in-syria.php>.

⁶⁷⁰ U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, "'Abdallah 'Azzam Brigades (AAB),"

https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/abdallah_azzam.html.

⁶⁷¹ Caleb Weiss, "Abdullah Azzam Brigades Dissolves Itself in Syria," *Long War Journal*, November 22, 2019,

<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/11/abdullah-azzam-brigades-dissolves-itself-in-syria.php>.

Fatah al-Islam

Shaker al-Absi

Shaker al-Absi was born in 1955⁶⁷² in the Ein al-Sultan refugee camp, which is located near Jericho.⁶⁷³ Al-Absi later moved with his family to Amman, where he would complete high school in 1973.⁶⁷⁴ According to his brother, Abdel Razzak al-Absi, Shaker al-Absi moved to Tunisia to join the medical school but realized that practicing medicine was not his goal.⁶⁷⁵ Al-Absi also became involved in the Palestinian militant movement, joining Yasser Arafat's Fatah.⁶⁷⁶ Al-Absi became a fighter pilot and received formal military training in the Eastern Bloc countries and in Libya, with sources indicating he fought for Libya in Chad.⁶⁷⁷ Al-Absi also reportedly fought with Fatah in Lebanon following the 1982 Israeli invasion.⁶⁷⁸ Al-Absi was arrested on multiple occasions. First, he was imprisoned in Syria in the late 1980s and released in 1996, with this time in prison marking "a turning point in Shaker al-Absi's existence. In prison, he formed ties with Islamist detainees, began praying five times daily, and memorized the Qur'an."⁶⁷⁹ After his release, al-Absi reportedly had meetings with individuals close to Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with Jordanian officials claiming that al-Zarqawi and al-Absi orchestrated the

⁶⁷² There are debates surrounding al-Absi's year of birth. While Rougier states that al-Absi was born in 1950, multiple sources claim he was born in 1955. For instance, see Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015); Samid Haddad, "The Inside Story of Fatah al Islam's Leader Shaker al-Absi," *Ya Libnan*, June 16, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20070619120257/http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2007/06/lebanon_the_ins_1.php; Al Jazeera Arabic, "شاكِر العِبيسي.. حكاية لاجئ فلسطيني أسس فتح الإسلام," <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2007/5/24/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A6-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B3-%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AD>.

⁶⁷³ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شاكِر العِبيسي.. حكاية لاجئ فلسطيني أسس فتح الإسلام," <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2007/5/24/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A6-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B3-%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AD>.

⁶⁷⁴ Al Jazeera Arabic, "شاكِر العِبيسي.. حكاية لاجئ فلسطيني أسس فتح الإسلام," <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2007/5/24/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A6-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B3-%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AD>.

⁶⁷⁵ Samid Haddad, "The Inside Story of Fatah al Islam's Leader Shaker al-Absi," *Ya Libnan*, June 16, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20070619120257/http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2007/06/lebanon_the_ins_1.php.

⁶⁷⁶ Samid Haddad, "The Inside Story of Fatah al Islam's Leader Shaker al-Absi," *Ya Libnan*, June 16, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20070619120257/http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2007/06/lebanon_the_ins_1.php.

⁶⁷⁷ Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁶⁷⁸ Samid Haddad, "The Inside Story of Fatah al Islam's Leader Shaker al-Absi," *Ya Libnan*, June 16, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20070619120257/http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2007/06/lebanon_the_ins_1.php.

⁶⁷⁹ Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 86.

assassination of USAID official Laurence Foley in 2002.⁶⁸⁰ As Rougier states: “Al-Absi could claim a long relationship with the Jordanian Abu Mus‘ab al-Zarqawi. A death sentence imposed on both by Jordanian authorities served as unimpeachable proof of his legitimacy as a jihadi.”⁶⁸¹ In the early 2000s, al-Absi was arrested again by Syrian authorities and sentenced to three years in prison,⁶⁸² spending time in the Saydnaya prison.⁶⁸³ After his release, al-Absi joined forces with Fatah al-Intifada, which had deep ties to Syrian intelligence, and Abu Khalid al-‘Amleh, with al-‘Amleh putting al-Absi in command of the “western force” wing of the group.⁶⁸⁴ Al-Absi would shortly take command of his own organization, with Fatah al-Islam announcing its formation in the Naher al-Bared camp in Lebanon in 2006.⁶⁸⁵ In 2007, the United States sanctioned Fatah al-Islam under Executive Order 13224.⁶⁸⁶ While there is uncertainty surrounding his death, al-Absi may have died during a firefight with Syrian security forces in 2008.⁶⁸⁷

Hezbollah

Subhi al-Tufayli

Subhi al-Tufayli was born in 1948 in the town of Brital in southern Lebanon.⁶⁸⁸ Al-Tufayli completed religious training under Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr in Najaf, Iraq, studying alongside Abbas al-Musawi, the second secretary-general of Hezbollah.⁶⁸⁹ Al-Tufayli later traveled to Iran

⁶⁸⁰ Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁶⁸¹ Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 87.

⁶⁸² Al Jazeera Arabic, “شاكِر العبسي.. حكاية لاجئ فلسطيني أسس فتح الإسلام,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2007/5/24/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A6-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B3-%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AD>.

⁶⁸³ Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁶⁸⁴ Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁶⁸⁵ Bernard Rougier, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: Northern Lebanon from al-Qaeda to ISIS* (Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁶⁸⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Executive Order 13224,” <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224>.

⁶⁸⁷ Graham Bowley and Souad Mekhennet, “Fugitive Sunni Leader Thought to be Captured or Killed in Syria,” *The New York Times*, November 10, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/10/world/africa/10iht-syria.4.18569673.html>.

⁶⁸⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, “صبحي الطفيلي,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/2004/10/03/%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A-2>.

⁶⁸⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “صبحي الطفيلي,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/10/27/%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A>.

to continue his religious studies and would eventually teach in the Hawzat of Qom.⁶⁹⁰ After returning to Lebanon in 1979, al-Tufayli reportedly founded the Association of Muslim Scholars, headquartered in the Bekaa Valley, and participated in resistance activities against Israeli forces in Lebanon.⁶⁹¹ Al-Tufayli was also a member of Amal during the Lebanese civil war before leaving the movement to help found Hezbollah.⁶⁹² In 1989, al-Tufayli was elected as Hezbollah's first secretary-general. Al-Tufayli stepped down from his position as secretary-general of Hezbollah following the 1991 elections which were won by Abbas al-Musawi.⁶⁹³

Abbas al-Musawi

Abbas al-Musawi succeeded Subhi al-Tufayli as secretary-general of Hezbollah. Al-Musawi was born in 1952 in a suburb of Beirut.⁶⁹⁴ Al-Musawi traveled to Iraq at an early age to receive religious education under the guidance of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr.⁶⁹⁵ He eventually left Iraq in the late 1970s at the request of al-Sadr due to increasing repression from the Iraqi regime.⁶⁹⁶ In Lebanon, al-Musawi established a religious seminary in Baalbek.⁶⁹⁷ Following the Iranian revolution, al-Musawi reportedly visited Iran and later received training from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Lebanon.⁶⁹⁸ Al-Musawi was also a member of Amal during the Lebanese civil war before leaving the movement to help found Hezbollah.⁶⁹⁹ Al-Musawi reportedly visited Pakistan and Afghanistan in his efforts to promote the Palestinian issue.⁷⁰⁰ His leadership of Hezbollah would be short-lived. Along with his wife, son, and five bodyguards, al-Musawi was killed in an Israeli airstrike in February 1992.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic “صبحي الطفيلي”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/10/27/%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A>.

⁶⁹¹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “صبحي الطفيلي”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/2004/10/03/%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A-2>.

⁶⁹² Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion* (Pluto Press, 2002).

⁶⁹³ Al Jazeera Arabic, “صبحي الطفيلي”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/2004/10/03/%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A-2>.

⁶⁹⁴ Al Khanadeq, “الشهيد السيد عباس الموسوي” <https://www.alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=126>.

⁶⁹⁵ Al Khanadeq, “الشهيد السيد عباس الموسوي” <https://www.alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=126>.

⁶⁹⁶ Al Khanadeq, “الشهيد السيد عباس الموسوي” <https://www.alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=126>.

⁶⁹⁷ Middle East Eye, “Who Was Hassan Nasrallah, Leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah - and why did he matter?”

Middle East Eye, September 27, 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/explainer-who-hezbollah-leader-hassan-nasrallah-profile-lebanon>.

⁶⁹⁸ Al Khanadeq, “الشهيد السيد عباس الموسوي” <https://www.alkhanadeq.com/post.php?id=126>.

⁶⁹⁹ Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion* (Pluto Press, 2002).

⁷⁰⁰ Israa Alfass, “الأممي الأول... السيد عباس الموسوي” <https://archive.almanar.com.lb/6299911>.

⁷⁰¹ Nicholas Blanford, “Twenty-Eight Years Ago Hezbollah's Leader Was Assassinated, and Israel Paid a Price,” *Atlantic Council*, January 6, 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/twenty-eight-years-ago-hezbollahs-leader-was-assassinated-and-israel-paid-a-price/>.

Hassan Nasrallah

Hassan Nasrallah succeeded Abbas al-Musawi as Hezbollah's leader in 1992. Nasrallah was born in 1960 in Sharshabouk, an area of east Beirut's Karantina.⁷⁰² Following the onset of the Lebanese civil war, Nasrallah joined Amal.⁷⁰³ According to Daher, Nasrallah reportedly dropped out of college and traveled to study in Najaf, Iraq.⁷⁰⁴ Due to political repression, Hassan Nasrallah returned to Lebanon in 1978 and studied at a religious seminary in Baalbek under Abbas al-Musawi.⁷⁰⁵ Back in Lebanon, Nasrallah resumed his participation with Amal, serving as the head of administration for the Bekaa region and later as a member of the Politburo.⁷⁰⁶ He reportedly remained active in Amal until 1982 before playing an important role in the formation of Hezbollah. According to a biography produced by the Lebanese Cultural Centre, Nasrallah was "very active during this era in the recruitment and mobilization of fighters."⁷⁰⁷ In Hezbollah, Nasrallah became head of the Baalbek region before taking charge of organizational activities across the entire Bekaa.⁷⁰⁸ Between 1985 and 1986, Nasrallah briefly resumed studies in Qom, Iran.⁷⁰⁹ The United States designated Hezbollah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in October 1997.⁷¹⁰ On September 27, 2024, Israel launched airstrikes against Hezbollah positions in southern Beirut, with Hezbollah announcing Nasrallah's death the following day.⁷¹¹

Libya

Ansar al-Sharia - Libya

Mohammad al-Zahawi

Mohammad al-Zahawi served as the leader of Ansar al-Sharia in Libya at its inception in 2012.⁷¹² Al-Zahawi reportedly fought in Afghanistan alongside al-Qaida prior to returning to Libya to

⁷⁰² Middle East Eye, "Who Was Hassan Nasrallah, Leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah - And Why Did He Matter?" September 27, 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/explainer-who-hezbollah-leader-hassan-nasrallah-profile-lebanon>.

⁷⁰³ Aurélie Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁷⁰⁴ Aurélie Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁷⁰⁵ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁷⁰⁶ Aurélie Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁷⁰⁷ See Aurélie Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power* (Oxford University Press, 2024), 156.

⁷⁰⁸ Aurélie Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁷⁰⁹ Aurélie Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁷¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁷¹¹ Michael Young, "Israel Has Assassinated the Secretary General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, September 29, 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/middle-east/diwan/2024/09/israel-has-assassinated-the-secretary-general-of-hezbollah-hassan-nasrallah?lang=en>.

⁷¹² Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Shariah (Libya)." Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/327/>.

combat the Gaddafi regime.⁷¹³ Al-Zahawi spent time in prison in Libya.⁷¹⁴ In his eulogy to al-Zahawi, an official of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) claimed: “Sheikh al Zahawi, may Allah have mercy on him, began his march in [the] mid-nineties...Allah guided him [to] meet the reviving Imam Osama bin Laden when Osama was in Sudan. Zahawi took from his determination and learned from his methodology, then he was captured quickly by the Saud government, the traitor to Allah and His Messenger.”⁷¹⁵ Al-Zahawi was then reportedly extradited to Libya. After his release from prison, al-Zahawi participated in the overthrow of Gaddafi’s regime during the February 17 Revolution.⁷¹⁶ Despite his time in Afghanistan, al-Zahawi publicly rejected any links to al-Qaida in 2013.⁷¹⁷ There are conflicting reports over al-Zahawi’s death. Some sources claim that al-Zahawi was killed during a battle in the fall of 2014.⁷¹⁸ However, the organization publicly announced al-Zahawi’s death in January 2015.⁷¹⁹ It is thought that al-Zahawi died of wounds that he suffered after an ambush by pro-government forces in 2014.⁷²⁰ In 2014, the United States designated Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi and Ansar al-Sharia in Derna as Foreign Terrorist Organizations.⁷²¹

⁷¹³ BBC Arabic, “أنصار الشريعة في ليبيا يعلن مقتل زعيم التنظيم محمد الزهاوي ويتوعد بالانتقام,” https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2015/01/150124_libya_ansar.

⁷¹⁴ BBC Arabic, “أنصار الشريعة في ليبيا يعلن مقتل زعيم التنظيم محمد الزهاوي ويتوعد بالانتقام,” https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2015/01/150124_libya_ansar.

⁷¹⁵ Thomas Joscelyn, Ansar al Sharia Libya Leader Met with Osama bin Laden, Followed His ‘Methodology.’” *Long War Journal*, February 11, 2015.

⁷¹⁶ Al Jazeera Arabic, “مقتل زعيم أنصار الشريعة الليبي بمعارك في بنغازي,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2015/1/24/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83>.

⁷¹⁷ France 24, “زعيم مجموعة أنصار الشريعة في ليبيا ينفي أية صلة مع تنظيم القاعدة,” <https://www.france24.com/ar/20131203-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A>.

⁷¹⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, “مقتل زعيم أنصار الشريعة الليبي بمعارك في بنغازي,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2015/1/24/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83>.

⁷¹⁹ BBC Arabic, “أنصار الشريعة في ليبيا يعلن مقتل زعيم التنظيم محمد الزهاوي ويتوعد بالانتقام,” https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2015/01/150124_libya_ansar.

⁷²⁰ Al Jazeera, “Libya’s Ansar al-Sharia Leader Dies Months after Ambush,” January 23, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/1/23/libyas-ansar-al-sharia-leader-dies-months-after-ambush>.

⁷²¹ National Counterterrorism Center, “Ansar al-Sharia,” https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/ansar_al_sharia.html.

Abu Khalid al-Madani

Abu Khalid al-Madani succeeded Mohammad al-Zahawi as leader of Ansar al-Sharia Libya.⁷²² Al-Madani was born in the town of Sabha in southwestern Libya.⁷²³ Al-Madani was reportedly a member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and spent time in the Abu Salim prison in Libya.⁷²⁴ After his release, al-Madani participated in the February 17 Revolution and was a member of the Rafallah al-Sahati Brigade before joining Ansar al-Sharia.⁷²⁵ In 2017, al-Madani was killed in an airstrike conducted by an unknown aircraft.⁷²⁶

Dernah Mujahideen Shura Council

Salim Derby

Salim Derby was the founding leader of the Dernah Mujahideen Shura Council. Derby was born in 1972 in Tobruk, Libya.⁷²⁷ In the 1990s, Derby joined the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and

⁷²² Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar al-Shariah (Libya)." Last modified July 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/327/>.

⁷²³ Ahmed Gomaa, "أمير تنظيم أنصار الشريعة في ليبيا يدعو الإرهابيين لمواصلة القتال ضد الجيش"،

https://www.youm7.com/story/2017/11/16/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%89-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84/3513008#goog_rewarded.

⁷²⁴ Ahmed Gomaa, "أمير تنظيم أنصار الشريعة في ليبيا يدعو الإرهابيين لمواصلة القتال ضد الجيش"،

https://www.youm7.com/story/2017/11/16/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%89-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84/3513008#goog_rewarded.

⁷²⁵ Ahmed Gomaa, "أمير تنظيم أنصار الشريعة في ليبيا يدعو الإرهابيين لمواصلة القتال ضد الجيش"،

https://www.youm7.com/story/2017/11/16/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%89-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84/3513008#goog_rewarded.

⁷²⁶ Al Jazeera Arabic, "مقتل قائد 'أنصار الشريعة' في بنغازي بغارة مجهولة"،

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2017/7/9/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8>

⁷²⁷ Akhbar Libya 24, "الإرهابي 'دربي' بين حقيقته وما أورد الظهور به .. ولماذا اختار درنة منطلقاً لعملتيه الإرهابية"،

<https://akhbarlibya24.net/2020/08/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%>

spent years combating the Gaddafi regime.⁷²⁸ In 2011, Derby reportedly helped found⁷²⁹ and commanded the Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade.⁷³⁰ In December 2014, Derby announced the formation of the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council in a statement that criticized “the work of the criminal Haftar.”⁷³¹ The Islamic State in Libya killed Derby in 2015 during clashes in Derna, Libya.⁷³²

Atiya Sayyed al-Sha’eri

Atiya Sayyed al-Sha’eri replaced Salim Derby as head of the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council following the latter’s death.⁷³³ While little information is available surrounding al-Sha’eri’s early life, he reportedly served as a commander in the Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade before taking control of the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council.⁷³⁴ Al-Sha’eri led the organization until his death in 2018,⁷³⁵ when the Libyan National Army reportedly killed al-Sha’eri during a firefight in eastern Libya.⁷³⁶

<https://akhbarlibya24.net/2020/08/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D9%87>.

⁷²⁸ Akhbar Libya 24, “الإرهابي “دربي” بين حقيقته وما أورد الظهور به .. ولماذا اختار درنة منطلق لعملياته الإرهابية”,

<https://akhbarlibya24.net/2020/08/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D9%87>.

⁷²⁹ Akhbar Libya 24, “الإرهابي “دربي” بين حقيقته وما أورد الظهور به .. ولماذا اختار درنة منطلق لعملياته الإرهابية”,

<https://akhbarlibya24.net/2020/08/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D9%87>.

⁷³⁰ Kevin Truitte, “The Derna Mujahideen Shura Council: A Revolutionary Islamist Coalition in Libya,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 5 (2018).

⁷³¹ Kevin Truitte, “The Derna Mujahideen Shura Council: A Revolutionary Islamist Coalition in Libya,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 5 (2018), 6.

⁷³² Alexander Decina, “General Hifter’s Machiavelli Plan to Get American Support,” *The National Interest*, June 29, 2015, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/libyan-general-hifters-machiavellian-plan-get-american-13210>.

⁷³³ Kevin Truitte, “The Derna Mujahideen Shura Council: A Revolutionary Islamist Coalition in Libya,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 5 (2018).

⁷³⁴ Kevin Truitte, “The Derna Mujahideen Shura Council: A Revolutionary Islamist Coalition in Libya,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 5 (2018).

⁷³⁵ Kevin Truitte, “The Derna Mujahideen Shura Council: A Revolutionary Islamist Coalition in Libya,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 5 (2018).

⁷³⁶ Agenzia Nova, “Libia: ucciso il capo del Consiglio della Shura dei mujahidin di Derna,” (2018), <https://www.agenzianova.com/a/5b31de0da1d3d4.71237362/1975348/2018-06-26/libia-ucciso-il-capo-del-consiglio-della-shura-dei-mujahidin-di-derna>.

February 17th Martyrs Brigade

Fawzi Bukatf

Fawzi Bukatf was the founding leader of the February 17th Martyrs Brigade.⁷³⁷ In 1984, Bukatf was first arrested on charges of affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, remaining in prison until 1992.⁷³⁸ He was later arrested in 1996 and 1998 and sentenced to life in prison before being released in an amnesty agreement in 2006.⁷³⁹ Aside from years of imprisonment in the Abu Salim prison, Bukatf was also an engineer for the Arabian Gulf Oil Company.⁷⁴⁰ In 2011, Bukatf was nominated to head a “military committee” of defectors from Benghazi’s police force.⁷⁴¹ According to the International Crisis Group, Bukatf also established the Revolutionary Brigades Coalition.⁷⁴² Discussing the need for greater coordination between armed groups, Bukatf stated: “In the early days, Misratans were fighting for Misrata and Zintanis for Zintan. By the end of May 2011, it was clear that we had to gather together coalitions of brigades. We couldn’t fight well if we did not coordinate ourselves.”⁷⁴³ The February 17th Martyrs Brigade was eventually formed in August 2011 under Bukatf’s leadership.⁷⁴⁴ By 2012, however, Amraja'a al-Msheiti had replaced Bukatf as leader of the organization.⁷⁴⁵

Amraja'a al-Msheiti

Amraja'a al-Msheiti replaced Fawzi Bukatf as leader of the February 17th Martyrs Brigade.⁷⁴⁶ Al-Msheiti was born in 1984 in the Bohdema neighborhood in Benghazi, Libya.⁷⁴⁷ Al-Msheiti reportedly had formal military training and rose to the rank of Colonel.⁷⁴⁸ In 2012, the General Staff of the Libyan National Army issued a statement promoting al-Msheiti as leader of the

⁷³⁷ Mary Fitzgerald, “Finding Their Place: Libya’s Islamists During and After the Revolution.” *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath* (2015): 177-204.

⁷³⁸ Mohamed Fawzy, “قضية فوزي بوكاتف.. فضيحة تعيد للأذهان جرائم جماعة الإخوان في ليبيا,” <https://lywitness.com/68073/%D9%82%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%83%D8%AA%D9%81-%D9%81%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B0%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%86/>.

⁷³⁹ Mary Fitzgerald, “Finding Their Place: Libya’s Islamists During and After the Revolution.” *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath* (2015): 177-204.

⁷⁴⁰ El Watan, “فوزي بوكاتف.. الذراع الجديد لتركيا في ليبيا,” https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/4877168#goog_rewarded.

⁷⁴¹ Mary Fitzgerald, “Finding Their Place: Libya’s Islamists During and After the Revolution.” *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath* (2015): 177-204.

⁷⁴² International Crisis Group, “Divided We Stand: Libya’s Enduring Conflicts,” (2012).

⁷⁴³ International Crisis Group, “Divided We Stand: Libya’s Enduring Conflicts,” (2012), p. 18.

⁷⁴⁴ Carey, Sabine C., Neil J. Mitchell and Katrin Paula. 2022. “The Life, Death and Diversity of Pro- Government Militias: The Fully Revised Pro-Government Militias Database Version 2.0”. *Research & Politics* 9(1).

⁷⁴⁵ Almotamar, “الجيش الليبي يتولى قيادة ميليشيات في بنغازي,” <https://almotamar.net/news/print.php?id=102124>.

⁷⁴⁶ The Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor: In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror*, Volume X, Issue 19 (2012).

⁷⁴⁷ Al Hadath, “في وجود الدببية.. أحد عناصر “شورى بنغازي” الإرهابية يحصل على رتبة عسكرية بحفل كلية الدفاع الجوي مصراة,” <https://libyaalhadath.net/?p=32395>.

⁷⁴⁸ The Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor: In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror*, Volume X, Issue 19 (2012).

February 17th Martyrs Brigade.⁷⁴⁹ According to the Wilson Center, “The 17 February Martyrs Brigade, one of the largest and best armed militias in eastern Libya, was formed by members of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 2011 uprising. The Brigade, which previously received funding from Libya’s Defense Ministry, has carried out law enforcement functions in southern and eastern Libya. It is based in Benghazi and battled Gen. Haftar’s forces throughout 2014. Several hundred fighters reportedly left the group to join Ansar al Sharia in 2012, but the two groups maintain close ties.”⁷⁵⁰ However, the organization formally dissolved in 2014.⁷⁵¹

Libyan Islamic Fighting Group

Abd al-Ghaffar al-Duwadi

Abd al-Ghaffar al-Duwadi, also known as ‘Abd al-Salam, was born in the town of Sabrata, Libya.⁷⁵² Al-Duwadi, a former medical student, spent time in Afghanistan, where he reportedly established a militant training camp.⁷⁵³ Al-Duwadi became the founding leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group as the group coalesced in the early 1990s.⁷⁵⁴ Al-Duwadi later traveled to Egypt. Upon arriving in Egypt, al-Duwadi was arrested and extradited to Libya in 1992, remaining in prison until early 2009.⁷⁵⁵

Abdelhakim Belhadj

Abdelhakim Belhadj, also known as Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq, became the leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group in 1995.⁷⁵⁶ According to an arrest warrant issued by the Libyan government in 2002, Belhadj was born in 1966 in the Souq al-Jumaa area of Tripoli.⁷⁵⁷ He later studied civil engineering at al-Fateh University.⁷⁵⁸ Belhadj also reportedly fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in the 1980s.⁷⁵⁹ After leaving Afghanistan, he reportedly lived in Sudan

⁷⁴⁹ Almotamar, “الجيش الليبي يتولى قيادة ميليشيات في بنغازي,” <https://almotamar.net/news/print.php?id=102124>.

⁷⁵⁰ Cameron Glenn, “Libya’s Islamists: Who They Are - And What They Want,” *Wilson Center*, August 8, 2017. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/libyas-islamists-who-they-are-and-what-they-want>.

⁷⁵¹ Carey, Sabine C., Neil J. Mitchell and Katrin Paula. 2022. “The Life, Death and Diversity of Pro- Government Militias: The Fully Revised Pro-Government Militias Database Version 2.0”. *Research & Politics* 9(1).

⁷⁵² Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi Books, 2011), 53.

⁷⁵³ Al Chourouk, “من هو مفتاح الدواي عضو الجماعة الإسلامية الليبية المقاتلة المتوفي في حادث سقوط الطائرة الليبية,” https://www.turess.com/alchourouk/1039544#google_vignette.

⁷⁵⁴ Hussam Haddad, “الإسلامية المقاتلة الليبية... مفرخة المليشيات الإرهابية,” <https://www.islamist-movements.com/3455>.

⁷⁵⁵ Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi Books, 2011), 65.

⁷⁵⁶ Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of al-Qa’ida and the Arab Jihadists* (Saqi Books, 2011).

⁷⁵⁷ BBC, “Abdul Hakim Belhaj: Libyan Rebel Commander Who Got UK Apology,” May 10, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14786753>.

⁷⁵⁸ BBC, “Abdul Hakim Belhaj: Libyan Rebel Commander Who Got UK Apology,” May 10, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14786753>.

⁷⁵⁹ David Poort, “Q&A: Top NTC Commander Abdel Hakim Belhadj,” *Al Jazeera*, September 20, 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2011/9/20/qa-top-ntc-commander-abdel-hakim-belhadj>.

until the mid-1990s.⁷⁶⁰ He then returned to Libya to combat the Gaddafi regime and later fled the country, spending time in countries such as Syria, Pakistan, Turkey, and Iran.⁷⁶¹ Belhadj was eventually arrested by the CIA in Bangkok in 2004 and extradited to Libya, where he was imprisoned in the Abu Salim prison.⁷⁶² In 2001, the United States sanctioned the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group under Executive Order 13224.⁷⁶³

Malaysia

Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia

Zainon Ismail

Zainon Ismail was the founding leader of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia upon the organization's formation in October 1995.⁷⁶⁴ Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia emerged from Halaqa Pakinda and had links to the Malaysian Islamist party Parti Islam Se-Malaysia.⁷⁶⁵ The organization was established to “seek religious purity among Malay-Muslims” and implement “*syariah* laws in Malaysia and subsequently to establish an Islamic state.”⁷⁶⁶ Ismail is noted to be a Malaysian from the state of Kedah who fought against the USSR in Afghanistan.⁷⁶⁷ Ismail was reportedly replaced as leader of the group by Nik Adli Abdul Aziz in 1999 following internal organizational deliberations.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, “من هو عبد الحكيم بلحاج?” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2017/1/19/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AC>.

⁷⁶¹ David Poort, “Q&A: Top NTC Commander Abdel Hakim Belhadj,” Al Jazeera, September 20, 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2011/9/20/qa-top-ntc-commander-abdel-hakim-belhadj>.

⁷⁶² David Poort, “Q&A: Top NTC Commander Abdel Hakim Belhadj,” Al Jazeera, September 20, 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2011/9/20/qa-top-ntc-commander-abdel-hakim-belhadj>.

⁷⁶³ U.S. Department of State, “Executive Order 13224,” <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224>.

⁷⁶⁴ Amira Jadoon, Nakissa Jahanbani, Elina Noor, Marley Carroll, and William Frangia, “Risks, Recruits, and Plots: Understanding and Mitigating the Influence of the Islamic State in Malaysia,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2022).

⁷⁶⁵ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, “Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

⁷⁶⁶ Amira Jadoon, Nakissa Jahanbani, Elina Noor, Marley Carroll, and William Frangia, “Risks, Recruits, and Plots: Understanding and Mitigating the Influence of the Islamic State in Malaysia,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2022), 10.

⁷⁶⁷ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009).

⁷⁶⁸ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, “Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

Nik Adli Abdul Aziz

Nik Adli Abdul Aziz reportedly assumed control of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia in 1999.⁷⁶⁹ Abdul Aziz was born in the late 1960s⁷⁷⁰ and was the son of Nik Aziz Nik Mat, the spiritual leader of Parti Islam Se-Malaysia.⁷⁷¹ Abdul Aziz received madrasa education in Pakistan and also fought against the USSR in Afghanistan.⁷⁷² In terms of employment, he was noted to be “a religious teacher.”⁷⁷³ In 2001, Malaysian authorities arrested Abdul Aziz and other suspected militants on the basis of the Internal Security Act that allowed for detention without trial.⁷⁷⁴

Zulkifli Abdhir

Zulkifli Abdhir was born in January 1996 in Muar, Johor, Malaysia.⁷⁷⁵ Zulkifli completed his secondary education in 1983 and subsequently secured a Malaysian government scholarship to study engineering in the United States.⁷⁷⁶ Zulkifli gained expertise in explosives while fighting in Afghanistan for three years before returning to Malaysia.⁷⁷⁷ In 2007, the United States designated Zulkifli as a Specifically Designated Global Terrorist.⁷⁷⁸ Zulkifli reportedly succeeded Nik Adli Abdul Aziz as the leader of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia following the latter’s arrest.⁷⁷⁹ In 2015, Zulkifli was killed during an assault by the Special Action Forces in the Philippines.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁶⁹ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, “Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

⁷⁷⁰ Los Angeles Times, “Son of Opposition Leader is Arrested in Sweep,” August 5, 2001, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-aug-05-mn-30840-story.html>.

⁷⁷¹ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, “Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihads in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* (2019): 1-13.

⁷⁷² Therese Lee, “Malaysia and the International Security Act: The Insecurity of Human Rights After September 11,” *Singapore Journal of Legal Studies* (2002): 56-72.

⁷⁷³ Los Angeles Times, “Son of Opposition Leader is Arrested in Sweep,” August 5, 2001, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-aug-05-mn-30840-story.html>.

⁷⁷⁴ Los Angeles Times, “Son of Opposition Leader is Arrested in Sweep,” August 5, 2001, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-aug-05-mn-30840-story.html>.

⁷⁷⁵ Zachary Abuza, “Zulkifli bin Hir: JI’s U.S.-Trained Engineer,” *Jamestown Monitor*, April 5, 2007.

⁷⁷⁶ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009). Within this volume, see Ronan Gunaratna, “The Current and Emerging Extremist Threat in Malaysia,” (2009): 12-29.

⁷⁷⁷ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009).

⁷⁷⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, “Specially Designated Global Terrorist and His Brother Indicted for Providing Material Support to Terrorists,” August 3, 2007, https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2007/August/07_nsd_578.html.

⁷⁷⁹ Scott Helfstein (ed.), *Radical Islamic Ideology in Southeast Asia* (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2009).

⁷⁸⁰ Tim Hume, “FBI Confirms ‘Most Wanted’ Terror Suspect Marwan Killed after Philippines Raid,” *CNN*, April 3, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/04/03/world/philippines-marwan-confirmed-dead/index.html>.

Jemaah Islamiya

Abdullah Sungkar

Abdullah Sungkar was born in 1937 to a prominent family of traders of Yemeni descent in Solo.⁷⁸¹ Sungkar received early religious education from his father, a religious teacher in Solo, and later graduated from the Muhamadiyah Islamic University of Surakarta in 1957.⁷⁸² After graduating, Sungkar reportedly worked as a religious teacher and preacher and also became increasingly active in politics.⁷⁸³ Sungkar was briefly detained in 1977 and was arrested again in 1978 on subversion charges for his alleged involvement in Darul Islam.⁷⁸⁴ Sungkar was released from prison in 1982 and fled to Malaysia with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir in 1985.⁷⁸⁵ In Malaysia, Sungkar and Ba'asyir set up a religious school called Pondok Pesantren Lukmantul Hakiem.⁷⁸⁶ This time in Malaysia witnessed the growth of their militant activities: "In exile, they expanded their network and began sending men to wage guerrilla war against the Soviet army in Afghanistan... Those who traveled to the training camps of Pakistan and the battlefields of Afghanistan gained important military skills, including instruction on explosives, mines, maps, and infantry tactics. The men were also exposed to new ideologies through their contact with Abdullah Azzam, the man most responsible for catalyzing the foreign fighter migration to Afghanistan."⁷⁸⁷ During the 1990s, Sungkar and Ba'asyir co-founded Jemaah Islamiya, with Sungkar serving as the organization's top leader.⁷⁸⁸ The fall of President Suharto's regime in 1998 allowed Sungkar to return to Indonesia.⁷⁸⁹ Shortly after this return, however, Sungkar died of natural causes in 1999.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸¹ International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the *Jemaah Islamiyah* Terrorist Network Operations," December 11, 2002.

⁷⁸² Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

⁷⁸³ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

⁷⁸⁴ International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the *Jemaah Islamiyah* Terrorist Network Operations," December 11, 2002.

⁷⁸⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021.
<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁷⁸⁶ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

⁷⁸⁷ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011), 2-3.

⁷⁸⁸ The International Crisis Groups dates Jemaah Islamiya's formation to 1995. International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the *Jemaah Islamiyah* Terrorist Network Operations," December 11, 2002.

⁷⁸⁹ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, "Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihad in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 41, no. 1 (2019): 1-13.

⁷⁹⁰ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021.
<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

Abu Bakar Ba'asyir

Abu Bakar Ba'asyir succeeded Abdullah Sungkar as leader of Jemaah Islamiya.⁷⁹¹ Ba'asyir was born in East Java in August 1938.⁷⁹² In a similar fashion to Abdullah Sungkar, Ba'asyir's family was of Yemeni/Hadramauti descent.⁷⁹³ Ba'asyir received religious education at an early age and continued his studies at al-Irsyad Islamic University in Surakarta, graduating in 1963.⁷⁹⁴ Alongside Abdullah Sungkar, Ba'asyir created a religious seminary (*pesantren*) in Ngruki and was an active supporter of the Darul Islam movement.⁷⁹⁵ In 1978, Ba'asyir was arrested and remained in prison until 1982.⁷⁹⁶ Reports indicate that "it was in prison that Baasyir and Sungkar grew even more radical in their thinking and ambitions."⁷⁹⁷ After being released, Ba'asyir traveled with Sungkar to Malaysia to avoid future arrests in Indonesia.⁷⁹⁸ Ba'asyir helped co-found Jemaah Islamiya while in exile.⁷⁹⁹ The fall of President Suharto's regime in 1998 allowed Sungkar and Ba'asyir to return to Indonesia.⁸⁰⁰ However, Sungkar's death in 1999 left Jemaah Islamiya "in the hands of Ba'asyir, whom many saw as a weak leader."⁸⁰¹ Ba'asyir reportedly served as Jemaah Islamiya's leader until his arrest in 2002⁸⁰² due to his connections to the 2002 Bali bombings.⁸⁰³ The United States designated Jemaah Islamiya as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2002.⁸⁰⁴

⁷⁹¹ Scott Atran, "The Emir: An Interview with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Alleged Leader of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah Organization," December 16, 2005; David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

⁷⁹² Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

⁷⁹³ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

⁷⁹⁴ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

⁷⁹⁵ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007).

⁷⁹⁶ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

⁷⁹⁷ Farish A. Noor, "Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta," No. 139 (October 2007), 3.

⁷⁹⁸ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011).

⁷⁹⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁸⁰⁰ Kirsten E. Schulze and Julie Chernov Hwang, "Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: New Insights into Jihad in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 41, no. 1 (2019): 1-13.

⁸⁰¹ David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2011), 3.

⁸⁰² Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁸⁰³ Al Jazeera, "Indonesian Leader Behind 2002 Bali Bombings to be Freed: Lawyer," January 18, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/1/18/indonesian-leader-behind-2002-bali-bombings-to-be-freed-lawyer>.

⁸⁰⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

Abu Rusydan

Abu Rusydan, also known as Thoriquddin, succeeded Abu Bakar Ba'asyir as leader of Jemaah Islamiya. Abu Rusydan was born in 1960 in Central Java, Indonesia.⁸⁰⁵ He was reportedly inducted into the Darul Islam organization at 15 years of age⁸⁰⁶ and was university-educated.⁸⁰⁷ Abu Rusydan is also thought to have fought in Afghanistan.⁸⁰⁸ According to the United Nations Security Council, Abu Rusydan traveled to Afghanistan for paramilitary training in 1986 and stayed until 1989.⁸⁰⁹ As stated by the United Nations Security Council, Abu Rusydan became emir of Jemaah Islamiya after Ba'asyir's 2002 arrest.⁸¹⁰ In 2003, he was arrested in Indonesia on charges of harboring one of the masterminds of the 2002 Bali bombings and sentenced in February 2004 to three and a half years in prison.⁸¹¹ Muhammad Naim reportedly took over the position of "caretaker" emir in 2004.⁸¹²

Zarkasih

Zarkasih, also known as Muhammad Naim, succeeded Abu Rusdyan as Jemaah Islamiya's leader.⁸¹³ Naim was reportedly born in December 1962.⁸¹⁴ While little information is available about his life, Naim is believed to have joined the mujahideen in Afghanistan.⁸¹⁵ Naim reportedly served as Jemaah Islamiya's "caretaker" emir until his arrest in Indonesia in 2007.⁸¹⁶

⁸⁰⁵ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Designates Jemaah Islamiyah's Emir, Top Bomb Maker and Military Comma," May 12, 2005, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js2441>.

⁸⁰⁶ Julie Chernov Hwang and Kirsten E. Schulze, "Why They Join: Pathways into Indonesia Jihadist Organizations," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 6 (2018): 911-932.

⁸⁰⁷ Sian Powell, "New JI Terror Boss Tagged as 'Very Dangerous,'" *The Australian* (2003).

⁸⁰⁸ Julie Chernov Hwang and Kirsten E. Schulze, "Why They Join: Pathways into Indonesia Jihadist Organizations," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 6 (2018): 911-932.

⁸⁰⁹ United Nations Security Council, "Abu Rusdan," February 2, 2023, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abu-rusdan.

⁸¹⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Abu Rusdan," February 2, 2023, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abu-rusdan.

⁸¹¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁸¹² Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁸¹³ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁸¹⁴ Detik News, "Sidang Perdana Tersangka Teroris Zarkasih Digelar," <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-867868/sidang-perdana-tersangka-teroris-zarkasih-digelar>.

⁸¹⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7140846.stm>.

⁸¹⁶ Mapping Militants Project. "Jemaah Islamiyah." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

Para Wijayanto

Para Wijayanto reportedly succeeded Zarkasih as leader of Jemaah Islamiya.⁸¹⁷ Wijayanto was born in August 1964 and is the son of an Indonesian Air Force officer.⁸¹⁸ Wijayanto studied at the Faculty of Technology at Diponegoro University in Central Java and subsequently worked in the civil engineering division of the PT Pura Group.⁸¹⁹ Sources highlight that Wijayanto may have studied in Malaysia as well as traveled to Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁸²⁰ In 2019, Indonesian authorities arrested Wijayanto in Bekasi, Indonesia.⁸²¹

Mali

al-Mourabitoun

Abu Bakr al-Nasri

Abu Bakr al-Nasri was reportedly the first leader of al-Mourabitoun.⁸²² Al-Nasri, who was from Egypt, is noted to have fought in Afghanistan alongside the Taliban and also worked at an al-Qaeda camp in Libya.⁸²³ Al-Nasri also reportedly had close ties with al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁸²⁴ In August 2013, al-Mourabitoun was formed following the merger of the al-Mulathamun Battalion and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO).⁸²⁵ Al-

⁸¹⁷ Mapping Militants Project. “Jemaah Islamiyah.” Last modified June 1, 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/420/>.

⁸¹⁸ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, “Indonesian Website Provides Info on Jemaah Islamiyah’s Para Wijayanto,” September 3, 2009.

⁸¹⁹ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, “Indonesian Website Provides Info on Jemaah Islamiyah’s Para Wijayanto,” September 3, 2009.

⁸²⁰ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, “Indonesian Website Provides Info on Jemaah Islamiyah’s Para Wijayanto,” September 3, 2009.

⁸²¹ ABC News, “Indonesia Arrests Alleged Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Leader Para Wijayanto,” July 1, 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-02/indonesian-police-arrest-jemaah-islamiyah-network-leader/11269286>.

⁸²² Christine Muratet, “Mali: qui sont les nouveaux chefs des katibas jihadistes?” May 14, 2014, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20140514-mali-etat-jihadistes-apres-mort-emir-al-mourabitoune-aqmi-al-qaida-mujao-belmokhtar>; Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>.

⁸²³ Christine Muratet, “Mali: qui sont les nouveaux chefs des katibas jihadistes?” May 14, 2014, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20140514-mali-etat-jihadistes-apres-mort-emir-al-mourabitoune-aqmi-al-qaida-mujao-belmokhtar>.

⁸²⁴ Christine Muratet, “Mali: qui sont les nouveaux chefs des katibas jihadistes?” May 14, 2014, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20140514-mali-etat-jihadistes-apres-mort-emir-al-mourabitoune-aqmi-al-qaida-mujao-belmokhtar>.

⁸²⁵ Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>.

Nasri was killed by French military forces in April 2014 in the Timetrine region of Mali.⁸²⁶ The United States had previously sanctioned al-Mourabitoun under Executive Order 13224 in 2013.⁸²⁷

Ahmed al-Tilemsi

Ahmed al-Tilemsi, also known as Abderrahmane Ould el Amar, was born in 1977 in the Gao region of Mali.⁸²⁸ Reportedly of Arab descent,⁸²⁹ al-Tilemsi was involved in drug trafficking before joining the jihadist movement.⁸³⁰ He fought with the Tariq Ibn Ziyad organization and later joined al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.⁸³¹ Al-Tilemsi was arrested in April 2005 in Mauritania, but escaped the following year.⁸³² He was arrested again in Mali in September 2008 and was released in April 2009.⁸³³ Al-Tilemsi later joined the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO); however, reports differ over his exact role. While some sources note that he was an influential leader but not a top leader,⁸³⁴ other reports claim that he founded MUJAO alongside Hamad el Khairy and served as the organization's top military leader.⁸³⁵ The United States designated al-Tilemsi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2012.⁸³⁶ Following al-Nasri's

⁸²⁶ Christine Muratet, "Mali: qui sont les nouveaux chefs des katibas jihadistes?" May 14, 2014, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20140514-mali-etat-jihadistes-apres-mort-emir-al-mourabitoune-aqmi-al-qaida-mujao-belmokhtar>.

⁸²⁷ Federal Register, "In the Matter of the Designation of Al-Mulathamun Battalion, Also Known as al-Mulathamun Brigade, Also Known as al-Muwaqqi'un bil-Dima, Also Known as Those Signed in Blood Battalion, Also Known as Signatories in Blood, Also Known as Those who Sign in Blood, Also Known as Witnesses in Blood, Also Known as Signed-in-Blood Battalion, Also Known as Masked Men Brigade, Also Known as Khaled Abu al-Abbas Brigade, Also Known as al-Mulathamun Masked Ones Brigade, Also Known as al-Murabitoun, Also Known as The Sentinels; as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Pursuant to Section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224, as Amended," December 19, 2013, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/12/19/2013-30252/in-the-matter-of-the-designation-of-al-mulathamun-battalion-also-known-as-al-mulathamun-brigade-also>.

⁸²⁸ Andrew Lebovich, "The Local Face of Jihadism in Northern Mali," *CTC Sentinel* 6, no. 6 (2013): 4-10; Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Sanctions List Search," <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/Details.aspx?id=15611>.

⁸²⁹ Andrew Lebovich, "The Local Face of Jihadism in Northern Mali," *CTC Sentinel* 6, no. 6 (2013): 4-10.

⁸³⁰ David Thompson, "Ahmed al-Tilemsi: portrait d'un «des principaux financiers du Mujao»" *RFI*, December 11, 2014, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20141211-mali-ahmed-al-telemsi-portait-principaux-financiers-mujao>.

⁸³¹ United Nations Security Council, "Abderrahmane Ould El Amar," https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abderrahmane-ould-el-amar.

⁸³² United Nations Security Council, "Abderrahmane Ould El Amar," https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abderrahmane-ould-el-amar.

⁸³³ Open Sanctions, "Abderrahmane Ould El Amar," <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-W6nsQhfh7dGZUt5wb3CpMK/>; United Nations Security Council, "Abderrahmane Ould El Amar," https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/abderrahmane-ould-el-amar.

⁸³⁴ David Thompson, "Ahmed al-Tilemsi: portrait d'un «des principaux financiers du Mujao»" *RFI*, December 11, 2014, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20141211-mali-ahmed-al-telemsi-portait-principaux-financiers-mujao>.

⁸³⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designations of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Hamad el Khairy, and Ahmed el Tilemsi," December 7, 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/12/201660.htm>; Bill Roggio and Caleb Weiss, "French Troops Kill MUJAO Founder During Raid in Mali," *Long War Journal*, December 11, 2014, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/12/us_wanted_malian_jih.php.

⁸³⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designations of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Hamad el Khairy, and Ahmed el Tilemsi," December 7, 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/12/201660.htm>.

death, al-Tilemsi reportedly took command of al-Mourabitoun and commanded the group until his death, which occurred during a special operations mission conducted by the French forces in Gao in December 2014.⁸³⁷

Mokhtar Belmokhtar

Mokhtar Belmokhtar, also known as Khalid Abu al-Abbas, was born in 1972 in the town of Metlili in the Ghardaïa Province of Algeria.⁸³⁸ Belmokhtar reportedly completed some secondary schooling before leaving the country for Afghanistan.⁸³⁹ In Afghanistan, Belmokhtar is noted to have trained at al-Qaida camps, fought the Najibullah regime, and met with numerous influential jihadist figures.⁸⁴⁰ Belmokhtar also suffered an injury in Afghanistan that caused him to lose an eye, earning him the “one-eyed” nickname.⁸⁴¹ Belmokhtar reportedly returned from Afghanistan at the end of 1992⁸⁴² or early 1993.⁸⁴³ Back in Algeria for the early stages of the civil war, Belmokhtar established a local militia known as the Martyrs’ Brigade in Ghardaïa.⁸⁴⁴ Through his militant activities, Belmokhtar distinguished himself through stealing vehicles from oil companies, cross-border smuggling between Mali and Algeria, and the murder of five Sonatrach workers in 1995, after which the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) declared him as the organization’s Saharan emir.⁸⁴⁵ Belmokhtar later joined the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat/al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).⁸⁴⁶ In 2001, Belmokhtar hosted an al-Qaida emissary traveling to Niger, Algeria, and Mali: “the visit not only elevated Belmokhtar’s reputation but also reflected his ability to navigate the Sahara in a geographical and political sense.”⁸⁴⁷ In 2003, the United States

⁸³⁷ Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>.

⁸³⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, “بلمختار.. من إمارة الملثمين” إلى “المرابطين”, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/1/%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1>.

⁸³⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “بلمختار.. من إمارة الملثمين” إلى “المرابطين”, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/1/%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1>.

⁸⁴⁰ Andrew Wojtanik, “Mokhtar Belmokhtar: One-Eyed Firebrand of North Africa and the Sahel,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2015).

⁸⁴¹ Andrew Wojtanik, “Mokhtar Belmokhtar: One-Eyed Firebrand of North Africa and the Sahel,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2015).

⁸⁴² Al Jazeera Arabic, “بلمختار.. من إمارة الملثمين” إلى “المرابطين”, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/12/1/%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1>.

⁸⁴³ Andrew Wojtanik, “Mokhtar Belmokhtar: One-Eyed Firebrand of North Africa and the Sahel,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2015).

⁸⁴⁴ Andrew Wojtanik, “Mokhtar Belmokhtar: One-Eyed Firebrand of North Africa and the Sahel,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2015).

⁸⁴⁵ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁸⁴⁶ Andrew Wojtanik, “Mokhtar Belmokhtar: One-Eyed Firebrand of North Africa and the Sahel,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (2015).

⁸⁴⁷ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

designated Belmokhtar for his involvement in terrorism.⁸⁴⁸ Due to internal disputes, Belmokhtar left AQIM in 2012 and formed the al-Mulathamun Battalion, which is also known as the Those Who Sign in Blood Brigade.⁸⁴⁹ In August 2013, Belmokhtar merged his organization with the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) to create al-Mourabitoun.⁸⁵⁰ Belmokhtar reportedly took command of the organization in 2015.⁸⁵¹ The same year, he rejected the oath of allegiance given by Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahraoui to the Islamic State's leaders and highlighted the group's allegiance to al-Qaida.⁸⁵² Despite repeated reports of his death,⁸⁵³ Belmokhtar remained in charge of the organization until its merger with other jihadist groups, such as the Macina Liberation Front and Ansar al-Dine, to form Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) in 2017.⁸⁵⁴ In 2021, Ayman al-Zawahiri confirmed Belmokhtar's death.⁸⁵⁵

Ansar al-Dine

Iyad Ag Ghali

Iyad Ag Ghali, also known as Abu Fadl, was the founding leader of Ansar al-Dine in Mali. Ghali was born in 1954 in the city of Kidal, Mali.⁸⁵⁶ Ghali is of Tuareg ethnicity and a member of the Ifoghas tribe.⁸⁵⁷ During the 1990s, Ghali played a prominent role in the Tuareg revolt in Mali, reportedly serving as the secretary-general of the Popular Movement of Azawad and the “undisputed leader” of the Tuareg rebels.⁸⁵⁸ During the 2000s, Ghali reportedly studied at a

⁸⁴⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury, “U.S. Designates Three Individuals And One Organization Involved in Terrorism,” October 24, 2003, [https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js944#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20--%20The%20U.S.%20Treasury,Call%20and%20Combat%20\(GSPC\)](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js944#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20--%20The%20U.S.%20Treasury,Call%20and%20Combat%20(GSPC)).

⁸⁴⁹ Mapping Militants Project. “The Those Who Sign in Blood Brigade.” Last modified June 30, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/308/>.

⁸⁵⁰ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Mourabitoun.” Last modified June 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/307/>.

⁸⁵¹ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Mourabitoun.” Last modified June 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/307/>.

⁸⁵² Mapping Militants Project. “Al Mourabitoun.” Last modified June 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/307/>.

⁸⁵³ For instance, see France 24, ““Uncatchable” Islamist Militant Belmokhtar Reported Killed in US Air Strike,” June 15, 2015, <https://www.france24.com/en/20150615-terrorist-belmokhtar-reported-killed-us-air-strike-libya-algerian>.

⁸⁵⁴ Mapping Militants Project. “Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen.” Last modified October 31, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/2979/>.

⁸⁵⁵ Jacob Zenn, “Ayman al-Zawahiri Confirms Death of Sahelian Jihadist Mastermind Mokhtar Belmokhtar,” *The Jamestown Foundation*, October 28, 2021.

⁸⁵⁶ Al Jazeera Arabic, “إياد غالي” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/3/24/%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A2%D8%BA-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A>.

⁸⁵⁷ International Criminal Court, “Iyad Ag Ghaly,” <https://www.icc-cpi.int/defendant/iyad-ag-ghaly>.

⁸⁵⁸ Steve Metcalf, “Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali's Islamist Leader,” *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

Mosque in St. Denis, France,⁸⁵⁹ as well as served as a Malian diplomat in Saudi Arabia.⁸⁶⁰ In 2003, Ghali played a key role in negotiating the release of German tourists kidnapped by the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.⁸⁶¹ Additionally, Ghali briefly served as head of the 23 May Democratic Alliance for Change.⁸⁶² In 2011, Ghali reportedly returned to Mali from Libya following the fall of the Gaddafi regime⁸⁶³ and founded Ansar al-Dine.⁸⁶⁴ Shortly after the formation of Ansar al-Dine, the United States designated Ghali as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist⁸⁶⁵ and Ansar al-Dine as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.⁸⁶⁶ Ghali continued to lead Ansar al-Dine until the organization merged with other jihadist organizations to form Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen in 2017.⁸⁶⁷

Ansaroul Islam

Ibrahim Malam Dicko

Ibrahim Malam Dicko founded Ansaroul Islam in Burkina Faso in 2016. Dicko was reportedly born around 1970 in a Fulani community in Burkina Faso.⁸⁶⁸ Dicko first attended a traditional public school before undertaking religious studies in Burkina Faso and abroad.⁸⁶⁹ Utilizing his religious education to become a cleric, Dicko taught as an Imam in Niger before returning to

⁸⁵⁹ Counter Extremism Project, "Iyad Ag Ghaly," <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/iyad-ag-ghaly>.

⁸⁶⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, "إياد غالي"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/3/24/%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A2%D8%BA-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A>.

⁸⁶¹ Steve Metcalf, "Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali's Islamist Leader," *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

⁸⁶² Steve Metcalf, "Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali's Islamist Leader," *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

⁸⁶³ Steve Metcalf, "Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali's Islamist Leader," *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

⁸⁶⁴ Mapping Militants Project. "Ansar Dine." Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/329/>.

⁸⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designations of Iyad ag Ghali, February 26, 2013, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/02/205196.htm>.

⁸⁶⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁸⁶⁷ Mapping Militants Project. "Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen." Last modified October 31, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/2979/>.

⁸⁶⁸ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>; Koudbi Kaboré, "The Modernity of Islam in Burkina Faso: Contrasting Strategies in Two Emergent Movements," in Abdoulaye Sounaye and André Chappatte (eds.), *Islam and Muslim Life in West Africa: Practices, Trajectories and Influences* (De Gruyter, 2022): 39-62.

⁸⁶⁹ Morgane Le Cam, "Comment est né Ansaroul Islam, premier groupe djihadiste de l'Histoire du Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, April 11, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/04/11/comment-est-ne-ansaroul-islam-premier-groupe-djihadiste-de-l-histoire-du-burkina-faso_5109520_3212.html; Koudbi Kaboré, "The Modernity of Islam in Burkina Faso: Contrasting Strategies in Two Emergent Movements," in Abdoulaye Sounaye and André Chappatte (eds.), *Islam and Muslim Life in West Africa: Practices, Trajectories and Influences* (De Gruyter, 2022): 39-62.

Burkina Faso in 2009.⁸⁷⁰ In 2012, Dicko reportedly joined the jihadist struggle in Mali before being arrested by French troops in 2013 and subsequently transported to Bamako.⁸⁷¹ He was released in 2015 due to a lack of incriminating evidence and returned to Burkina Faso to form Ansaroul Islam.⁸⁷² According to *Le Monde*, Dicko died of natural causes in 2017.⁸⁷³

Jafar Dicko

Jafar Dicko succeeded his brother as the leader of Ansaroul Islam.⁸⁷⁴ Born in Soboulé, Dicko was reportedly 38 years old when he assumed power in 2017.⁸⁷⁵ In a similar fashion to his brother, Jafar was influenced by Amadou Koufa, the leader of the Macina Liberation Front.⁸⁷⁶ However, Jafar reportedly lacked his brother's leadership skills: "Known for his brutal temper...Jafar purportedly lacks his brother's charisma."⁸⁷⁷ The United States designated Ansaroul Islam as a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224 in 2018 and sanctioned Dicko in 2024.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁰ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

⁸⁷¹ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

⁸⁷² Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

⁸⁷³ Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html.

⁸⁷⁴ Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html; Hédi Nsaibia and Caleb Weiss, "Ansaroul Islam and the Growing Terrorist Insurgency in Burkina Faso," *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 3 (2018): 21-26; Mapping Militants Project. "Ansaroul Islam." Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/2980/>; Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

⁸⁷⁵ Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html.

⁸⁷⁶ Seidik Abba, "Jafar Dicko, The New Face of Jihadism in Burkina Faso," *Le Monde Afrique*, December 21, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/21/jafar-dicko-le-nouveau-visage-du-djihadisme-au-burkina-faso_5232877_3212.html.

⁸⁷⁷ Pauline Le Roux, "Ansaroul Islam: The Rise and Decline of a Militant Islamist Group in the Sahel," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 29, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ansaroul-islam-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-militant-islamist-group-in-the-sahel/>.

⁸⁷⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "U.S. Targets West African Hostage Takers," April 23, 2024, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2293>.

Islamic State Greater Sahara

Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahraoui

Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahraoui was born in 1973 in Western Sahara.⁸⁷⁹ Al-Sahraoui participated in the Western Sahara independence movement and received military training from the Polisario Front.⁸⁸⁰ In 1992, al-Sahraoui fled Western Sahara for Algeria. In Algeria, he would study at the University of Mentouri in Constantine, receiving a social science degree.⁸⁸¹ By the early 2000s, al-Sahraoui reportedly grew increasingly frustrated by the lack of a political settlement between Western Sahara and Morocco and also suffered from health problems.⁸⁸² He later began smuggling goods between Mali and Algeria and grew closer to the jihadist movement, joining al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb's Tariq Ibn Ziyad battalion in 2010.⁸⁸³ Al-Sahraoui subsequently became the spokesperson for the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO).⁸⁸⁴ He would subsequently help create al-Mourabitoun in 2013, becoming a senior leader within the group.⁸⁸⁵ In 2015, al-Sahraoui pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, claiming to do so on behalf of the entire al-Mourabitoun organization.⁸⁸⁶ However, Mokhtar Belmokhtar rejected this oath, and al-Sahraoui splintered with a few dozen fighters to create the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara.⁸⁸⁷ The United States designated the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and al-Sahraoui as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in May 2018.⁸⁸⁸ In August 2021, a French drone strike killed al-Sahraoui while he was riding his motorbike near the "border between Mali and Niger."⁸⁸⁹

⁸⁷⁹ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁸⁸⁰ Yvan Guichaoua and Andrew Lebovich, "America's Options in Niger: Join Forces to Reduce Tensions, or Fan the Flames," *The Conversation*, November 2, 2017, <https://theconversation.com/americas-options-in-niger-join-forces-to-reduce-tensions-or-fan-the-flames-86655>.

⁸⁸¹ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁸⁸² Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁸⁸³ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁸⁸⁴ Counter Extremism Project, "Adnan al-Sahrawi," <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/adnan-al-sahrawi>.

⁸⁸⁵ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront* (Oxford University Press 2021).

⁸⁸⁶ Thomas Joscelyn and Caleb Weiss, "Islamic State Recognizes Oath of Allegiance from Jihadists in Mali," *Long War Journal*, October 31, 2016, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/10/islamic-state-recognizes-oath-of-allegiance-from-jihadists-in-west-africa.php>.

⁸⁸⁷ Jason Warner and Charlotte Hulme, "The Islamic State in Africa: Estimating Fighter Numbers in Cells Across the Continent," 11, no. 7 (2018): 21-28.

⁸⁸⁸ U.S. Department of State, "State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS) and Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi," May 16, 2018, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-in-the-greater-sahara-isis-gs-and-adnan-abu-walid-al-sahrawi/>.

⁸⁸⁹ Tom Wheeldon and Wassim Nasr, "Sahrawi: The Top Sahel Jihadist Killed in French 'Opportunistic Hit,'" September 16, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210916-the-assassinated-abou-walid-al-sahrawi-france-s-major-enemy-in-the-sahel>.

Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen

Iyad Ag Ghali

Iyad Ag Ghali, also known as Abu Fadl, was the founding leader of Ansar al-Dine in Mali. Ghali was born in 1954 in the city of Kidal, Mali.⁸⁹⁰ Ghali is of Tuareg ethnicity and a member of the Ifoghas tribe.⁸⁹¹ During the 1990s, Ghali played a prominent role in the Tuareg revolt in Mali, reportedly serving as the secretary-general of the Popular Movement of Azawad and the “undisputed leader” of the Tuareg rebels.⁸⁹² During the 2000s, Ghali reportedly studied at a Mosque in St. Denis, France,⁸⁹³ as well as served as a Malian diplomat in Saudi Arabia.⁸⁹⁴ In 2003, Ghali played a key role in negotiating the release of German tourists kidnapped by the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.⁸⁹⁵ Additionally, Ghali briefly served as head of the 23 May Democratic Alliance for Change.⁸⁹⁶ In 2011, Ghali reportedly returned to Mali from Libya following the fall of the Gaddafi regime⁸⁹⁷ and founded Ansar al-Dine.⁸⁹⁸ Shortly after the formation of Ansar al-Dine, the United States designated Ghali as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist⁸⁹⁹ and Ansar al-Dine as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.⁹⁰⁰ Ghali continued to lead Ansar al-Dine until the organization merged with other jihadist organizations, such as the Macina Liberation Front and al-Mourabitoun, to form Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) in 2017.⁹⁰¹ Serving as the leader of the newly formed JNIM, Ghali would pledge allegiance to the

⁸⁹⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, “إياد غالي” April 24, 2015,

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/3/24/%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A2%D8%BA-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A>.

⁸⁹¹ International Criminal Court, “Iyad Ag Ghaly,” <https://www.icc-cpi.int/defendant/iyad-ag-ghaly>.

⁸⁹² Steve Metcalf, “Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali’s Islamist Leader,” *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

⁸⁹³ Counter Extremism Project, “Iyad Ag Ghaly,” <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/iyad-ag-ghaly>.

⁸⁹⁴ Al Jazeera Arabic, “إياد غالي” April 24, 2015,

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/3/24/%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A2%D8%BA-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A>.

⁸⁹⁵ Steve Metcalf, “Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali’s Islamist Leader,” *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

⁸⁹⁶ Steve Metcalf, “Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali’s Islamist Leader,” *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

⁸⁹⁷ Steve Metcalf, “Iyad Ag Ghaly - Mali’s Islamist Leader,” *BBC*, July 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18814291>.

⁸⁹⁸ Mapping Militants Project. “Ansar Dine.” Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/329/>.

⁸⁹⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Terrorist Designations of Iyad ag Ghali,” February 26, 2013, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/02/205196.htm>.

⁹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁹⁰¹ Mapping Militants Project. “Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen.” Last modified October 31, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/2979/>.

leaders of al-Qaida and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.⁹⁰² Shortly after its formation, the United States designated JNIM as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2018.⁹⁰³

Macina Liberation Front (FLM)

Amadou Koufa

Amadou Koufa was the founding leader of the Macina Liberation Front. Koufa was born in 1961 in Mali.⁹⁰⁴ Educated in religious schools, Koufa became a preacher, initially “advocating for more social justice and practicing a moderate form of Islam.”⁹⁰⁵ During the 2000s, Koufa visited Afghanistan, India, and Qatar.⁹⁰⁶ After returning to Mali, Koufa’s beliefs grew increasingly radical and he joined Ansar al-Dine in 2012.⁹⁰⁷ In 2013, Koufa led a jihadist offensive into the town of Konna in central Mali.⁹⁰⁸ Over time, Koufa grew his popularity through his “mastery of radio as a tool for communication in his native Fulani language.”⁹⁰⁹ The Macina Liberation Front was created in 2015, with Koufa as its leader.⁹¹⁰ In 2017, the Macina Liberation Front merged with other jihadist actors to create Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen, an organization that pledged its fealty to al-Qaida’s leaders.⁹¹¹

Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat/al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

Hassan Hattab

Hassan Hattab became the founding leader of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) after splintering from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria. Hattab was born in 1967

⁹⁰² Mapping Militants Project. “Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen.” Last modified October 31, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/2979/>.

⁹⁰³ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

⁹⁰⁴ André Bourgeot, “Le djihad armé d’Amadou Koufa (Mali central).” *Recherches Internationales* 117, no. 1 (2020): 95-116.

⁹⁰⁵ Pauline Le Roux, “Confronting Central Mali’s Extremist Threat,” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, February 22, 2019.

⁹⁰⁶ Jacob Zenn, “The Sahel’s Militant ‘Melting Pot’: Hamadou Kouffa’s Macina Liberation Front (FLM),” *Jamestown Foundation* 13, no. 22 (2015).

⁹⁰⁷ Pauline Le Roux, “Confronting Central Mali’s Extremist Threat,” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, February 22, 2019.

⁹⁰⁸ Jacob Zenn, “The Sahel’s Militant ‘Melting Pot’: Hamadou Kouffa’s Macina Liberation Front (FLM),” *Jamestown Foundation* 13, no. 22 (2015).

⁹⁰⁹ Jacob Zenn, “The Sahel’s Militant ‘Melting Pot’: Hamadou Kouffa’s Macina Liberation Front (FLM),” *Jamestown Foundation* 13, no. 22 (2015).

⁹¹⁰ Jacob Zenn, “The Sahel’s Militant ‘Melting Pot’: Hamadou Kouffa’s Macina Liberation Front (FLM),” *Jamestown Foundation* 13, no. 22 (2015).

⁹¹¹ Mapping Militants Project. “Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen.” Last modified October 31, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/2979/>.

in Algeria.⁹¹² After receiving some university education, Hattab reportedly joined the Algerian Armed Forces.⁹¹³ Hattab received formal military training, serving as a paratrooper before becoming a mechanic.⁹¹⁴ After serving as the GSPC's leader for years, the Council of Notables mobilized against Hattab in 2003. As Alexander Thurston states: "The coup against Hattab was organized by the very structures meant to ensure that the organization ran smoothly."⁹¹⁵ During Hattab's time in power, the GSPC had no pledge of allegiance to al-Qaida.

Nabil Sahrawi

Nabil Sahrawi, also known as Abu Ibrahim, succeeded Hassan Hattab as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat's (GSPC) leader in August 2003.⁹¹⁶ Sahrawi was born in 1966 in Batna, Algeria.⁹¹⁷ Sahrawi attained a post-secondary degree in engineering, with a specialization in thermal energy.⁹¹⁸ Sahrawi served as commander of "Zone 5" in the GIA before splintering to join the GSPC.⁹¹⁹ In the GSPC, Sahrawi served in various positions, including being assigned a military command, serving as head of external relations, and participating as a member of the Council of Notables (*majlis al-A'yan*).⁹²⁰ Sahrawi pledged the GSPC's loyalty to al-Qaida, Taliban, and jihadists in other conflict zones in 2003, indicating the group's expanding external ties. However, this Arabic-language statement was not a formal pledge of allegiance (*bay'a*) but rather a statement of broad solidarity (*wala'*).⁹²¹ In June 2004, Sahrawi was killed in a firefight with the Algerian army.⁹²²

⁹¹² Hussam Haddad, "حسن خطاب المؤسس "التائب" للجماعة السلفية للدعوة والقتال بالجزائر," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/33033>.

⁹¹³ Hussam Haddad, "حسن خطاب المؤسس "التائب" للجماعة السلفية للدعوة والقتال بالجزائر," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/33033>.

⁹¹⁴ Gregory A. Smith, "Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb," *Journal of Strategic Security* 2, no. 2 (May 2009).

⁹¹⁵ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 70.

⁹¹⁶ Mapping Militants Project. "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb." Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

⁹¹⁷ Hussam Haddad, "أبو إبراهيم مصطفى (الأمير الثاني) للجماعة السلفية للدعوة والقتال بالجزائر," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/31421>.

⁹¹⁸ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹¹⁹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹²⁰ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹²¹ For a link to the statement, see Aaron Zelin's jihadology.net. Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, "Statement from al-Jama'ah al-Salafiyyah Li-l-Da'wah Wa-l-Qital: Support for the Jihadi Groups," September 11, 2003, <https://jihadology.net/2003/09/11/statement-from-al-jamaah-al-salafiyyah-li-l-dawah-wa-l-qital-support-for-the-jihadi-groups/>.

⁹²² Jean-Pierre Filiu, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Algerian Challenge or Global Threat?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 104 (October 2009).

Abdelmalek Droukdel

Abdelmalek Droukdel, also known as Abu Musab ‘Abd al-Wadud, replaced Sahrawi in June 2004 as the GSPC’s third leader.⁹²³ Droukdel was born in the Blid Province of Algeria in 1970.⁹²⁴ Droukdel attained a post-secondary degree in mathematics,⁹²⁵ becoming an engineer by trade.⁹²⁶ Droukdel reportedly traveled to Afghanistan before returning to fight in Algeria.⁹²⁷ In the early 1990s, Droukdel joined the Movement for the Islamic State and later became the GIA’s commander of “Zone 2” and a distinguished bombmaker.⁹²⁸ In the GSPC, he joined the Council of Notables and replaced Sahrawi as the head of the Council.⁹²⁹ Droukdel formally pledged the GSPC’s allegiance to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida in 2006, with the organization changing its name to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in January 2007.⁹³⁰ Droukdel oversaw the organization’s expansion into Mali and other regional states.⁹³¹ In 2020, Droukdel was killed during a raid by French forces in Mali.⁹³²

Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Annabi

In November 2020, AQIM announced Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Annabi as the successor to Droukdel.⁹³³ Al-Annabi was born in January or February 1969 in Annaba, Algeria.⁹³⁴ Al-Annabi holds a university degree in economics.⁹³⁵ Al-Annabi reportedly became an active member at the age of 19 in the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) before participating in the Algerian Civil War.⁹³⁶

⁹²³ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.” Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

⁹²⁴ Sidi Ahmed Ould Al Amir, “تداعيات مقتل عبد المالك دروكدل على منطقة الساحل,” <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/4717>.

⁹²⁵ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹²⁶ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.” Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

⁹²⁷ BBC, “Al-Qaeda Chief in North Africa Abdelmalek Droukdel Killed - France,” June 5, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-52943692>.

⁹²⁸ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹²⁹ Alexander Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹³⁰ Jean-Pierre Filiu, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Algerian Challenge or Global Threat?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 104 (October 2009).

⁹³¹ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.” Last modified July 21, 2025. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/312/>.

⁹³² Wassim Nasr, “Implications of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s New Leadership,” *News Lines Institute*, February 8, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/transnational-criminal-networks/implications-of-al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghrebs-new-leadership/>.

⁹³³ U.S. Department of State, “Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi,” <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/abu-ubaydah-yusuf-al-anabi/>.

⁹³⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi,” <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/abu-ubaydah-yusuf-al-anabi/>.

⁹³⁵ The North Africa Journal, “Profile: Abu Ubaidah Youssef al-Annabi,” March 20, 2023, <https://north-africa.com/profile-abu-ubaidah-youssef-al-annabi/>.

⁹³⁶ Akram Khariief, “Qui est le nouveau chef d’Aqmi, Abou Obeida Yousouf al-Annabi?” November 24, 2020, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1079608/politique/qui-est-le-nouveau-chef-daqmi-abou-obeida-yousouf-al-annabi/>.

There is little information to suggest that al-Annabi traveled to Afghanistan like other Algerian jihadists. As Wassim Nasr writes: “It is improbable that he participated in the Afghan jihad or visited Afghanistan or Pakistan in those early years. Instead, he likely joined one of the very small, local groups active in his native region that orbited around” the GIA.⁹³⁷ Within AQIM, al-Annabi served as the organization's media chief and head of the Council of Notables.⁹³⁸ As of October 2024, al-Annabi remains AQIM’s leader.

Morocco

Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group

Abdelkarim el-Mejjati

Abdelkarim el-Mejjati is considered a founding leader of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) since the 1990s.⁹³⁹ Little information exists on el-Mejjati. GICM absorbed cells during the founding period and has cells across Europe.⁹⁴⁰ Nourredine Nafia is supposed to be involved in the leadership given the drafting of the charter of the group’s doctrine.⁹⁴¹ The group was listed as a terrorist organization by the UN in 2002⁹⁴² and has close ties to al-Qaida.⁹⁴³ Abdelkarim el-Mejjati became a leader of al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia and was killed by police in 2004.⁹⁴⁴

⁹³⁷ Wassim Nasr, “Implications of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s New Leadership,” *News Lines Institute*, February 8, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/transnational-criminal-networks/implications-of-al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghrebs-new-leadership/>.

⁹³⁸ Wassim Nasr, “Implications of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s New Leadership,” *News Lines Institute*, February 8, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/transnational-criminal-networks/implications-of-al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghrebs-new-leadership/>.

⁹³⁹ Mapping Militants Project. “Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group.” Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/457/>; It is assumed he founded the organization after 1998 (Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point., <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>)

⁹⁴⁰ Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>.

⁹⁴¹ Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>.

⁹⁴² UCDP, actor GICM, <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/383>.

⁹⁴³ Tan, Andrew T.H. 82010): *Politics of Terrorism: A Survey*, Routledge, <https://books.google.de/books?id=qXerAgAAQBAJ&lpg=PA183&hl=de&pg=PA184#v=onepage&q&f=false> (pp. 183-184)

⁹⁴⁴ Mapping Militants Project. “Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group.” Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/457/>, Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point., <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>

Mohamed al-Guerbouzi

Mohamed al-Guerbouzi, also known as Abou Aissa, became Abdelkarim el-Mejjati's successor after 2002.⁹⁴⁵ However, he denies relationships with GICM.⁹⁴⁶ He lived in London and received British citizenship two decades earlier.⁹⁴⁷ Mohamed al-Guerbouzi was convicted in absentia, receiving a 20-year prison sentence for his role in the Casablanca bombings.⁹⁴⁸

Mozambique

Ansar al-Sunna

Abu Yassir Hassan

In October 2017, Ansar al-Sunna, also known locally as al-Shabaab, attacked multiple police stations in the Mocímboa da Praia district, signaling the start of their insurgency.⁹⁴⁹ The year 2007 witnessed the earliest manifestations of the al-Shabaab sect under the guidance of figures such as Sualehe Rafayel.⁹⁵⁰ Over the next decade, the group expanded across the Cabo Delgado province and shifted toward the use of violence around 2016.⁹⁵¹ By 2017, the organization was led by

⁹⁴⁵ Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>.

⁹⁴⁶ Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>; Mapping Militants Project. "Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group." Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/457/>.

⁹⁴⁷ Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>.

⁹⁴⁸ Echeverría Jesús, C. (2009). *The current state of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group*. CTC Sentinel, 2(3). Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss3-Art8.pdf>.

⁹⁴⁹ Tom Gould, Tomás Queface, and Fernando Lima, "The Islamic State in Mozambique: The Cabo Delgado Conflict since 2021," *Hudson: Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, February 20, 2024, <https://www.hudson.org/islamic-state-mozambique-cabo-delgado-conflict-2021-tom-gould-tomas-queface-fernando-lima#footNote11>.

⁹⁵⁰ Eric Morier-Genoud, "The Jihadi Insurgency in Mozambique: Origins, Nature and Beginning," *Journal of East African Studies* 14, no. 3 (2020): 396-412.

⁹⁵¹ Eric Morier-Genoud, "The Jihadi Insurgency in Mozambique: Origins, Nature and Beginning," *Journal of East African Studies* 14, no. 3 (2020): 396-412.

Tanzanian national, Abu Yassir Hassan.⁹⁵² Hassan was reportedly born between 1981 and 1983.⁹⁵³ Under Hassan's leadership, the organization pledged fealty to the Islamic State's leaders in 2019 and became known as the Islamic State Mozambique.⁹⁵⁴ The United States designated Hassan as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2021.⁹⁵⁵ The same year, the United States also designated the Islamic State Mozambique as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.⁹⁵⁶ In 2023, Hassan reportedly resigned from his leadership duties following a car accident.⁹⁵⁷

Nigeria

Ansaru

Abubakar Adam Kamar

Abubakar Adam Kamar, also known as Abu Yasir, was the first leader of Ansaru, alternatively called Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis-Sudan in 2011.⁹⁵⁸ Ansaru only consists of combatants as its members and initially formed as a faction of Boko Haram.⁹⁵⁹ Kamar was born

⁹⁵² Tom Gould, Tomás Queface, and Fernando Lima, "The Islamic State in Mozambique: The Cabo Delgado Conflict since 2021," *Hudson: Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, February 20, 2024, <https://www.hudson.org/islamic-state-mozambique-cabo-delgado-conflict-2021-tom-gould-tomas-queface-fernando-lima#footNote11>; U.S. Embassy in Mozambique, "Media Note: Office of the Spokesperson," March 10, 2021, <https://mz.usembassy.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-affiliates-and-leaders-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-mozambique/>.

⁹⁵³ Due to this uncertainty, we used 1982 as an estimate. U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Burma-related Designations; Counter Terrorism Designations and Designations Updates; Global Magnitsky Designation Update; Democratic Republic of the Congo Designation Update," March 10, 2021, <https://ofac.treasury.gov/recent-actions/20210310>.

⁹⁵⁴ Eric Morier-Genoud, "The Jihadi Insurgency in Mozambique: Origins, Nature and Beginning," *Journal of East African Studies* 14, no. 3 (2020): 396-412; Tom Gould, Tomás Queface, and Fernando Lima, "The Islamic State in Mozambique: The Cabo Delgado Conflict since 2021," *Hudson: Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, February 20, 2024, <https://www.hudson.org/islamic-state-mozambique-cabo-delgado-conflict-2021-tom-gould-tomas-queface-fernando-lima#footNote11>.

⁹⁵⁵ U.S. Embassy in Mozambique, "Media Note: Office of the Spokesperson," March 10, 2021, <https://mz.usembassy.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-affiliates-and-leaders-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-mozambique/>.

⁹⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, "State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique," March 10, 2021, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-affiliates-and-leaders-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-mozambique/>.

⁹⁵⁷ Tom Gould, Tomás Queface, and Fernando Lima, "The Islamic State in Mozambique: The Cabo Delgado Conflict since 2021," *Hudson: Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, February 20, 2024, <https://www.hudson.org/islamic-state-mozambique-cabo-delgado-conflict-2021-tom-gould-tomas-queface-fernando-lima#footNote11>.

⁹⁵⁸ Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis* (London: Chatham House, Africa Programme, September 2014), https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20140901BokoHaramPerousedeMontclos_0.pdf

⁹⁵⁹ Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis* (London: Chatham House, Africa Programme, September 2014),

in 1977 in Nigeria.⁹⁶⁰ Kamar reportedly received military training from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in Algeria and was arrested for these activities in Nigeria in 2007.⁹⁶¹ He was involved in the United Nations headquarters bombing in Abudja.⁹⁶² He had close ties to Boko Haram's Mohammed Yusuf.⁹⁶³ Kamar was a specially designated national by the US in 2012.⁹⁶⁴ Kamar was killed in Kano in August 2012 by security forces.⁹⁶⁵

Khalid al-Barnawi

Khalid al-Barnawi, also known as Usman Umar Abubaker, succeeded Abubakar Adam Kamar after his death in 2012.⁹⁶⁶ Al-Barnawi was born in 1976 in Nigeria.⁹⁶⁷ In the 1990s, he joined the Armed Islamic Group and later the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.⁹⁶⁸ He reportedly completed military training in Algeria with al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in 2009.⁹⁶⁹ He is

https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20140901BokoHaramPerousedeMontclos_0.pdf; Dudley-Taylor, E. (2023, September 11; updated September 23). *Ansaru*. Modern Insurgent.

<https://www.moderninsurgent.org/post/ansaru>

⁹⁶⁰ Sanctions-Finder.com, *Abubakar Adam Kamar sanction entry* (Sanctions-Finder), showing that Abubakar Adam Kamar is listed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist by the U.S. Treasury/OFAC under Executive Order 13224, accessed January 2026, <https://sanctions-finder.com/sanction/574bf3bd-6ba9-4c26-875a-8497d68f3007/Abubakar%20Adam%20KAMbar>

⁹⁶¹ Jacob Zenn, "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014), <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>; International Crisis Group. (2014, April 3). *Curbing violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram insurgency* (Africa Report No. 216). International Crisis Group.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20160117095404/www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf>

⁹⁶² Jacob Zenn, "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014), <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>

⁹⁶³ News Wires. (2016, April 3). Leader of Ansaru Islamist militant group arrested in Nigeria. *France 24*. <https://www.france24.com/en/20160403-nigeria-leader-ansaru-islamist-militant-group-arrested>

⁹⁶⁴ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control. (2012, June 21). *Anti-terrorism designations*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://ofac.treasury.gov/recent-actions/20120621>

⁹⁶⁵ Jacob Zenn, "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014), <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>; Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis* (London: Chatham House, Africa Programme, September 2014),

https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20140901BokoHaramPerousedeMontclos_0.pdf

⁹⁶⁶ Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis* (London: Chatham House, Africa Programme, September 2014),

https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20140901BokoHaramPerousedeMontclos_0.pdf; Isamotu, I. (2025, August 16). *UPDATED: Top Ansaru terrorist group leaders arrested*. Daily Trust.

<https://dailytrust.com/breaking-ansaru-terrorist-group-leader-arrested>; International Crisis Group. (2014, April 3). *Curbing violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram insurgency* (Africa Report No. 216). International Crisis Group. <http://web.archive.org/web/20160117095404/www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf>.

⁹⁶⁷ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control. (2012, June 21). *Anti-terrorism designations*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://ofac.treasury.gov/recent-actions/20120621>

⁹⁶⁸ Zenn, J., & Weiss, C. (2021, October). *Ansaru resurgent. Perspectives on Terrorism*, 15(5), 46–58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2707343>

⁹⁶⁹ Jacob Zenn, "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014), <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>; International Crisis Group.

supposed to have close connections to MUJAO.⁹⁷⁰ He also became a specially designated national by the United States in 2012.⁹⁷¹ Al-Barnawi is known for his kidnapping skills and allegedly cooperated on kidnapping Westerns with Shekau.⁹⁷² He was arrested in April 2016 in Nigeria.⁹⁷³

Pakistan

Hizb-ul Mujahideen

Muhammad Ahsan Dar

Muhammad Ahsan Dar was born in India during the early 1950s.⁹⁷⁴ Dar was a former Jamaat schoolteacher⁹⁷⁵ before reportedly turning to militancy in the mid-1980s and joining Ansar-ul-Islam.⁹⁷⁶ He was arrested by Indian authorities in 1988 but escaped after eight months of incarceration. Hizb-ul Mujahideen was established in the Kashmir Valley in 1989, with Dar serving as its founding leader.⁹⁷⁷ In 1991, Dar was expelled from the organization “in favor of imposing the command of a JI-dominated shura council.”⁹⁷⁸

(2014, April 3). *Curbing violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram insurgency* (Africa Report No. 216). International Crisis Group.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20160117095404/www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf>; Henry Jackson Society. (2014, June). *Terrorism in Nigeria: The threat from Boko Haram and Ansaru* (Strategic Briefing). <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Nigeria-Boko-Haram-Strategic-Briefing.pdf>

⁹⁷⁰ Jacob Zenn, “Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria,” *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014), <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>

⁹⁷¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control. (2012, June 21). *Anti-terrorism designations*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://ofac.treasury.gov/recent-actions/20120621>

⁹⁷² Jacob Zenn, “Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria,” *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014), <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>; International Crisis Group.

(2014, April 3). *Curbing violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram insurgency* (Africa Report No. 216). International Crisis Group.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20160117095404/www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency>.

⁹⁷³ Zenn, J., & Weiss, C. (2021, October). *Ansaru resurgent. Perspectives on Terrorism*, 15(5), 46–58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2707343>

⁹⁷⁴ We estimated Dar’s birth year as 1952 as a news article published in December 2012 stated that he was sixty years old. Kashmir Times (India), “From Guns to Peaceful Resistance,” December 26, 2012.

⁹⁷⁵ Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

⁹⁷⁶ Yelena Biberman, *Gambling with Violence: State Outsourcing of War in Pakistan and India* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁹⁷⁷ Surinder Kumar Sharma and Anshuman Behera, *Militant Groups in South Asia* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2014); South Asia Terrorism Portal, “Hizb-ul-Mujahideen,”

https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/hizbul_mujahideen.htm.

⁹⁷⁸ Paul Staniland, “Organizing Insurgency: Networks: Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia,” *International Security*, 37, no. 1 (2012), 167.

Syed Salahuddin

Syed Salahuddin, also known as Muhammad Yusuf Shah, was born in 1946 in Jammu and Kashmir, India.⁹⁷⁹ Salahuddin graduated from SP College in Srinagar and subsequently attained a master's degree in political science from the Kashmir University in 1971.⁹⁸⁰ Salahuddin worked as a teacher and preacher and was an active member of Jamaat-e-Islami.⁹⁸¹ Salahuddin's "knowledge of Islamic religious scriptures and command of English, Urdu and various local languages earned him much popularity among college and university students."⁹⁸² Salahuddin lost his election bid as a candidate for the Muslim United Front in the 1987 Kashmir assembly elections.⁹⁸³ He reportedly became "more disgruntled and radical" and was jailed for anti-India activities and hate speeches.⁹⁸⁴ In 1991, Salahuddin traveled to Afghanistan to make arrangements to train Kashmiri fighters.⁹⁸⁵ In Afghanistan, Salahuddin met with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who reportedly advised Salahuddin "to eliminate all of Hizbul Mujahideen's rivals."⁹⁸⁶ Salahuddin became the second leader of Hizb-ul Mujahideen in 1991.⁹⁸⁷ Salahuddin's time in Afghanistan was critical to subsequent actions: "His training in Afghanistan and Pakistan and knowledge of the local geography helped him immensely in many attacks on communication networks and bridges as well as ambushes on Indian security force convoys in Kashmir."⁹⁸⁸ The United States designated Salahuddin as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in June 2017, coinciding with a visit by Indian Prime Minister Modi to Washington;⁹⁸⁹ Hizb-ul Mujahideen was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in August 2017.⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁷⁹ Animesh Roul, "Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad," *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

⁹⁸⁰ Abhishek Saha, "Syed Salahuddin: From Political Science Student in Kashmir to 'Global Terrorist,'" *Hindustan Times*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/syed-salahuddin-kashmiri-islamic-preacher-to-global-terrorist/story-IJuoHxTv5Tvd1SKpeIJDeP.html>.

⁹⁸¹ Abhishek Saha, "Syed Salahuddin: From Political Science Student in Kashmir to 'Global Terrorist,'" *Hindustan Times*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/syed-salahuddin-kashmiri-islamic-preacher-to-global-terrorist/story-IJuoHxTv5Tvd1SKpeIJDeP.html>; The Indian Express, "Syed Salahuddin: Teacher to Terror Commander," June 28, 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/salahuddin-teacher-to-terror-commander-4725290/>.

⁹⁸² Animesh Roul, "Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad," *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

⁹⁸³ Aijaz Hussain, "AP Explains: Who is Salahuddin, Rebel Named Terrorist by US?" *Associated Press*, June 27, 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/35475eceb25e40a3b08f61bcaf530536>.

⁹⁸⁴ Animesh Roul, "Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad," *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

⁹⁸⁵ Arif Jamal, *Shadow War: The Untold Story of Jihad in Kashmir* (New York: Melville House, 2009).

⁹⁸⁶ Arif Jamal, *Shadow War: The Untold Story of Jihad in Kashmir* (New York: Melville House, 2009).

⁹⁸⁷ Abhishek Saha, "Syed Salahuddin: From Political Science Student in Kashmir to 'Global Terrorist,'" *Hindustan Times*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/syed-salahuddin-kashmiri-islamic-preacher-to-global-terrorist/story-IJuoHxTv5Tvd1SKpeIJDeP.html>; Aijaz Hussain, "AP Explains: Who is Salahuddin, Rebel Named Terrorist by US?" *Associated Press*, June 27, 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/35475eceb25e40a3b08f61bcaf530536>.

⁹⁸⁸ Animesh Roul, "Brief Sketch of Syed Salahuddin of Kashmir Jihad," *Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 4 (2014).

⁹⁸⁹ Aijaz Hussain, "AP Explains: Who is Salahuddin, Rebel Named Terrorist by US?" *Associated Press*, June 27, 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/35475eceb25e40a3b08f61bcaf530536>.

⁹⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

Islamic Jihad Union

Najmiddin Kamolitdinovic Jalolov

Najmiddin Kamolitdinovic Jalolov, also known as Abu Yahya Muhammad Fatih,⁹⁹¹ founded the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), also known as Jama'at al-Jihad al-Islam,⁹⁹² in March 2002. The IJU was formed following internal disagreements and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's (IMU) decision to cease operations in Uzbekistan.⁹⁹³ Jalolov left IMU in 2001 before founding IJU in Pakistan, having its headquarters in Mir Ali.⁹⁹⁴ The group's initial name—Islamic Jihad Group—was changed to Islamic Jihad Union in 2005.⁹⁹⁵ Jalolov was born on April 1, 1972, in the Andijan Region in Uzbekistan.⁹⁹⁶ Jalolov is noted to have received secondary education.⁹⁹⁷ Jalolov is the leader behind the terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan and the ringleader of the Sauerland cell attack plans in Germany.⁹⁹⁸ He had links to the Taliban and al-Qaida, including Mohammad Omar and Osama bin Laden.⁹⁹⁹ The IJU maintained close ties with the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaida.¹⁰⁰⁰ He received military training at al-Qaida camps and spent time in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁰¹ Jalolov was convicted in absentia in Uzbekistan in 2000 for his actions as an IMU member.¹⁰⁰² The group was listed as a terrorist organization by the United States in June 2005.¹⁰⁰³ Jalolov was sanctioned under

⁹⁹¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2008, June 18). *Treasury designates leadership of the IJU terrorist group* (Press Release hp-1035). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/hp1035>.

⁹⁹² Logvinov, M. (2009). Kapitel 16 Islamische Jihad Union – al-Qaidas Türkzentrale? *Jahrbuch Terrorismus*, 3, 265–278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24916921>.

⁹⁹³ Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf. (2010, March 4). *Urteil des 6. Strafsenats* (Az. III-6 StS 11/08 u. III-6 StS 15/08). https://nrwe.justiz.nrw.de/olgs/duesseldorf/j2010/III_6_StS_11_08_u_III_6_StS_15_08_Urteil_20100304.html.

⁹⁹⁴ Guido Steinberg, *The Islamic Jihad Union: On the Internationalisation of Uzbek Jihadism*, SWP Comment 2008/ (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, April 2008), https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2008C07_sbg_ks.pdf.

⁹⁹⁵ United States Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Islamic Jihad Union, 19 September 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/usdos/2018/en/121970>.

⁹⁹⁶ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2008, June 18). *Treasury designates leadership of the IJU terrorist group* (Press Release hp-1035). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/hp1035>

⁹⁹⁷ ROLE dataset

⁹⁹⁸ Sandee, R. (2008, October 14). *The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*. The NEFA Foundation. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120824041931/http://www.nefafoundation.org/file/FeaturedDocs/nefaijuoct08.pdf>.

⁹⁹⁹ Nichol, J. (2010, August 10). *Central Asia: Regional developments and implications for U.S. interests* (CRS Report No. RL33458). Congressional Research Service. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA530585.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Steinberg, Guido W., 'The Islamic Jihad Union', *German Jihad: On the Internationalization of Islamist Terrorism* (New York, NY, 2013; online edn, Columbia Scholarship Online, 19 Nov. 2015), <https://doi.org/10.7312/columbia/9780231159920.003.0004>; Logvinov, M. (2009). Kapitel 16 Islamische Jihad Union – al-Qaidas Türkzentrale? *Jahrbuch Terrorismus*, 3, 265–278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24916921>.

¹⁰⁰¹ Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf. (2010, March 4). *Urteil des 6. Strafsenats* (Az. III-6 StS 11/08 u. III-6 StS 15/08).

¹⁰⁰² Sandee, R. (2008, October 14). *The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*. The NEFA Foundation. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120824041931/http://www.nefafoundation.org/file/FeaturedDocs/nefaijuoct08.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰³ Nichol, J. (2010, August 10). *Central Asia: Regional developments and implications for U.S. interests* (CRS Report No. RL33458). Congressional Research Service. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA530585.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰⁴ United States Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Islamic Jihad Union, 19 September 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/usdos/2018/en/121970>

the framework of the U.S. Executive Order 13224 in June 2008.¹⁰⁰⁴ He was killed in a U.S. drone strike on September 14, 2009.¹⁰⁰⁵

Suhayl Fatilleovich Buranov

Suhayl Fatilleovich Buranov, also known as Abu Huzaifa and Mansur Suhail,¹⁰⁰⁶ is assumed to have taken over IJU's leadership after Jalolov's death in 2009.¹⁰⁰⁷ He was the deputy leader of IJU as of 2007 and led the communication of the organization.¹⁰⁰⁸ Buranov was born on October 11, 1983, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.¹⁰⁰⁹ His expertise includes explosives¹⁰¹⁰ with training in an al-Qaida camp in the Khost province.¹⁰¹¹ Buranov was convicted in 2004 in Uzbekistan for terrorist attacks alongside Jalolov.¹⁰¹² He participated in activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan for the Taliban.¹⁰¹³ Buranov most likely died during a firefight/military engagement shortly after Jalolov's death.¹⁰¹⁴ Buranov was also designated under U.S. Executive Order 13224 in June 2008.¹⁰¹⁵

Rauschan Eke

Rauschan Eke, also known as Abdullah Fatih, was the military commander of IJU's Afghanistan

¹⁰⁰⁴ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2008, June 18). *Treasury designates leadership of the IJU terrorist group* (Press Release hp-1035). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/hp1035>

¹⁰⁰⁵ Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf. (2010, March 4). *Urteil des 6. Strafsenats* (Az. III-6 StS 11/08 u. III-6 StS 15/08). https://nwrwe.justiz.nrw.de/olgs/duesseldorf/j2010/III_6_StS_11_08_u_III_6_StS_15_08_Urteil_20100304.html;

Reuters. (2009, September 17). *Al Qaeda-linked Uzbek militant killed in Pakistan*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/economy/al-qaeda-linked-uzbek-militant-killed-in-pakistan-idUSISL412179/>.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Logvinov, M. (2009). Kapitel 16 Islamische Jihad Union – al-Qaidas Türkzentrale? *Jahrbuch Terrorismus*, 3, 265–278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24916921>.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Witter, D. (2011, January 27). *Uzbek militancy in Pakistan's tribal region* (Research Report). Institute for the Study of War. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07877>.

¹⁰⁰⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2008, June 18). *Treasury designates leadership of the IJU terrorist group* (Press Release hp-1035). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/hp1035>.

¹⁰⁰⁹ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2008, June 18). *Treasury designates leadership of the IJU terrorist group* (Press Release hp-1035). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/hp1035>.

¹⁰¹⁰ Witter, D. (2011, January 27). *Uzbek militancy in Pakistan's tribal region* (Research Report). Institute for the Study of War. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07877>.

¹⁰¹¹ European Commission. (2008, May 5). *Commission Regulation (EC) No 400/2008 amending for the 95th time Council Regulation (EC) No 881/2002 imposing certain specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities associated with Usama bin Laden, the Al-Qaida network and the Taliban*. Official Journal of the European Union.

¹⁰¹² Witter, D. (2011, January 27). *Uzbek militancy in Pakistan's tribal region* (Research Report). Institute for the Study of War. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07877>; U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2008, June 18). *Treasury designates leadership of the IJU terrorist group* (Press Release hp-1035). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/hp1035>.

¹⁰¹³ United Nations Security Council. (2010, September 7). *Sanctions list materials: Narrative summaries of reasons for listing – Islamic Jihad Group* (QDe.119). ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1822/materials>.

¹⁰¹⁴ Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf. (2010, March 4). *Urteil des 6. Strafsenats* (Az. III-6 StS 11/08 u. III-6 StS 15/08).

¹⁰¹⁵ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2008, June 18). *Treasury designates leadership of the IJU terrorist group* (Press Release hp-1035). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/hp1035>.

cell before taking over the leadership of IJU.¹⁰¹⁶ He is associated with the attacks against the U.S. military.¹⁰¹⁷ There is little confirmed evidence surrounding Eke and the leadership of IJU until Ilimbek Mamatov's leadership from 2019 onward.¹⁰¹⁸

Ilimbek Mamatov

Ilimbek Mamatov is a Kyrgyz national¹⁰¹⁹ who leads IJU as of 2019.¹⁰²⁰ The group is mostly operating in the Afghan Provinces of Badakhshan, Sari Pul and Takhar.¹⁰²¹ It is assumed that the Kunduz fighters of the group pledged fealty to al-Qaida in 2015.¹⁰²² In 2019, IJU fighters also reportedly fought with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria.¹⁰²³

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)

Masood Azhar

Masood Azhar was born in July 1968 in Pakistan's Punjab Province.¹⁰²⁴ Azhar received his education at Jamia Uloom-i-Islami, a prominent religious university in Pakistan.¹⁰²⁵ Despite reportedly failing to complete his 40-day military training in Afghanistan due to physical weakness, Azhar joined the war against the USSR.¹⁰²⁶ After suffering injuries, he began editing Urdu and Arabic jihadist magazines.¹⁰²⁷ Azhar reportedly taught classes and worked as a

¹⁰¹⁶ Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf. (2010, March 4). *Urteil des 6. Strafsenats* (Az. III-6 StS 11/08 u. III-6 StS 15/08).

¹⁰¹⁷ Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf. (2010, March 4). *Urteil des 6. Strafsenats* (Az. III-6 StS 11/08 u. III-6 StS 15/08).

¹⁰¹⁸ GlobalSecurity.org. (n.d.). *Islamic Jihad Union*. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/iju.htm>.

¹⁰¹⁹ Seldin, J. (2023, August 18). *Afghanistan reemerging as a terrorism incubator*. Voice of America. <https://www.voanews.com/a/afghanistan-reemerging-as-a-terrorism-incubator-/7230546.html#IJG>;

<https://www.gfatf.org/archives/how-afghanistans-terrorist-groups-evolving-under-taliban-rule/>

¹⁰²⁰ GlobalSecurity.org. (n.d.). *Islamic Jihad Union*. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/iju.htm>.

¹⁰²¹ Botobekov, Uran. (2020, June 3). *Central Asian Salafi-Jihadi groups and the US-Taliban peace agreement*. CACI Analyst. <https://www.modern-diplomacy.eu/central-asian-salafi-jihadi-groups-and-the-us-taliban-peace-agreement>

¹⁰²² Roggio, B., & Joscelyn, T. (2015, August 24). *Central Asian groups split over leadership of global jihad*. Long War Journal.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20151122142032/http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/08/central-asian-groups-split-over-leadership-of-global-jihad.php>.

¹⁰²³ United Nations Security Council. (2019, July 15). *Letter dated 15 July 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council* (S/2019/570).

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190802144618/https://undocs.org/S/2019/570>.

¹⁰²⁴ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Pakistan-Based Terrorist Organizations Lashkar-E Tayyiba and Jaish-E Mohammed," November 4, 2010, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg944>.

¹⁰²⁵ Hindustan Times, "A Profile of Maulana Masood Azhar," December 9, 2008, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/a-profile-of-maulana-masood-azhar/story-SgfdaU2uSP7iOi6GH0UGqM.html>.

¹⁰²⁶ Kashmir Herald, "Maulana Masood Azhar," (January 2002), <https://web.archive.org/web/20081211065030/http://www.kashmirherald.com/profiles/masoodazhar.html>.

¹⁰²⁷ Kashmir Herald, "Maulana Masood Azhar," (January 2002), <https://web.archive.org/web/20081211065030/http://www.kashmirherald.com/profiles/masoodazhar.html>.

preacher,¹⁰²⁸ giving sermons as far as the United Kingdom during the 1990s.¹⁰²⁹ He also traveled across multiple regions on recruitment and fundraising missions.¹⁰³⁰ Due to his growing prominence, he assumed a high-ranking position in Harkat ul-Ansar, which was led by Maulana Saadatullah Khan. In 1994, Indian authorities arrested Azhar for being a member of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen.¹⁰³¹ Azhar was eventually released in 1999 in exchange for 155 individuals being held hostage on an Indian Airlines flight that was hijacked to Afghanistan.¹⁰³² After being released from prison, Azhar created Jaish-e-Mohammad in 2000.¹⁰³³ Azhar was held under house arrest in 2002 but was released after the Lahore High Court stated there were insufficient grounds to keep him detained.¹⁰³⁴ The United States designated Jaish-e-Mohammad as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2001 and Azhar as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2010.¹⁰³⁵

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

Hafiz Muhammad Saeed

Hafiz Muhammad Saeed was born in 1950 to a Punjabi family in Sargodha, Pakistan.¹⁰³⁶ Saeed pursued graduate education at Lahore University and also studied at King Saud University in Riyadh.¹⁰³⁷ He also reportedly taught in higher education and received an appointment to Lahore's University of Engineering and Technology.¹⁰³⁸ Saeed traveled to Afghanistan in the late 1970s or

¹⁰²⁸ Hindustan Times, "A Profile of Maulana Masood Azhar," December 9, 2008, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/a-profile-of-maulana-masood-azhar/story-SgfdaU2uSP7iOi6GH0UGqM.html>.

¹⁰²⁹ BBC, "Masood Azhar: The Man Who Brought Jihad to Britain," April 5, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35959202>.

¹⁰³⁰ Kashmir Herald, "Maulana Masood Azhar," (January 2002), <https://web.archive.org/web/20081211065030/http://www.kashmirherald.com/profiles/masoodazhar.html>.

¹⁰³¹ Hindustan Times, "A Profile of Maulana Masood Azhar," December 9, 2008, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/a-profile-of-maulana-masood-azhar/story-SgfdaU2uSP7iOi6GH0UGqM.html>.

¹⁰³² United Nations Security Council, "Mohammed Masood Azhar Alvi," <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/mohammed-masood-azhar-alvi>.

¹⁰³³ Mapping Militants Project. "Jaish-e-Mohammad." Last modified July 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/411/>.

¹⁰³⁴ BBC, "Indian Fury over Freed Militant," December 14, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2575199.stm.

¹⁰³⁵ U.S. Department of State, "United Nations 1267 Sanctions Committee Designation of Masood Azhar," May 1, 2019, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/united-nations-1267-sanctions-committee-designation-of-masood-azhar/>.

¹⁰³⁶ The Times of India, "Who is Hafiz Saeed?" April 4, 2012, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Who-is-Hafiz-Saeed/articleshow/12529918.cms>.

¹⁰³⁷ Suhasini Haidar, "Hafiz Saeed: The 'Professor' Who Runs Terrorist Networks," November 29, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/hafiz-saeed-the-professor-who-runs-terrorist-networks/article33201614.ece>.

¹⁰³⁸ Praveen Swami, "Pakistan and the Lashkar's Jihad in India," *The Hindu*, December 9, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20081212111914/http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/09/stories/2008120955670800.htm>.

early 1980s to receive military training¹⁰³⁹ and became close contacts with Abdullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden.¹⁰⁴⁰ Saeed formed Lashkar-e-Taiba in 1990, with the organization being linked to numerous militant operations, such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks.¹⁰⁴¹ Over recent decades, Pakistani authorities arrested Saeed on multiple occasions; Saeed was eventually convicted in 2020 and 2022 on charges of terrorism financing.¹⁰⁴² The United States designated Lashkar-e-Taiba as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2001¹⁰⁴³ and Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2008.¹⁰⁴⁴

Philippines

Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement

Ameril Umbra Kato

Ameril Umbra Kato founded the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement in the Philippines in 2010.¹⁰⁴⁵ Kato was born during the mid-1940s¹⁰⁴⁶ in Datu Piang town in the Maguindanao Province of the Philippines.¹⁰⁴⁷ He reportedly graduated from the Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University in Saudi Arabia.¹⁰⁴⁸ Kato was a member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front; he commanded the organization's 105th Base Command and led an attack in the North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte provinces in 2008.¹⁰⁴⁹ He reportedly broke away from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front after facing disciplinary action for attacking civilian communities.¹⁰⁵⁰ Shortly

¹⁰³⁹ United Nations Security Council, "Hafiz Muhammad Saeed," December 19, 2023, https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/hafiz-muhammad-saeed.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Bruce Riedel, Hafiz Saeed, Pakistani Extremist with a \$10 Million Price on his Head, Is al Qaeda's Ally," *Brookings*, April 3, 2012.

¹⁰⁴¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Lashkar-e-Taiba." Last modified November 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/440/>.

¹⁰⁴² Al Jazeera, "Pakistan: Hafiz Saeed Gets 31 Years in Jail for Terror Financing," April 9, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/9/pakistan-hafiz-saeed-gets-31-years-in-jail-for-terror-financing>.

¹⁰⁴³ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

¹⁰⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Hafiz Saeed," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/hafiz-saeed/>.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters." Last modified November 1, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/348/>.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Roy Ramos, "Muslim Rebel Group Head Dies in Philippines: Report," *Anadolu Ajansi*, April 14, 2015, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/archive/muslim-rebel-group-head-dies-in-philippines-report/57599>.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Joe Torres, "Philippines Rebel Chief Dies of Heart Attack," UCA News, April 14, 2015, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippines-rebel-chief-dies-of-heart-attack/73376>.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Joe Torres, "Philippines Rebel Chief Dies of Heart Attack," UCA News, April 14, 2015, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippines-rebel-chief-dies-of-heart-attack/73376>.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Roy Ramos, "Muslim Rebel Group Head Dies in Philippines: Report," *Anadolu Ajansi*, April 14, 2015, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/archive/muslim-rebel-group-head-dies-in-philippines-report/57599>.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Roy Ramos, "Muslim Rebel Group Head Dies in Philippines: Report," *Anadolu Ajansi*, April 14, 2015, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/archive/muslim-rebel-group-head-dies-in-philippines-report/57599>.

after breaking away to form the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement, Kato suffered a severe stroke in November 2011 and remained paralyzed until his death in April 2015.¹⁰⁵¹ Prior to his death, the organization pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in 2014.¹⁰⁵²

Ismael Abubakar

At the age of 40,¹⁰⁵³ Ismael Abubakar succeeded Ameril Umbra Kato as leader of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement in 2015.¹⁰⁵⁴ Abubakar reportedly served as a brigade commander of the 105th Base Command in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.¹⁰⁵⁵ He is also noted to be an “expert at Shariah law” and studied in the Middle East.¹⁰⁵⁶ Following Kato’s death, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement splintered into three factions, with Abubakar reportedly pledging to the Islamic State but later retracting it.¹⁰⁵⁷ While some narratives note the group ended in 2017,¹⁰⁵⁸ the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement continues to conduct militant operations.¹⁰⁵⁹

Russia

Chechen Republic of Ichkeria

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev was born in 1952 in Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁶⁰ He was the second president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria between 1996 and 1997 and the first one to establish an independent

¹⁰⁵¹ Mapping Militants Project. “Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.” Last modified November 1, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/348/>.

¹⁰⁵² GMA News, “BIFF, Abu Sayyaf Pledge Allegiance to Islamic State Jihadists,” August 16, 2014, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/375074/biff-abu-sayyaf-pledge-allegiance-to-islamic-state-jihadists/story/>.

¹⁰⁵³ GMA News, “Kumander Bungos is New BIFF Head,” April 15, 2015, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/470082/kumander-bungos-is-new-biff-head/story/>.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Mapping Militants Project. “Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.” Last modified November 1, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/348/>.

¹⁰⁵⁵ GMA News, “Kumander Bungos is New BIFF Head,” April 15, 2015, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/470082/kumander-bungos-is-new-biff-head/story/>.

¹⁰⁵⁶ GMA News, “Kumander Bungos is New BIFF Head,” April 15, 2015, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/470082/kumander-bungos-is-new-biff-head/story/>.

¹⁰⁵⁷ International Crisis Group, “The Philippines: Militancy and the New Bangsamoro,” *Asia Report*, June 27, 2019.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Iris Malone, “Unmasking Militants: Organizational Trends in Armed Groups, 1970–2012,” *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2022): sqac050.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Mapping Militants Project. “Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.” Last modified November 1, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/348/>.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Zelimkhan Yandarbiev. (n.d.). In Biographs.org. Retrieved from <https://biographs.org/zelimkhan-yandarbiev>; Bamford, D. (2004, February 14). *Obituary: Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev*. BBC News. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3486179.stm>

Islamic state.¹⁰⁶¹ He studied at the Maxim Gorki Institute of Literature.¹⁰⁶² Yandarbiyev was a writer, specializing in ideological poetry.¹⁰⁶³ At the beginning of the 1990s, Yandarbiyev became the deputy chairman of the *All-National Congress of the Chechen People*, and head of the media committee of the Chechen parliament. Yandarbiyev led the Chechen delegation on peace talks with the Russian president in May 1996 and signed the agreement with Moscow in 1997.¹⁰⁶⁴ In subsequent elections, he lost against Aslan Maskhadov and became Chechen rebel representative in the Gulf region, established the Chechen embassy in Afghanistan, and was listed on the UN Security Council sanctions list in 2003.¹⁰⁶⁵ He lived in Qatar until his assassination by a car bomb linked to Russian agents.¹⁰⁶⁶

Aslan Aliyevich Mashkhadov

Coming to power through elections, Aslan Aliyevich Mashkhadov was the leader of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria between 1997 and 2005.¹⁰⁶⁷ He was born in 1951 in Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁶⁸ Mashkhadov graduated from Tbilisi Artillery College and with honors in 1981 from the Kalinin Artillery Academy in Leningrad.¹⁰⁶⁹ He was a trained military officer in the Soviet Army who served abroad after 1981, including in Hungary and Lithuania.¹⁰⁷⁰ Mashkhadov retired from the Soviet Army in 1992 and returned to Chechnya.¹⁰⁷¹ In 1994, he became chief of staff for the

¹⁰⁶¹ The group is listed as of 1996 because its “jihadization” started, see Hahn, G. M. (2014). *The Caucasus Emirate mujahedin: Global jihadism in Russia’s North Caucasus and beyond*. McFarland. The first president in 1991 was Dzhokhar Dudayev who followed a nationalist and secular agenda as outlined in Hahn (2014) and the Mapping Militants Project. “Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.” Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/356/>. Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>

¹⁰⁶² Admin. (2008, May 18). *Zelimkhan Abdumuslimovich Yandarbiyev*. Waynakh Online.

<https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/zelimkhan-abdumuslimovich-yandarbiyev/>

¹⁰⁶³ Bamford, D. (2004, February 14). *Obituary: Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev*. BBC

News.<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3486179.stm>

¹⁰⁶⁴ Admin. (2008, May 18). *Zelimkhan Abdumuslimovich Yandarbiyev*. Waynakh Online.

<https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/zelimkhan-abdumuslimovich-yandarbiyev/>

¹⁰⁶⁵ Bamford, D. (2004, February 14). *Obituary: Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev*. BBC

News.<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3486179.stm>; Admin. (2008, May 18). *Zelimkhan Abdumuslimovich Yandarbiyev*. Waynakh Online. <https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/zelimkhan-abdumuslimovich-yandarbiyev/>; *Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev*. (n.d.). In Biographs.org. Retrieved January 9, 2026, from <https://biographs.org/zelimkhan-yandarbiev>

¹⁰⁶⁶ Admin. (2008, May 18). *Zelimkhan Abdumuslimovich Yandarbiyev*. Waynakh Online.

<https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/zelimkhan-abdumuslimovich-yandarbiyev/>; McGregor, A. (2004). The Assassination Of Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev: Implications For The War On Terrorism. *Terrorism Monitor*, 2(14).

¹⁰⁶⁷ Mapping Militants Project. “Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.” Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/356/>

¹⁰⁶⁸ Felix Corley (2005, March 10). *Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov*. *The Independent (UK Edition)*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/aslan-maskhadov-527805.html>

¹⁰⁶⁹ Felix Corley (2005, March 10). *Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov*. *The Independent (UK Edition)*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/aslan-maskhadov-527805.html>

¹⁰⁷⁰ Felix Corley (2005, March 10). *Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov*. *The Independent (UK Edition)*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/aslan-maskhadov-527805.html>

¹⁰⁷¹ Admin. (2008, May 18). *Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov*. Waynakh Online.

<https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/aslan-aliyevich-maskhadov/>

embryonic armed forces under President Dudayev.¹⁰⁷² In 2005, he called for negotiations with Russia to end the conflict.¹⁰⁷³ Shortly after the ceasefire agreement, Mashkhadov was killed by Russian troops on 8 March 2005.¹⁰⁷⁴

Abdul Khalim-Salomovich Sadulayev

Abdul Halim-Salomovich Sadulayev succeeded Mashkhadov as the fourth president of the CRI in 2005.¹⁰⁷⁵ He also founded the Caucasus and Dagestan Front and reunified the rebels in 2002. He was born in 1966 in Russia, attended the Chechen State University, and spoke fluent Chechen, Russian, Arabic, and some English.¹⁰⁷⁶ Sadulayev studied with local theologians and became the local Imam of Argun.¹⁰⁷⁷ He made the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.¹⁰⁷⁸ Mashkhadov appointed him as Vice President in 2002, and after his death, Sadulayev became president.¹⁰⁷⁹ Sadulayev reportedly opposed civilian killings and suicide attacks harming civilians.¹⁰⁸⁰ He was killed by Russian forces in June 2006.¹⁰⁸¹

Doku Umarov

Doku Umarov became the president after Sadulayev's death in 2006.¹⁰⁸² He was born in 1964 in Russia and joined the Chechen separatists in 1994.¹⁰⁸³ Umarov holds a degree in civil engineering from Grozny Oil Institute and has experience as a guerrilla commander.¹⁰⁸⁴ He was the Head of

¹⁰⁷² Admin. (2008, May 18). *Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov*. Waynakh Online.

<https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/aslan-aliyevich-maskhadov/>

¹⁰⁷³ Mapping Militants Project. "Chechen Republic of Ichkeria." Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/356/>; Admin. (2008, May 18). *Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov*. Waynakh Online.

<https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/aslan-aliyevich-maskhadov/>

¹⁰⁷⁴ Admin. (2008, May 18). *Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov*. Waynakh Online.

<https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/aslan-aliyevich-maskhadov/>; Uppsala Conflict Data Program. (n.d.).

Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (Actor ID 352). <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/352>

¹⁰⁷⁵ Smirnov, A. (2007, June 21). *One year after: Assessing the life of Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev*. *North Caucasus Weekly*. Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/one-year-after-assessing-the-life-of-abdul-khalim-sadulaev/>

¹⁰⁷⁶ Smirnov, A. (2007, June 21). *One year after: Assessing the life of Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev*. *North Caucasus Weekly*. Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/one-year-after-assessing-the-life-of-abdul-khalim-sadulaev/>

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Abdul Khalim Salomovich Sadullayev*. Waynakh Online. <https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/abdul-khalim-salamovich-sadullayev/>

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Abdul Khalim Salomovich Sadullayev*. Waynakh Online. <https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/abdul-khalim-salamovich-sadullayev/>

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Abdul Khalim Salomovich Sadullayev*. Waynakh Online. <https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/abdul-khalim-salamovich-sadullayev/>

¹⁰⁸⁰ Mapping Militants Project. "Chechen Republic of Ichkeria." Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/356/>; Admin. (2008, May 18). *Abdul Khalim Salomovich Sadullayev*. Waynakh Online. <https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/abdul-khalim-salamovich-sadullayev/>

¹⁰⁸¹ Uppsala Conflict Data Program. (n.d.). *Chechen Republic of Ichkeria* (Actor ID 352).

<https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/352>

¹⁰⁸² Mapping Militants Project. "Chechen Republic of Ichkeria." Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/356/>

¹⁰⁸³ Smick, E. (2006, July 18). *The Chechen separatist movement*. Council on Foreign Relations.

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chechen-separatist-movement>

¹⁰⁸⁴ Smick, E. (2006, July 18). *The Chechen separatist movement*. Council on Foreign Relations.

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chechen-separatist-movement>; Cunningham, J. M., (2024). *Doku Umarov*:

the Security Council of the CRI from 1997 onward and Vice-President from 2005 onward.¹⁰⁸⁵ He denounced terrorism but openly called for a jihad.¹⁰⁸⁶ He united the units in the North Caucasus under the Caucasus Emirate, declared himself Emir, and the CRI a province under the Caucasus Emirate in 2007.¹⁰⁸⁷ Consequently, the CRI dissolved temporarily before being revived in exile by Akhmed Zakayev.¹⁰⁸⁸

Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs

Shamil Basayev

Shamil Basayev, also known as Abu Idris, was the founder of the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs in 1999.¹⁰⁸⁹ He was born in 1965 in Russia.¹⁰⁹⁰ He studied land management in Moscow; however, Basayev dropped out of college and became a computer salesman and guerrilla commander.¹⁰⁹¹ He was responsible for hijacking a Russian passenger jet in 1991.¹⁰⁹² Basayev also fought with separatists in Georgia.¹⁰⁹³ In 1996, he lost to Mashkhadov in the presidential election.¹⁰⁹⁴ Basayev was the deputy prime minister and field commander in the CRI.¹⁰⁹⁵ Basayev grew increasingly radical in his beliefs and frequently

Chechen separatist and guerrilla leader. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Doku-Umarov>; Isayev, R. (2006, June 20). *Dokka Umarov: A Hawk Flies to the Ichkerian Throne*. Prague Watchdog. Retrieved from <https://www.watchdog.cz/?show=000000-000004-000001-000188&lang=1>

¹⁰⁸⁵ Cunningham, J. M., (2024). *Doku Umarov: Chechen separatist and guerrilla leader. Encyclopedia Britannica.* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Doku-Umarov>

¹⁰⁸⁶ Cunningham, J. M., (2024). *Doku Umarov: Chechen separatist and guerrilla leader. Encyclopedia Britannica.* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Doku-Umarov>

¹⁰⁸⁷ Mapping Militants Project. "Chechen Republic of Ichkeria." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/356/>; Admin. (2008, May 18). *Dokka Khamadovich Umarov*. Waynakh Online. Retrieved January 9, 2026, from <https://www.waynakh.com/eng/2008/05/dokka-khamadovich-umarov>

¹⁰⁸⁸ Uppsala Conflict Data Program. (n.d.). *Chechen Republic of Ichkeria* (Actor ID 352). <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/352>

¹⁰⁸⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Brigade." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/511/>; *Riyad us-Salien Brigade of Martyrs*. (n.d.). In Turkey. <https://cvelasco1.wixsite.com/turkey/rsbm>. Sources suggest that Basayev founded the group based on two groups he led previously: Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR) and the International Islamic Brigade (IIB), see e.g. Roggio, B. (2011, January 24). *35 killed in suicide attack at Moscow airport*. FDD's Long War Journal. https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/01/31_killed_in_suicide.php

¹⁰⁹⁰ Gartenstein-Ross, D. (2006, July 14). *The death of Shamil Basayev. The American Spectator.* https://spectator.org/46731_death-shamil-basayev/

¹⁰⁹¹ BBC News. (2006, July 10). *Obituary: Shamil Basayev.* <https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4727935.stm>; Murphy, K. (2004, September 10). *Chechen warlord always brazen — but never caught. Los Angeles Times.* <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2004-sep-10-fg-basayev10-story.html>

¹⁰⁹² BBC News. (2006, July 10). *Obituary: Shamil Basayev.* <https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4727935.stm>

¹⁰⁹³ Murphy, K. (2004, September 10). *Chechen warlord always brazen — but never caught. Los Angeles Times.*

¹⁰⁹⁴ Gartenstein-Ross, D. (2006, July 14). *The death of Shamil Basayev. The American Spectator.* https://spectator.org/46731_death-shamil-basayev/

¹⁰⁹⁵ Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>; Mapping Militants Project. "Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Brigade." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/511/>

made use of hostage taking and human shields as well as labeling Russian citizens a legitimate target given their support for President Putin in the early 2000s.¹⁰⁹⁶ Basayev had close contact with Umar ibn al-Khattab.¹⁰⁹⁷ Basayev was designated as a terrorist by the UN Security council.¹⁰⁹⁸ Russian forces killed Basayev in 2006.¹⁰⁹⁹

Aslan Avgazarovich Butukayev

Aslan Avgazarovich Butukayev, also known as Emir Khamzat, was born in 1974 in Russia.¹¹⁰⁰ Possessing a Chechen identity, he succeeded Basayev as the leader of the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs. Some reports mention that the group was revived into a unit of the Caucasus Emirate under Umarov in 2009 where Butukayev served as top commander until 2015.¹¹⁰¹ He was designated in the United States in 2016 as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.¹¹⁰² Butukayev was killed by Russian forces in 2021.¹¹⁰³

Special Purpose Islamic Regiment

Arbi Barayev

Arbi Barayev was the founding leader of the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment.¹¹⁰⁴ Barayev was born in 1974 in the village of Alkhan-Kala, southwest of Grozny.¹¹⁰⁵ He reportedly received a secondary education and briefly worked as a police sergeant in the early 1990s.¹¹⁰⁶ During the First Chechen-Russian War, Barayev fought for the Chechen separatists.¹¹⁰⁷ Seeking to establish a transnational Islamic state, the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment was formed in 1996 during the

¹⁰⁹⁶ Murphy, K. (2004, September 10). *Chechen warlord always brazen — but never caught*. *Los Angeles Times*.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Gartenstein-Ross, D. (2006, July 14). *The death of Shamil Basayev*. *The American Spectator*.

https://spectator.org/46731_death-shamil-basayev/

¹⁰⁹⁸ BBC News. (2006, July 10). *Obituary: Shamil Basayev*. <https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4727935.stm>;

¹⁰⁹⁹ Gartenstein-Ross, D. (2006, July 14). *The death of Shamil Basayev*. *The American Spectator*.

https://spectator.org/46731_death-shamil-basayev/

¹¹⁰⁰ Mapping Militants Project. “Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Brigade.” Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/511/>; Byutukayev, Aslan Avgazarovich. (n.d.). *ArmedConflicts.com*.

<https://www.armedconflicts.com/Byutukayev-Aslan-Avgazarovich-t113343>

¹¹⁰¹ Mapping Militants Project. “Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Brigade.” Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/511/>;

¹¹⁰² U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson. (2016, July 13). *State Department terrorist designations of Aslan Avgazarovich Byutukaev and Ayrat Nasimovich Vakhitov* [Media Note]. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/07/259932.htm>

¹¹⁰³ AFP. (2021, January 20). *Chechnya kills militant tied to IS, deadly Moscow attacks*, *The Moscow Times*.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/01/20/chechnya-kills-militant-tied-to-is-deadly-moscow-attacks-a72671>

¹¹⁰⁴ Mapping Militants Project. “Special Purpose Islamic Regiment.” Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

¹¹⁰⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20110827112213/http://www.waynakh.com/tr/arbi-barayev/>.

¹¹⁰⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/russian/news/newsid_1407000/1407433.stm.

¹¹⁰⁷ Mapping Militants Project. “Special Purpose Islamic Regiment.” Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

inter-war period of the Chechen Wars.¹¹⁰⁸ In June 2001, Barayev was killed during a Russian military operation in which Russian troops blockaded Alkhan-Kala to find Barayev and other rebels.¹¹⁰⁹

Movsar Barayev

Movsar Barayev succeeded Arbi Barayev as the leader of the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment.¹¹¹⁰ Born in the late 1970s in Chechnya,¹¹¹¹ Movsar Barayev was Arbi Barayev's nephew.¹¹¹² Movsar Barayev reportedly completed secondary education.¹¹¹³ He is also noted to be a "veteran of both Chechen wars."¹¹¹⁴ Movsar Barayev is considered to be one of the organizers of the Dubrovka Theater attacks and died on the final day of the siege.¹¹¹⁵

Khamzat Tazabayev

Khamzat Tazabayev succeeded Movsar Barayev as the leader of the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment.¹¹¹⁶ Tazabayev was born in 1978 in Chechnya and reportedly participated in both the First and Second Chechen Wars.¹¹¹⁷ In 2003, the United States designated the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment as a terrorist organization.¹¹¹⁸ The same year, the organization was absorbed into the armed forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.¹¹¹⁹

¹¹⁰⁸ Mapping Militants Project. "Special Purpose Islamic Regiment." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

¹¹⁰⁹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1406317.stm>.

¹¹¹⁰ Mapping Militants Project. "Special Purpose Islamic Regiment." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

¹¹¹¹ There are different dates listed for Barayev's birthdate. See Steve Banovac, Peter Dillon, Matthew Hennessy, Ronald Idoko, Christine Patterson, Augustine Paul, Ian Sonneborn, Christina Steve, and Kate Stubbe. "Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack: Terror at Beslan: A Chronicle of On-Going Tragedy and a Government's Failed Response." *Pittsburg: Ridgway Center* (2007); <https://www.smh.com.au/world/leader-of-kidnap-gang-led-brutal-life-20021027-gdfrhm.html>.

¹¹¹² Mapping Militants Project. "Special Purpose Islamic Regiment." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

¹¹¹³ Agence France Presse, "The Chechen Rebel Who Came to Moscow 'To Die,'" October 25, 2002.

¹¹¹⁴ Steve Banovac, Peter Dillon, Matthew Hennessy, Ronald Idoko, Christine Patterson, Augustine Paul, Ian Sonneborn, Christina Steve, and Kate Stubbe. "Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack: Terror at Beslan: A Chronicle of On-Going Tragedy and a Government's Failed Response." *Pittsburg: Ridgway Center* (2007).

¹¹¹⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Special Purpose Islamic Regiment." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

¹¹¹⁶ Mapping Militants Project. "Special Purpose Islamic Regiment." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

¹¹¹⁷ Steve Banovac, Peter Dillon, Matthew Hennessy, Ronald Idoko, Christine Patterson, Augustine Paul, Ian Sonneborn, Christina Steve, and Kate Stubbe. "Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack: Terror at Beslan: A Chronicle of On-Going Tragedy and a Government's Failed Response." *Pittsburg: Ridgway Center* (2007).

¹¹¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designation Under Executive Order 13224," February 28, 2003, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/18067.htm>.

¹¹¹⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Special Purpose Islamic Regiment." Last modified August 1, 2018. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/522/>.

Somalia

Islamic Courts Union

Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed

Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed was born in 1964 in Somalia and belongs to the Abgaal subclan of the Hawiya.¹¹²⁰ He studied geography and Arabic at Kurdufan University in Sudan in the 1980s.¹¹²¹ He was a former lieutenant of Mohamed Dheere, with whom he had a fallout in 2003, and also worked with Heusseine Aideed in the mid-1990s.¹¹²² As a former school teacher, he revived the Islamic Courts Union and was elected as chairman for all courts in 2004.¹¹²³ He is labeled as a moderate leader of the ICU¹¹²⁴ compared to the radical leader Sheikh Aweys, who was the chairman of the legislative council.¹¹²⁵ Ahmed was pushed down to the chairman of the executive committee after more radical members gained control within the ICU.¹¹²⁶ Ahmed resigned from his post on December 27, 2006 - after the Ethiopian invasion - and fled.¹¹²⁷ It is also mentioned that Sheik Ahmed surrendered to the Kenyan authorities on January 21, 2007 and was freed through an agreement with the United States.¹¹²⁸ He co-established the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) in 2007 and served as the 4th president of Somalia in 2009.¹¹²⁹

¹¹²⁰ <https://www.africa-confidential.com/profile/id/4867/Sheikh-Sharif-Sheikh-Ahmed>; Rabasa, Angel, *Radical Islam in East Africa*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009.

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG782.html>.

¹¹²¹ BBC News, *Somalia's moderate Islamist leader*, 22 January 2007, BBC News website,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5072268.stm>

¹¹²² Rabasa, Angel, *Radical Islam in East Africa*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009.

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG782.html>, 59

¹¹²³ Due to Somalia's Transitional National Government the Islamic Courts have lost their influence until the revival by Sheik Ahmed in 2003. See for example, Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic Courts Union." Last modified February 1, 2019. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/403/>; Cedric Barnes & Harun Hassan (2007) *The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts*, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1:2, 151-160. Islamic Courts occurred north of Mogadishu in 1994 for the first time and in the early 2000s In 2000 the different Islamic courts formed the Joint Islamic Courts Council

with Sheikh Hassan Mohammed Addeh as their head.

¹¹²⁴ BBC News, *Somalia's moderate Islamist leader*, 22 January 2007, BBC News website,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5072268.stm>

¹¹²⁵ Cedric Barnes & Harun Hassan (2007) *The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts*, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1:2, 151-160.

¹¹²⁶ Cedric Barnes & Harun Hassan (2007) *The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts*, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1:2, 151-160.

¹¹²⁷ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic Courts Union." Last modified February 1, 2019.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/403/>

¹¹²⁸ Cedric Barnes & Harun Hassan (2007) *The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts*, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1:2, 151-160, Rabasa, Angel, *Radical Islam in East Africa*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG782.html>.

¹¹²⁹ Rabasa, Angel, *Radical Islam in East Africa*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009.

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG782.html>; Atta-Asamoah, A. (2013, July). *Long walk to restoration: Lessons from Somalia's transition process*. Institute for Security Studies, ISS Pretoria.

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/166833/SitRep2013_9July-Asamoah.pdf

Islamic State Somalia

Abdul Qadir Mumin

Abdul Qadir Mumin was born in the early 1950s in Somalia.¹¹³⁰ Mumin reportedly lived in Sweden and the United Kingdom during the 1990s and 2000s.¹¹³¹ In the United Kingdom, he preached at a mosque in Leicester and also lived in South London.¹¹³² Due to increasing surveillance from British intelligence, Mumin left the United Kingdom in 2010, burning his British passport and returning to Somalia.¹¹³³ In Somalia, Mumin joined al-Shabaab and was sent by the organization to the Puntland region of Somalia in 2012.¹¹³⁴ However, “despite his rising profile in al-Shabaab’s Puntland group, Mumin likely began to recognize that there were limits to his ascent given the all-importance of clan affiliation in Somali politics.”¹¹³⁵ As a member of al-Shabaab, the United States sanctioned Mumin under Executive Order 13224.¹¹³⁶ In 2015, Mumin defected from al-Shabaab and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the Islamic State.¹¹³⁷ The United States designated the Islamic State Somalia as a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224 in 2018.¹¹³⁸

Syria

Abdullah Azzam Brigades

Saleh al-Qarawi

The Abdullah Azzam Brigades (AAB) was formed in 2009 under the leadership of Saleh al-Qarawi.¹¹³⁹ Saudi government sources note that al-Qarawi was born in 1982 in Buraidah, Saudi

¹¹³⁰ <https://ofac.treasury.gov/recent-actions/20160831>.

¹¹³¹ Austin Doctor and Gina Ligon, “The Death of an Islamic State Global Leader in Africa?” *CTC Sentinel* 17, no. 7 (2024): 26-31.

¹¹³² Austin Doctor and Gina Ligon, “The Death of an Islamic State Global Leader in Africa?” *CTC Sentinel* 17, no. 7 (2024): 26-31.

¹¹³³ Jason Warner, Ryan O’Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹¹³⁴ Jason Warner, Ryan O’Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹¹³⁵ Jason Warner, Ryan O’Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021), 206.

¹¹³⁶ Austin Doctor and Gina Ligon, “The Death of an Islamic State Global Leader in Africa?” *CTC Sentinel* 17, no. 7 (2024): 26-31.

¹¹³⁷ Austin Doctor and Gina Ligon, “The Death of an Islamic State Global Leader in Africa?” *CTC Sentinel* 17, no. 7 (2024): 26-31.

¹¹³⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Executive Order 13224,” <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224>.

¹¹³⁹ The Global Terrorism Database includes attacks conducted by the group before 2009. However, sources list 2009 as the start name for this iteration of the organization. For instance, see United Nations Security Council, “Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB),” September 23, 2014,

Arabia.¹¹⁴⁰ Al-Qarawi is a graduate of the Scientific Institute in Buraidah, where he specialized in religious studies.¹¹⁴¹ After leaving Saudi Arabia sometime in 2006, al-Qarawi was reportedly arrested by Syrian authorities and handed over to Saudi authorities, spending a few months in jail before being released and leaving the country.¹¹⁴² During his time abroad, al-Qarawi fought against U.S. forces in Fallujah and reportedly worked with al-Qaida in Iraq and received training in electronics.¹¹⁴³ Al-Qarawi stated he started AAB as an outgrowth of al-Qaida in Iraq,¹¹⁴⁴ with the organization making it clear that it was openly loyal to al-Qaida's leader.¹¹⁴⁵ Al-Qarawi reportedly sustained major injuries in Pakistan, forcing him to return to Saudi Arabia in 2012, where he was detained and subsequently replaced as AAB's leader.¹¹⁴⁶

Majid bin Muhammad al-Majid

Majid bin Muhammad al-Majid succeeded al-Qarawi as AAB's leader in 2012.¹¹⁴⁷ Al-Majid was born in Saudi Arabia in 1973.¹¹⁴⁸ Little information exists surrounding al-Majid's early life in Saudi Arabia. Arabic-language reporting notes that al-Majid traveled to Lebanon in 2006, joining Fatah al-Islam in their struggle against the Lebanese army.¹¹⁴⁹ After the Battle of Nahr al-Bared,

https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/abdallah-azzam-brigades-%28aab%29.

¹¹⁴⁰ Saudi Ministry of Interior, "85 قائمة المطلوبين",

[https://safiu.moi.gov.sa/wps/portal/Home/sectors/passports/contents!/ut/p/z0/fY4xD4IwFIT_ShfmV0khXQmJCC4aB7ELeYGiVWwLvKA_32pcXBzvct_dgYIalMXFnJGMSzgEfVJpw0shNisRb6XYrXm2j6s8y8tYFikccIIK1P9QaDHXcVQZqNZZ0k-C2thFz_RdYq7vTasj_ut22uNEd22J4RRxumj2wMB3zGvnh5AfzExMJh-weQuZNOGRvxXHF-p0oGs!/.](https://safiu.moi.gov.sa/wps/portal/Home/sectors/passports/contents!/ut/p/z0/fY4xD4IwFIT_ShfmV0khXQmJCC4aB7ELeYGiVWwLvKA_32pcXBzvct_dgYIalMXFnJGMSzgEfVJpw0shNisRb6XYrXm2j6s8y8tYFikccIIK1P9QaDHXcVQZqNZZ0k-C2thFz_RdYq7vTasj_ut22uNEd22J4RRxumj2wMB3zGvnh5AfzExMJh-weQuZNOGRvxXHF-p0oGs!/)

¹¹⁴¹ Gulf Issues Center for Strategic Studies, "الكرهية الدينية، والطائفية، والتحريض على القتل"،

https://gulffissues.info/m_p_folder/main_div/derasat/derasat_0013.htm.

¹¹⁴² Gulf Issues Center for Strategic Studies, "الكرهية الدينية، والطائفية، والتحريض على القتل"،

https://gulffissues.info/m_p_folder/main_div/derasat/derasat_0013.htm.

¹¹⁴³ Gulf Issues Center for Strategic Studies, "الكرهية الدينية، والطائفية، والتحريض على القتل"،

https://gulffissues.info/m_p_folder/main_div/derasat/derasat_0013.htm.

¹¹⁴⁴ Thomas Joscelyn, "Online Jihadists Discuss Fate of al Qaeda Operative Held by Saudi Arabia," *Long War Journal*, June 27, 2013, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/06/online_jihadists_dis.php.

¹¹⁴⁵ Caleb Weiss, "Abdullah Azzam Brigades Dissolves Itself in Syria," *Long War Journal*, November 22, 2019, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/11/abdullah-azzam-brigades-dissolves-itself-in-syria.php>.

¹¹⁴⁶ Thomas Joscelyn, "Online Jihadists Discuss Fate of al Qaeda Operative Held by Saudi Arabia," *Long War Journal*, June 27, 2013, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/06/online_jihadists_dis.php.

¹¹⁴⁷ U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, "Abdallah 'Azzam Brigades (AAB),"

https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/abdallah_azzam.html.

¹¹⁴⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام"،

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

¹¹⁴⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام"،

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

al-Majid moved to the Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon.¹¹⁵⁰ Al-Majid kept AAB in al-Qaida's orbit by pledging fealty to Jabhat al-Nusra's leader, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, in 2013.¹¹⁵¹ Al-Majid was arrested by Lebanese security forces in December 2013 before dying shortly thereafter while in custody in January 2014.¹¹⁵² Al-Majid reportedly suffered from kidney failure which required dialysis.¹¹⁵³

Sirajuddin Zureiqat

Sirajuddin Zureiqat assumed control of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades (AAB) in October 2014.¹¹⁵⁴ Zureiqat was born in 1990 in a hospital outside of Beirut, Lebanon.¹¹⁵⁵ Zureiqat completed high school and studied at the College of Sharia.¹¹⁵⁶ Zureiqat reportedly opened a store selling phones and also served as an Imam.¹¹⁵⁷ In 2011, Zureiqat was reportedly detained and taken to the Lebanese Ministry of Defense and interrogated before being released after questioning.¹¹⁵⁸ Shortly thereafter, Zureiqat left home and later joined AAB, becoming a spokesperson for the organization.¹¹⁵⁹ After reportedly being based in Syria since 2012,¹¹⁶⁰ Zureiqat became AAB's leader in 2014 following the death of al-Majid.¹¹⁶¹ In 2019, the organization issued a statement dissolving its operational units in Syria.¹¹⁶²

¹¹⁵⁰ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام,"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

¹¹⁵¹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "ماجد الماجد.. أمير كتائب عبد الله عزام,"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2014/1/3/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85/>.

¹¹⁵² BBC, "القبض في لبنان على ماجد الماجد زعيم كتائب عبد الله عزام,"

https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/01/140101_terrorist_arrest_lebanon.

¹¹⁵³ BBC, "القبض في لبنان على ماجد الماجد زعيم كتائب عبد الله عزام,"

https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/01/140101_terrorist_arrest_lebanon.

¹¹⁵⁴ U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, "Abdallah 'Azzam Brigades (AAB),"

https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/abdallah_azzam.html.

¹¹⁵⁵ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

¹¹⁵⁶ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

¹¹⁵⁷ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

¹¹⁵⁸ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

¹¹⁵⁹ Lina Fakhridine, "سراج الدين زريقات.. من شيخ هادي إلى إرهابي خطير," <https://www.saidanet.com/News-32455/>.

¹¹⁶⁰ Caleb Weiss, "Abdullah Azzam Brigades Dissolves Itself in Syria," *Long War Journal*, November 22, 2019,

<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/11/abdullah-azzam-brigades-dissolves-itself-in-syria.php>.

¹¹⁶¹ U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, "Abdallah 'Azzam Brigades (AAB),"

https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/abdallah_azzam.html.

¹¹⁶² Caleb Weiss, "Abdullah Azzam Brigades Dissolves Itself in Syria," *Long War Journal*, November 22, 2019,

<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/11/abdullah-azzam-brigades-dissolves-itself-in-syria.php>.

al-Nusra Front/Jabhat Fatah al-Sham

Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani

Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, or Ahmed al-Sharaa, was the founding leader of al-Nusra Front/Jabhat al-Nusra following the organization's formation in 2012.¹¹⁶³ Al-Jawlani's reported birth date is disputed, with some sources stating he was born between 1975 and 1979 or as late as 1982.¹¹⁶⁴ Arabic-language reports note that al-Jawlani was born in 1981.¹¹⁶⁵ However, recent reporting clarifies that he was born in 1982.¹¹⁶⁶ Al-Jawlani reportedly joined the College of Medicine at Damascus University before traveling to Iraq.¹¹⁶⁷ Al-Jawlani states that he traveled to Iraq shortly before the U.S. invasion of Iraq to participate in the insurgency; he would join al-Qaida in Iraq.¹¹⁶⁸ In 2006, al-Jawlani reportedly briefly traveled to Lebanon to supervise military training for Ajnad al-Sham before returning to Iraq, where he was arrested and held in prisons such as Abu Ghraib and Camp Bucca.¹¹⁶⁹ Al-Jawlani returned to Syria in 2011,¹¹⁷⁰ establishing Jabhat al-Nusra in early 2012.¹¹⁷¹ Al-Jawlani pledged Jabhat al-Nusra's allegiance to al-Qaida in 2013

¹¹⁶³ Jerome Drevon and Patrick Haenni, "Redefining Global Jihad and Its Termination: The Subjugation of al-Qaeda by Its Former Franchise in Syria," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 48, no. 3 (2025): 284-299.

¹¹⁶⁴ Martin Smith and Marcela Gaviria, "The Jihadist," *Frontline*, June 1, 2021,

<http://pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/the-jihadist/>.

¹¹⁶⁵ Al Khaleej Online, "الجزيرة تكشف عن هوية زعيم جبهة النصرة أبو محمد الجولاني," <https://alkhaleejonline.net/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁶⁶ Raya Jalabi, "Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, the Syrian Rebel Leader Who Overthrew the Assad Regime," *Financial Times*, December 6, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/574cc17a-fa3a-411b-acb0-34fc032c7fe4>; Al Jazeera Arabic, "أحمد الشرع.. من جبهات القتال إلى رئاسة سوريا,"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/26/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁶⁷ Al Jazeera Arabic, "أحمد الشرع.. رحلة صعود طالب الطب إلى قيادة عملية إسقاط نظام الأسد," <https://www.aljazeeramubasher.net/profile/2024/12/9/%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B9-%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%B5%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A8-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89>.

¹¹⁶⁸ Martin Smith and Marcela Gaviria, "The Jihadist," *Frontline*, June 1, 2021, <http://pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/the-jihadist/>.

¹¹⁶⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, "أحمد الشرع.. من جبهات القتال إلى رئاسة سوريا," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/26/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁷⁰ Raya Jalabi, "Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, the Syrian Rebel Leader Who Overthrew the Assad Regime," *Financial Times*, December 6, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/574cc17a-fa3a-411b-acb0-34fc032c7fe4>.

¹¹⁷¹ Martin Smith and Marcela Gaviria, "The Jihadist," *Frontline*, June 1, 2021, <http://pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/the-jihadist/>; Jerome Drevon and Patrick Haenni, "Redefining Global Jihad and Its Termination: The Subjugation of al-Qaeda by Its Former Franchise in Syria," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 48, no. 3 (2025): 284-299.

following its split from the Islamic State.¹¹⁷² Al-Jawlani remained the organization's leader following its name change to Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in 2016.¹¹⁷³ However, al-Jawlani would disavow ties to al-Qaida in 2016 prior to the formation of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in January 2017.¹¹⁷⁴

Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki

Tawfiq Shahabuddin

Tawfiq Shahabuddin founded the Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki organization during the Syrian civil war.¹¹⁷⁵ The organization was formed outside of Aleppo in 2011.¹¹⁷⁶ In an interview with scholar Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, Shahabuddin stated that his birthplace is “a village called Qubtan al-Jabal in a farm called al-Sheikh Suleiman affiliated with the village of Qubtan al-Jabal. I was born in 1973, I studied at the primary and preparatory level in Aleppo province, Aleppo city. And from there I moved to my very simple village. I worked in agriculture and rearing livestock before the revolution.”¹¹⁷⁷ Therefore, unlike other jihadist leaders, Shahabuddin did not play a significant role in the anti-Asad movement before 2011.¹¹⁷⁸ Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki was largely defunct by 2019, as many remaining fighters within the group joined the Syrian National Army.¹¹⁷⁹

¹¹⁷² Jerome Drevon and Patrick Haenni, “Redefining Global Jihad and Its Termination: The Subjugation of al-Qaeda by Its Former Franchise in Syria,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 48, no. 3 (2025): 284-299.

¹¹⁷³ Mapping Militants Project, “Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Formerly Jabhat al-Nusra).” Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/392/>.

¹¹⁷⁴ Aaron Y. Zelin, “The Patient Efforts Behind Hayat Tahrir al-Sham’s Success in Aleppo,” *War on the Rocks*, December 3, 2024, <https://warontherocks.com/2024/12/the-patient-efforts-behind-hayat-tahrir-al-shams-success-in-aleppo/>.

¹¹⁷⁵ Syrian Memory Institution, “توفيق شهاب الدين,” <https://syrianmemory.org/archive/figures/5cd0d9f7658c9f000109f6b0>.

¹¹⁷⁶ Hosam al-Jablawi, “Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement: How a Once Moderate Group Joined Fateh al-Sham,” *Atlantic Council*, February 17, 2017, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/nour-al-din-al-zenki-movement-how-a-once-moderate-group-joined-fateh-al-sham/>.

¹¹⁷⁷ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, “The History of Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki: Interview,” January 8, 2020, <https://aymennjawad.org/2020/01/the-history-of-harakat-nour-al-din-al-zenki>.

¹¹⁷⁸ Rafid Jaboori, “Al-Nusra’s Unlikely Ally: A Profile of Nour al-Din al-Zenki Leader Tawfiq Shahabuddin,” *Jamestown Foundation*, May 2, 2017, <https://jamestown.org/al-nusras-unlikely-ally-profile-nour-al-din-al-zenki-leader-tawfiq-shahabuddin/>.

¹¹⁷⁹ European Union Agency for Asylum, “Syria: Country Focus,” March 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-03/2025_03_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Country_Focus.pdf.

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham

Hashim al-Sheikh

Hashim al-Sheikh, also known as Abu Jaber, was born in 1968 in Aleppo, Syria.¹¹⁸⁰ According to a biography released by Ahrar al-Sham, al-Sheikh attained a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Aleppo.¹¹⁸¹ In 2003, al-Sheikh reportedly traveled to Iraq to combat U.S. forces.¹¹⁸² After returning to Syria in 2005, al-Sheikh was arrested by the Asad regime and spent time in the Sadnaya Prison.¹¹⁸³ He was released in 2011 and “joined the Mujahideen against the Assad regime in the northern and western countryside of Aleppo.”¹¹⁸⁴ Al-Sheikh subsequently led Ahrar al-Sham before heading Jaysh Halab, which was an umbrella organization of Aleppo-based armed groups.¹¹⁸⁵ In early 2017, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham merged with other jihadist organizations to form Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, with al-Sheikh becoming the organization's leader.¹¹⁸⁶ However, al-Sheikh resigned from this leadership position later in 2017 and was succeeded by Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani.¹¹⁸⁷

Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani

Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, or Ahmed al-Sharaa, was the founding leader of al-Nusra Front/Jabhat al-Nusra following the organization's formation in 2012.¹¹⁸⁸ Al-Jawlani's reported birth date is disputed, with some sources stating he was born between 1975 and 1979 or as late as 1982.¹¹⁸⁹ Arabic-language reports note that al-Jawlani was born in 1981.¹¹⁹⁰ However, recent

¹¹⁸⁰ Counter Extremism Project, “Hashim al-Sheikh,” <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/hashim-al-sheikh>.

¹¹⁸¹ Thomas Joscelyn, “Hay'at Tahrir al Sham Leader Calls for ‘Unity’ in Syrian Insurgency,” February 10, 2017, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/02/hayat-tahrir-al-sham-leader-calls-for-unity-in-syrian-insurgency.php>.

¹¹⁸² Syrian Memory Institution, “هاشم الشيخ - أبو جابر,” <https://syrianmemory.org/archive/figures/5cea1c50e845530001e7a5ad>.

¹¹⁸³ Thomas Joscelyn, “Hay'at Tahrir al Sham Leader Calls for ‘Unity’ in Syrian Insurgency,” February 10, 2017, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/02/hayat-tahrir-al-sham-leader-calls-for-unity-in-syrian-insurgency.php>.

¹¹⁸⁴ Thomas Joscelyn, “Hay'at Tahrir al Sham Leader Calls for ‘Unity’ in Syrian Insurgency,” February 10, 2017, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/02/hayat-tahrir-al-sham-leader-calls-for-unity-in-syrian-insurgency.php>.

¹¹⁸⁵ Mapping Militants Project. “Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Formerly Jabhat al-Nusra).” Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/392/>.

¹¹⁸⁶ Mapping Militants Project. “Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Formerly Jabhat al-Nusra).” Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/392/>.

¹¹⁸⁷ Mapping Militants Project. “Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Formerly Jabhat al-Nusra).” Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/392/>.

¹¹⁸⁸ Jerome Drevon and Patrick Haenni, “Redefining Global Jihad and Its Termination: The Subjugation of al-Qaeda by Its Former Franchise in Syria,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 48, no. 3 (2025): 284-299.

¹¹⁸⁹ Martin Smith and Marcela Gaviria, “The Jihadist,” *Frontline*, June 1, 2021, <http://pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/the-jihadist/>.

¹¹⁹⁰ Al Khaleej Online, “الجزيرة تكشف عن هوية زعيم جبهة النصرة أبو محمد الجولاني,” <https://alkhaleejonline.net/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81-%D8%B9%D9%86->

reporting clarifies that he was born in 1982.¹¹⁹¹ Al-Jawlani reportedly joined the College of Medicine at Damascus University before traveling to Iraq.¹¹⁹² Al-Jawlani states that he traveled to Iraq shortly before the U.S. invasion of Iraq to participate in the insurgency; he would join al-Qaida in Iraq.¹¹⁹³ In 2006, al-Jawlani reportedly briefly traveled to Lebanon to supervise military training for Ayn al-Sham before returning to Iraq, where he was arrested and held in prisons such as Abu Ghraib and Camp Bucca.¹¹⁹⁴ Al-Jawlani returned to Syria in 2011,¹¹⁹⁵ establishing Jabhat al-Nusra in early 2012.¹¹⁹⁶ Al-Jawlani pledged Jabhat al-Nusra's allegiance to al-Qaida in 2013 following its split from the Islamic State.¹¹⁹⁷ Al-Jawlani remained the organization's leader following its name change to Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in 2016.¹¹⁹⁸ However, al-Jawlani would disavow ties to al-Qaida in 2016 prior to the formation of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in January 2017.¹¹⁹⁹ After the formation of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, al-Jawlani assumed control of the organization in October 2017.¹²⁰⁰

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/26/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁹¹ Raya Jalabi, "Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, the Syrian Rebel Leader Who Overthrew the Assad Regime," *Financial Times*, December 6, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/574cc17a-fa3a-411b-acb0-34fc032c7fe4>; Al Jazeera Arabic, "أحمد الشرع.. من جبهات القتال إلى رئاسة سوريا," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/26/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁹² Al Jazeera Arabic, "أحمد الشرع.. رحلة صعود طالب الطب إلى قيادة عملية إسقاط نظام الأسد," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/26/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁹³ Al Jazeera Arabic, "أحمد الشرع.. رحلة صعود طالب الطب إلى قيادة عملية إسقاط نظام الأسد," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/26/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁹⁴ Martin Smith and Marcela Gaviria, "The Jihadist," *Frontline*, June 1, 2021, <http://pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/the-jihadist/>.

¹¹⁹⁵ Al Jazeera Arabic, "أحمد الشرع.. من جبهات القتال إلى رئاسة سوريا," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/7/26/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A>.

¹¹⁹⁶ Raya Jalabi, "Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, the Syrian Rebel Leader Who Overthrew the Assad Regime," *Financial Times*, December 6, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/574cc17a-fa3a-411b-acb0-34fc032c7fe4>.

¹¹⁹⁷ Martin Smith and Marcela Gaviria, "The Jihadist," *Frontline*, June 1, 2021, <http://pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/the-jihadist/>; Jerome Drevon and Patrick Haenni, "Redefining Global Jihad and Its Termination: The Subjugation of al-Qaida by Its Former Franchise in Syria," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 48, no. 3 (2025): 284-299.

¹¹⁹⁸ Jerome Drevon and Patrick Haenni, "Redefining Global Jihad and Its Termination: The Subjugation of al-Qaida by Its Former Franchise in Syria," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 48, no. 3 (2025): 284-299.

¹¹⁹⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Formerly Jabhat al-Nusra)." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/392/>.

¹²⁰⁰ Aaron Y. Zelin, "The Patient Efforts Behind Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's Success in Aleppo," *War on the Rocks*, December 3, 2024, <https://warontherocks.com/2024/12/the-patient-efforts-behind-hayat-tahrir-al-shams-success-in-aleppo/>.

¹²⁰¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Formerly Jabhat al-Nusra)." Last modified June 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/392/>.

Hurras al-Din

Faruq al-Suri

Faruq al-Suri, also known as Abu Hamam al-Shami, became the first leader of Hurras al-Din in 2018.¹²⁰¹ Al-Suri was reportedly born in 1977 in Damascus, Syria.¹²⁰² He later traveled to Afghanistan, receiving training at the al-Ghuraba training camp under the leadership of Abu Mus'ab al-Suri.¹²⁰³ After joining al-Qaida, al-Suri reportedly trained fighters in Iraq before being detained in Lebanon from 2009 to 2013.¹²⁰⁴ Following his release, al-Suri reportedly joined Jabhat al-Nusra during the Syrian civil war.¹²⁰⁵ In September 2019, the U.S. Department of State designated al-Suri as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.¹²⁰⁶ Despite initially leading Hurras al-Din, al-Suri was replaced as the organization's leader by Khalid al-Aruri in 2019.¹²⁰⁷

Khalid al-Aruri

Khalid al-Aruri, also known as Abu al-Qassam, succeeded al-Suri as the leader of Hurras al-Din.¹²⁰⁸ Al-Aruri was born in 1967 in the West Bank and grew up in Jordan.¹²⁰⁹ Although little is known about his early years, al-Aruri spent time in prison in Jordan during the 1990s.¹²¹⁰ After being released from prison, al-Aruri traveled to Afghanistan and received military training as well as developed close ties with Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, marrying one of al-Zarqawi's sisters.¹²¹¹

¹²⁰¹ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 15 July 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council," July 15, 2019, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2019/570>.

¹²⁰² Rewards for Justice, "Faruq al-Suri," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/faruq-al-suri/>.

¹²⁰³ The Soufan Group, "TSG IntelBrief: The Long Arc of an Al-Qaeda Terrorist," April 2015, <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/pbei/tsg/0033868/index.html>.

¹²⁰⁴ Rewards for Justice, "Faruq al-Suri," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/faruq-al-suri/>.

¹²⁰⁵ The Soufan Group, "TSG IntelBrief: The Long Arc of an Al-Qaeda Terrorist," April 2015, <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/pbei/tsg/0033868/index.html>.

¹²⁰⁶ Rewards for Justice, "Faruq al-Suri," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/faruq-al-suri/>.

¹²⁰⁷ Thomas Joscelyn, "Want al Qaeda Leader Warns of Turkish Influence on Jihad in Syria," *Long War Journal*, August 15, 2019, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/08/wanted-al-qaeda-leader-warns-of-turkish-influence-on-jihad-in-syria.php>.

¹²⁰⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 15 July 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council," July 15, 2019, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2019/570>.

¹²⁰⁹ Tore Hamming, "Abu al-Qassam: Zarqawi's Right-Hand Man Who Stayed Loyal to al-Qaida," *Jihadica*, November 20, 2017, <https://www.jihadica.com/abu-al-qassam-zarqawis-right-hand-man-who-stayed-loyal-to-al-qaeda/>.

¹²¹⁰ Tore Hamming, "Abu al-Qassam: Zarqawi's Right-Hand Man Who Stayed Loyal to al-Qaida," *Jihadica*, November 20, 2017, <https://www.jihadica.com/abu-al-qassam-zarqawis-right-hand-man-who-stayed-loyal-to-al-qaeda/>.

¹²¹¹ Huda al-Saleh, "أردني سقط في إلب.. من هو صهر الزرقاوي" <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2020/06/15/%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%B9%D9%88%D9%86->

After surviving initial battles following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, al-Aruri would eventually flee to Iran, where he was imprisoned for twelve years prior to being released in a prisoner exchange in 2015.¹²¹² Al-Aruri was later killed in a U.S. drone strike in northwest Syria in 2020.¹²¹³

Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar

Omar al-Shishani

Omar al-Shishani, also known as Tarkhan Batirashvili, was born in 1986 in Birkiani, Georgia.¹²¹⁴ Al-Shishani's father was reportedly a Christian while his mother was an ethnic Chechen Muslim.¹²¹⁵ Al-Shishani joined the Georgian military after high school,¹²¹⁶ performing national service in the Georgian army between 2006 and 2007.¹²¹⁷ Al-Shishani participated in combat during the 2008 Russia-Georgia War, rising to the rank of sergeant.¹²¹⁸ In 2010, al-Shishani was considered unfit for the military due to a tuberculosis diagnosis and was arrested months later on allegations that he illegally purchased and stored weapons.¹²¹⁹ The time in prison reportedly had a major impact on al-Shishani's subsequent trajectory into militancy.¹²²⁰ After being released under an amnesty program,¹²²¹ al-Shishani traveled to Turkey and then Syria.¹²²² In 2012, he became the

[%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B6%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B9-%D8%A8%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84%D9%87.](#)

¹²¹² Tore Hamming, "Abu al-Qassam: Zarqawi's Right-Hand Man Who Stayed Loyal to al-Qaida," *Jihadica*, November 20, 2017, <https://www.jihadica.com/abu-al-qassam-zarqawis-right-hand-man-who-stayed-loyal-to-al-qaida/>.

¹²¹³ Richard Spencer, "Khalid al-Aruri: Hellfire Missile Kills al-Qaeda Leader in Syria," *The Times*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.thetimes.com/world/us-world/article/khalid-al-aruri-hellfire-missile-kills-al-qaeda-leader-in-syria-kl7mkxj2j>.

¹²¹⁴ Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Syria Crisis: Omar Shishani, Chechen Jihadist Leader," *BBC*, December 3, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25151104>.

¹²¹⁵ Counter Extremism Project, "Omar al-Shishani," <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/omar-al-shishani>.

¹²¹⁶ Counter Extremism Project, "Omar al-Shishani," <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/omar-al-shishani>.

¹²¹⁷ Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Syria Crisis: Omar Shishani, Chechen Jihadist Leader," *BBC*, December 3, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25151104>.

¹²¹⁸ Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Syria Crisis: Omar Shishani, Chechen Jihadist Leader," *BBC*, December 3, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25151104>.

¹²¹⁹ Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Syria Crisis: Omar Shishani, Chechen Jihadist Leader," *BBC*, December 3, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25151104>.

¹²²⁰ Nina Akhmeteli, "The Georgian Roots of ISIS Commander Omar al-Shishani," *BBC*, July 9, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28217590>.

¹²²¹ Nina Akhmeteli, "The Georgian Roots of ISIS Commander Omar al-Shishani," *BBC*, July 9, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28217590>.

¹²²² Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Syria Crisis: Omar Shishani, Chechen Jihadist Leader," *BBC*, December 3, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25151104>.

commander of the al-Muhajireen Battalion¹²²³ before merging with other jihadist actors to form Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar in March 2013.¹²²⁴ However, months later, al-Shishani and other fighters pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and split from the group.¹²²⁵

Salahuddin al-Shishani

Salahuddin al-Shishani succeeded Omar al-Shishani as the leader of Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar.¹²²⁶ Al-Shishani was a prominent Chechen commander in the Syrian civil war and a veteran of the jihad in the North Caucasus and Georgia.¹²²⁷ In 2002, al-Shishani, who was born in Georgia, was reportedly imprisoned while attempting an illegal crossing on the Georgian-Chechen border and, in 2003, rearrested for acts of violence against Georgian government employees.¹²²⁸ Under al-Shishani's rule, the United States designated Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2014.¹²²⁹ In 2015, al-Shishani and his deputy, Abdul Karim Kyrmsky, were forced out of the group and told to leave northern Idlib, as the two commanders "were accused of threatening members of the group with force and rejecting sharia, or Islamic law."¹²³⁰

Abu Ibrahim al-Khorasani

Abu Ibrahim al-Khorasani succeeded Salahuddin al-Shishani as the leader of Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar. A Facebook account affiliated with the organization reportedly described al-Khorasani as a Russian-born Tajik militant.¹²³¹ Apart from his name and potential origins, little information is available regarding al-Khorasani's life before joining Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar, an organization in which he developed a reputation as an effective military commander.¹²³² Al-

¹²²³ Al Jazeera Arabic "أبو عمر الشيشاني.. وزير الحرب" بتنظيم الدولة" <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/3/9/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85>.

¹²²⁴ Counter Extremism Project, "Omar al-Shishani," <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/omar-al-shishani>.

¹²²⁵ Counter Extremism Project, "Omar al-Shishani," <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/omar-al-shishani>.

¹²²⁶ For background on the organization, see Bill Roggio, "State Department Adds Chechen, Moroccan-led Jihadist Groups to Terrorist List," *Long War Journal*, September 24, 2014.

¹²²⁷ Caleb Weiss, "Chechen Commander Killed in Northern Syria," *Long War Journal*, December 17, 2017.

¹²²⁸ Joanna, "Who is Salakhuddin Shishani aka Feyzullah Margoshvili (aka Giorgi Kushtanashvili?)," *From Chechnya to Syria*, April 15, 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210128103657/https://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=23682>.

¹²²⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Executive Order 13224," <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224>.

¹²³⁰ Bill Roggio, "Chechen Commander in Syria Pledges to Islamic Caucasus Emirate," *Long War Journal*, July 20, 2015.

¹²³¹ Joanna Paraszczuk, "Meet the Tajiks Fighting in Syria (But Not With IS)," *Radio Free Europe*, July 22, 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/islamic-state-tajiks-fighting-syria/27142561.html>.

¹²³² Joanna Paraszczuk, "Meet the Tajiks Fighting in Syria (But Not With IS)," *Radio Free Europe*, July 22, 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/islamic-state-tajiks-fighting-syria/27142561.html>.

Khorasani's time in power, however, would be short-lived. Shortly after assuming power, al-Khorasani reportedly resigned from his leadership position.¹²³³

Liwa al-Tawhid

Abdel Qader Saleh

Abdel Qader Saleh, also known as Hajji Marea, was born in 1979 in Syria.¹²³⁴ He co-founded Liwa al-Tawhid (the Tawhid Brigade) with Abdul-Aziz Salameh in 2012.¹²³⁵ He was a former businessman who has worked in the food industry.¹²³⁶ The group was fighting in Aleppo between 2012 and 2014.¹²³⁷ He was attacked during a leadership meeting by a Syrian air strike and died two days later in a hospital in Turkey in November 2013.¹²³⁸

Abdul-Aziz Salameh

Abdul-Azis Salameh, also called Abu Jumaa, is Syrian national.¹²³⁹ He co-founded Liwa al-Tawhid with Qader Saleh in 2012.¹²⁴⁰ He was in charge of the political affairs of Liwa al-Tawhid.¹²⁴¹ Salameh took over the leadership after Saleh died in 2013.¹²⁴² When Liwa al-Tawhid

¹²³³ Thomas Joscelyn and Bill Roggio, "Foreign Fighter Group Officially Joins Al Nusrah Front," *Long War Journal*, September 23, 2015, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/09/foreign-fighter-group-officially-joins-al-nusrah-front.php>.

¹²³⁴ إدارة الموقع [Media Office]. (2024, March 24). *Honored by the Syrian Future Movement (SFM) No. 16: Abdel Qader Saleh "Hajji Mare."* Syrian Future Movement. <https://sfuturem.org/en/2024/03/honored-by-the-syrian-future-movement-sfm-no-16-abdel-qader-saleh-hajji-mare/>

¹²³⁵ Mapping Militants Project. "Liwa al-Tawhid." Last modified July 1, 2016. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/448/>

¹²³⁶ Ashkar, Y. (2022, November 19). In memory of Abdul Qader Al-Saleh: The prince of Syria's martyrs for freedom. *SyriaWise*. <https://www.syriawise.com/abdul-qader-al-saleh-the-prince-of-syrias-martyrs-for-freedom/>

¹²³⁷ Generalbundesanwalt beim Bundesgerichtshof. (2024, January 23). *Anklage wegen mutmaßlicher Mitgliedschaft in der ausländischen terroristischen Vereinigung "Liwa al-Tawhid."* <https://www.generalbundesanwalt.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2024/Pressemitteilung-vom-23-01-2024.html>

¹²³⁸ Zaman al-Wasl. (2013, November 18). *Tawhid Brigade's head, Abdul-Qader Saleh dies of his wounds.* <https://en.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/2514>; AP. (2013, November 18). Syrian rebel group says its leader has died. *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/syrian-rebel-group-says-its-leader-has-died>

¹²³⁹ Mapping Militants Project. "Liwa al-Tawhid." Last modified July 1, 2016. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/448/>

¹²⁴⁰ Mapping Militants Project. "Liwa al-Tawhid." Last modified July 1, 2016. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/448/>

¹²⁴¹ Mapping Militants Project. "Liwa al-Tawhid." Last modified July 1, 2016. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/448/>

¹²⁴² Today Online. (2013, November 18). *Syrian rebel group says its leader has died.* <https://www.todayonline.com/world/middle-east/syrian-rebel-group-says-its-leader-has-died>; AP. (2013, November 18). Syrian rebel group says its leader has died. *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/syrian-rebel-group-says-its-leader-has-died>

became part of the Islamic Front, Salameh became the commander and later the commander for the Levantine Front.¹²⁴³

Tawhid and Jihad/al-Qaida in Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, also known as Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah, was born in October 1966 in Zarqa, Jordan.¹²⁴⁴ A high school dropout,¹²⁴⁵ al-Zarqawi joined the military in 1984 for two years under Jordan's mandatory conscription laws.¹²⁴⁶ During the 1980s, al-Zarqawi reportedly spent time in prison and was described by people who knew him during his teenage years as "a bully and a thug, a bootlegger and a heavy drinker, and even, allegedly, a pimp in Zarqa's underworld."¹²⁴⁷ In 1989, al-Zarqawi left for Afghanistan and "is believed to have taken part in some fighting, but he mainly worked as a correspondent for a radical Islamist magazine during this period."¹²⁴⁸ In Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi used this time "to begin the process of cultivating friendships that would eventually lead to the formation of an international support network for his activities."¹²⁴⁹ Al-Zarqawi returned to Jordan in 1993 and was subsequently arrested.¹²⁵⁰ Working with Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, al-Zarqawi "flourished" in prison, building his militant network and jihadist credentials.¹²⁵¹ Al-Maqdisi was released from prison in 1999 under a general amnesty and returned to Afghanistan.¹²⁵² Reportedly receiving a small amount of seed money from al-Qaida's leaders,¹²⁵³ al-Zarqawi set up a training camp in Herat and became the leader of Jama'at al-Tawhid wal Jihad.¹²⁵⁴ Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi operated in Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan and, by 2003, had established his organization's presence in Arab cities in Iraq.¹²⁵⁵ In 2004, al-Zarqawi pledged fealty to al-Qaida and changed his

¹²⁴³ Mapping Militants Project. "Liwa al-Tawhid." Last modified July 1, 2016.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/448/>; Zaman al-Wasl. (2014, December 25). *Islamic Front with 4 rebel groups unite in one alliance*. <https://en.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/8110/>

¹²⁴⁴ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

¹²⁴⁵ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

¹²⁴⁶ Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Haniyeh, *The Islamic Solution in Jordan* (2012), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/09373.pdf>.

¹²⁴⁷ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

¹²⁴⁸ Gary Gambill, "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch," *Jamestown Foundation*, May 5, 2005.

¹²⁴⁹ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

¹²⁵⁰ Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Haniyeh, *The Islamic Solution in Jordan* (2012), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/09373.pdf>.

¹²⁵¹ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

¹²⁵² Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

¹²⁵³ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

¹²⁵⁴ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic State." Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

¹²⁵⁵ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006.

organization's name to al-Qaida in Iraq.¹²⁵⁶ Al-Zarqawi died following a U.S. airstrike in 2006.¹²⁵⁷ The United States had previously designated al-Zarqawi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2003¹²⁵⁸ and al-Qaida in Iraq as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2004.¹²⁵⁹

Abu Hamza al-Muhajir

Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri, succeeded Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi as leader of al-Qaida in Iraq.¹²⁶⁰ There is significant controversy surrounding al-Muhajir's background, given he stole another jihadist's identity.¹²⁶¹ Al-Muhajir was born in 1968 in Egypt.¹²⁶² Al-Masri also reportedly joined Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and trained fighters in EIJ training camps in Yemen and later joined the Faruq training camp in Afghanistan in the late 1990s, specializing in explosives.¹²⁶³ Despite taking over leadership of al-Qaida in Iraq in mid-2006, al-Muhajir would hand over control of the group to Abu Umar al-Baghdadi that same year.¹²⁶⁴

¹²⁵⁶ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic State." Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

¹²⁵⁷ Fred Barbash and Daniela Deane, "U.S. Says Zarqawi Died from Blast," *The Washington Post*, June 11, 2006, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/business/technology/2006/06/12/us-says-zarqawi-died-from-blast/61897968-c052-4a3a-bce3-c1e41d5e2285/?isMobile=1>.

¹²⁵⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Designates Six Al-Qaida Terrorists," September 24, 2003, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js757>.

¹²⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

¹²⁶⁰ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic State." Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

¹²⁶¹ Thomas Joscelyn, "State Department Designates Founding Member of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," *Long War Journal*, January 6, 2017.

¹²⁶² Kamal Kamal and Ahmed Arafat, "أبو حمزة المهاجر قتل في العراق والمالكي أعلن مقتله.. داعية سلفي: "مكافأة الـ3 ملايين دولار الأمريكية حيلة مفضوحة للتدخل في سيناء.. وخالد الزعفراني يصفه بـ"الجهادى الكبير" https://www.youm7.com/story/2014/6/14/%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%89/1723940#goog_rewarded.

¹²⁶³ Kamal Kamal and Ahmed Arafat, "أبو حمزة المهاجر قتل في العراق والمالكي أعلن مقتله.. داعية سلفي: "مكافأة الـ3 ملايين دولار الأمريكية حيلة مفضوحة للتدخل في سيناء.. وخالد الزعفراني يصفه بـ"الجهادى الكبير" https://www.youm7.com/story/2014/6/14/%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%89/1723940#goog_rewarded.

¹²⁶⁴ Mapping Militants Project. "Islamic State." Last modified April 1, 2021. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407/>.

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi was born in 1959 in Iraq.¹²⁶⁵ He reportedly worked for the Iraqi Security Forces and was a Police Brigade General¹²⁶⁶ before being fired due to his Salafist leanings.¹²⁶⁷ Following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, al-Baghdadi commanded Jaish al-Ta'ifa al-Mansoura before pledging bay'a to al-Qaida in Iraq.¹²⁶⁸ He was reportedly briefly detained by U.S. security forces in Iraq, being released after seven months.¹²⁶⁹ Al-Baghdadi took control of al-Qaida in Iraq, which rebranded to the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), in October 2006.¹²⁷⁰ During a joint U.S.-Iraqi raid in 2010, U.S. air forces reportedly bombed a house that contained Abu Hamza al-Muhajir and al-Baghdadi.¹²⁷¹

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, also known as Ibrahim Awad al-Samarrai, was born in 1971 near Samarra, Iraq.¹²⁷² Al-Baghdadi was from the al-Bu Badri tribe, with his family claiming that they are descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's Quraysh tribe.¹²⁷³ Al-Baghdadi graduated from the University of Baghdad in 1996 and enrolled in a master's program in Quranic recitation at the Saddam University for Islamic Studies. After attaining this degree, he enrolled in Saddam University's doctoral program in Quranic studies.¹²⁷⁴ As Paul Kamolnick states: "His specialization across both [degrees] was phonetics and recitation of the Quran. He produced for his Ph.D. project in Quranic Sciences a commentary on a medieval poem on Quran recitation. It was defended March 13, 2007, receiving the grade of 'Very Good.'" Using this religious training, al-Baghdadi taught Quranic recitation¹²⁷⁵ and preached at a mosque in Samarra.¹²⁷⁶ Rather than remain on the sidelines, al-Baghdadi "founded his own militant group [Jaysh Ahl al-Sunna wa al-

¹²⁶⁵ Hussam Haddad, "أبو عمر البغدادي زعيم القاعدة بالعراق," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/26774>.

¹²⁶⁶ Myriam Benraad, "Assessing AQI's Resilience After April's Leadership Decapitations," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (2010): 4-8.

¹²⁶⁷ Hussam Haddad, "أبو عمر البغدادي زعيم القاعدة بالعراق," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/26774>.

¹²⁶⁸ Hussam Haddad, "أبو عمر البغدادي زعيم القاعدة بالعراق," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/26774>.

¹²⁶⁹ Myriam Benraad, "Assessing AQI's Resilience After April's Leadership Decapitations," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (2010): 4-8.

¹²⁷⁰ M.J. Kirdar, "Al Qaeda in Iraq," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (June 2011).

¹²⁷¹ Ernesto Londoño, "Two Top Leaders of the Insurgent Group al-Qaeda in Iraq are Killed in Raid," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, April 20, 2010.

¹²⁷² MEE Staff, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: The 'Loner' Who Became Leader of Islamic State," *Middle East Eye*, October 27, 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-loner-who-became-leader-islamic-state>.

¹²⁷³ Aaron Zelin, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State's Driving Force," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, July 2014.

¹²⁷⁴ William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>.

¹²⁷⁵ William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>.

¹²⁷⁶ Aaron Zelin, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State's Driving Force," *BBC*, July 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449>.

Jama'a] immediately following the U.S. invasion in 2003.”¹²⁷⁷ In 2004, al-Baghdadi was arrested by coalition forces and spent time in Camp Bucca, where “he dazzled his comrades—and, no doubt, his jailers—on the soccer field...he was compared to an Argentinian great: his nickname at Camp Bucca was ‘Maradona.’”¹²⁷⁸ After his release, al-Baghdadi allied with Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi and became a member of the Islamic State of Iraq, serving in roles such as the general supervisor of Sharia committees and a member of the organization’s senior consultative council.¹²⁷⁹ Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi succeeded Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as head of the Islamic State of Iraq after the latter’s death in April 2010.¹²⁸⁰ In 2011, the United States designated al-Baghdadi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, increasing to \$25 million its reward offer for “information leading to the location, arrest, or conviction” of al-Baghdadi.¹²⁸¹ Al-Baghdadi would oversee the expansion of the organization across Iraq and Syria and its transformation to the Islamic State in subsequent years.¹²⁸² Al-Baghdadi remained the organization’s leader until he detonated a bomb he was wearing in October 2019 during a raid conducted by U.S. forces.¹²⁸³

¹²⁷⁷ While the JLD codes this as rebel leadership, there is uncertainty surrounding al-Baghdadi’s role in the organization. Users of the dataset may wish to make their own decision surrounding this coding. For further information, see Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-‘Ubaydi, “Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State’s Future Caliph,” *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13; William McCants, “The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State,” *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>; Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, “Stations of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s Life: Translation and Analysis,” November 7, 2019, <https://www.aymennjawad.org/2019/11/stations-of-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-life-translation>; Kyle Orton, *Profiles of Islamic State Leaders* (Centre for the Response to Radicalisation and Terrorism at the Henry Jackson Society, 2016); Paul Kamolnick Dr., *The Al-Qaeda Organization and the Islamic State Organization: History, Doctrine, Modus Operandi, and U.S. Policy to Degrade and Defeat Terrorism Conducted in the Name of Sunni Islam* (US Army War College Press, 2017).

¹²⁷⁸ William McCants, “The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State,” *Brookings*, September 2015, <http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html>

¹²⁷⁹ Aaron Zelin, “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State’s Driving Force,” *BBC*, July 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449>; Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, “Stations of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s Life: Translation and Analysis,” November 7, 2019, <https://www.aymennjawad.org/2019/11/stations-of-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-life-translation>

¹²⁸⁰ Aaron Zelin, “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State’s Driving Force,” *BBC*, July 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449>.

¹²⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, “Rewards for Justice - Increased Reward Offer for Information on ISIL Leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,” December 16, 2016, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/12/265708.htm>.

¹²⁸² William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (Macmillan, 2015).

¹²⁸³ BBC, “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: US Releases First Images of Raid on Compound,” October 31, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50243895>; Patrice Taddonio, “Flashback: How Baghdadi Came to Lead ISIS,” *Frontline* October 27, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/trump-raid-baghdadi-killed-isis/>; Jim Garamone, “Central Command Chief Gives Details on Baghdadi Raid,” October 31, 2019, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/News-Article-View/Article/2004560/central-command-chief-gives-details-on-baghdadi-raid/>.

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, also known as Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla, was born in October 1976 in al-Muhalabiyah, Iraq.¹²⁸⁴ Despite being born in an area that is predominantly Turkmen, there is evidence to suggest that al-Qurayshi is ethnically Arab.¹²⁸⁵ Al-Qurayshi completed compulsory military service in Iraq in 2001-2002 and later attained a master's degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Mosul in 2007.¹²⁸⁶ An unofficial biography of al-Qurayshi published by Islamic State supporters notes that he joined Jama'at al-Ansar and worked as a member of its military personnel in Tel Afar¹²⁸⁷ before participating in the battle of Tel Afar under the banner of al-Qaida in Iraq.¹²⁸⁸ Al-Qurayshi subsequently taught Sharia classes to members of the Islamic State of Iraq and was appointed in July 2007 as the general Sharia leader for the city of Mosul.¹²⁸⁹ In January 2008, al-Qurayshi was captured by coalition forces.¹²⁹⁰ After his release, al-Qurayshi reportedly assumed various judicial and administrative roles within the Islamic State, such as serving as a judge for all of the Nineveh Province and as the leader of the Islamic State's treasury department.¹²⁹¹ On October 31, 2019, al-Qurayshi was announced as the successor to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.¹²⁹² Al-Qurayshi would remain the Islamic State's leader until he detonated an explosive device, which killed himself, his wife, and two children, during a U.S. raid in northern Syria in February 2022.¹²⁹³ The United States had previously designated al-Qurayshi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist on March 17, 2020.¹²⁹⁴

¹²⁸⁴ Much of the information for this biography comes from Tactical Interrogation Reports. These reports contained information that al-Qurayshi provided to U.S. interrogators while in detention in 2008. For further information on these reports and the pros and cons of using such sources, see Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13; Daniel Milton, "The al-Mawla TIRs: An Analytical Discussion with Cole Bunzel, Haroro Ingram, Gina Ligon, and Craig Whiteside," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 14-23.

¹²⁸⁵ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

¹²⁸⁶ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

¹²⁸⁷ This timing differs from the Tactical Interrogation Reports, which note that he only joined the Islamic State of Iraq in February 2007.

¹²⁸⁸ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Second Caliph," *Middle East Forum*, September 11, 2023, <https://www.meforum.org/a-brief-biography-of-abu-ibrahim-al-hashimi-al->

¹²⁸⁹ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

¹²⁹⁰ Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "Stepping Out from the Shadows: The Interrogation of the Islamic State's Future Caliph," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 9 (2020): 1-13.

¹²⁹¹ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Second Caliph," *Middle East Forum*, September 11, 2023, <https://www.meforum.org/a-brief-biography-of-abu-ibrahim-al-hashimi-al->

¹²⁹² Cole Bunzel, "Caliph Incognito: The Ridicule of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi," *Jihadica*, November 14, 2019, <https://www.jihadica.com/caliph-incognito/>.

¹²⁹³ BBC, "Islamic State Leader Abu Ibrahim al-Qurayshi Killed in Syria, US Says," February 3, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-60246129>.

¹²⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designation of ISIS Leader Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla," March 17, 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/terrorist-designation-of-isis-leader-amir-muhammad-said-abdal-rahman-al-mawla/>.

Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi

Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi succeeded Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi as the Islamic State's leader in March 2022.¹²⁹⁵ There are numerous conflicting reports surrounding Abu al-Hasan's identity.¹²⁹⁶ Some sources suggest that the new Islamic State leader was likely Bashar Khattab Ghazal a-Sumaidai¹²⁹⁷ or even Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's brother.¹²⁹⁸ However, an unofficial biography published by Islamic State supporters suggests that Abu al-Hasan was born in Rawa, Iraq, and briefly studied computer engineering at the University of Baghdad.¹²⁹⁹ Abu al-Hasan also reportedly spent time as a prisoner at Camp Bucca and Abu Ghraib prison and was a long-established veteran in the Islamic State and its predecessor organizations.¹³⁰⁰ Abu al-Hasan's time in power of the Islamic State was short-lived. While there are disputes surrounding who killed Abu al-Hasan,¹³⁰¹ Aymenn Al-Tamimi and Charlie Winter write that "the most likely scenario is that Abu al-Hasan was killed in clashes between Islamic State cells and local militiamen from the town of Jasim in the northern countryside of Dera'a province in mid-October 2022."¹³⁰²

Abu al-Husayn al-Husayni al-Qurayshi

Abu al-Husayn al-Husayni al-Qurayshi took over command of the Islamic State in November 2022.¹³⁰³ While there is little information surrounding Abu al-Husayn's early life, he was likely born in Iraq.¹³⁰⁴ Turkey's Anadolu state news agency also claimed that Abu al-Husayn joined the Islamic State in 2013 and quickly rose through the organization's ranks.¹³⁰⁵ There are disputing reports surrounding Abu al-Husayn's death, which occurred in 2023 only months after he assumed power. While Turkish sources claim that Abu al-Husayn detonated a suicide vest prior to being

¹²⁹⁵ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, "Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla," *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

¹²⁹⁶ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, "Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla," *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

¹²⁹⁷ Hassan Hassan, "The Next Islamic State Caliph," *New Lines Magazine*, February 16, 2022, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/the-next-islamic-state-caliph/>.

¹²⁹⁸ Reuters, "'EXCLUSIVE: New Islamic State Leader is Brother of Slain Caliph Baghdadi - Sources," March 11, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/exclusive-new-islamic-state-leader-is-brother-slain-caliph-baghdadi-sources-2022-03-11/>.

¹²⁹⁹ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Third Caliph," October 3, 2023, <https://www.aymennaltamimi.com/p/a-brief-biography-of-abu-al-hasan>.

¹³⁰⁰ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "A Brief Biography of Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State's Third Caliph," October 3, 2023, <https://www.aymennaltamimi.com/p/a-brief-biography-of-abu-al-hasan>.

¹³⁰¹ U.S. Central Command, "Death of ISIS Leader," November 30, 2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3232259/death-of-isis-leader/>.

¹³⁰² Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi and Charlie Winter, "The Islamic State in Dera'a: History and Present Situation," *Hudson: Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, April 24, 2023, <https://www.hudson.org/islamic-state-deraa-history-present-situation>.

¹³⁰³ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, "Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla," *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

¹³⁰⁴ Aymenn Al-Tamimi, "Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla," *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

¹³⁰⁵ France 24, "Turkey Offers Details of Islamic State Chief's Death," January 5, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230501-turkey-offers-details-of-islamic-state-chief-s-death>.

captured by Turkish forces,¹³⁰⁶ the Islamic State claimed that Abu al-Husayn was killed during a firefight by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham forces.¹³⁰⁷

Uganda

Allied Democratic Forces

Jamil Mukulu

In 1995, Jamil Mukulu became the founding leader of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).¹³⁰⁸ Mukulu was born in 1964 in Uganda.¹³⁰⁹ Mukulu was reportedly a Christian cleric before converting to Islam.¹³¹⁰ Mukulu received a diploma in Business Management in Kenya and studied Islamic theology in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Sudan.¹³¹¹ He later returned home to Uganda and became involved in the Tabligh movement.¹³¹² In 1991, Mukulu reportedly led as many as a thousand Tabligh activists and stormed the offices of the Ugandan Muslim Supreme Council. Mukulu was subsequently imprisoned until 1993.¹³¹³ After his release, Mukulu formed his own armed group, the Salafi Foundation, and clashed with the clerical establishment and former Tabligh colleagues.¹³¹⁴ After leading the ADF since 1995, Mukulu was arrested in 2015 by Tanzanian authorities and extradited to Uganda.¹³¹⁵

¹³⁰⁶ France 24, "Turkey Offers Details of Islamic State Chief's Death," January 5, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230501-turkey-offers-details-of-islamic-state-chief-s-death>.

¹³⁰⁷ We coded Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham as being the most likely actor responsible based on Al-Tamimi's analysis of the conflicting claims. Aymenn Al-Tamimi, "Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla," *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 8 (August 2023): 16-22.

¹³⁰⁸ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, "The Islamic state in Congo (GW Program on Extremism, 2021).

¹³⁰⁹ Daily Monitor, "Who is ADF's Jamil Mukulu?" August 7, 2015, https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/who-is-adf-s-jamil-mukulu--1620396#google_vignette.

¹³¹⁰ Daily Monitor, "Who is ADF's Jamil Mukulu?" August 7, 2015, https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/who-is-adf-s-jamil-mukulu--1620396#google_vignette.

¹³¹¹ Daily Monitor, "Who is ADF's Jamil Mukulu?" August 7, 2015, https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/who-is-adf-s-jamil-mukulu--1620396#google_vignette.

¹³¹² Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹³¹³ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹³¹⁴ Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹³¹⁵ Jared Thompson, "Examining Extremism: Allied Democratic Forces," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, July 29, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-allied-democratic-forces>.

Seka Baluku

Seka Bakulu, also known as Seka Musa Baluku or Musa Baluku, was born between 1975 and 1977 in Uganda.¹³¹⁶ Baluku reportedly received little formal education in Uganda's schooling system.¹³¹⁷ However, he completed studies at the Bugembe Islamic Institute and worked as an Imam at a Tabligh mosque.¹³¹⁸ Baluku was an early member of the Allied Democratic Forces: "While it is not known how Baluku became connected to the ADF, he joined the rebel outfit in 1994 and soon after departed for their camps. This makes Baluku part of the first wave of ADF members who joined in the 1990s and was with the group when it moved from Uganda to DRC in the late 1990s." After serving as Mukulu's second in command, Baluku took over the ADF following Mukulu's arrest in 2015.¹³¹⁹ Under Baluku's rule, the ADF pledged fealty to the Islamic State's leaders.¹³²⁰ In 2021, the United States designated Baluku as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist and also designated ISIS-DRC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.¹³²¹

Uzbekistan

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

Juma Namangani

Juma Namangani, also known as Jumaboi Ahmadjonovich Khodjiyev, is Uzbek national who was born in 1969 in Namangan.¹³²² He is a former Soviet Army soldier with experience in Afghanistan and the Tajik Civil War.¹³²³ He was a farmer and businessperson who was active in heroin

¹³¹⁶ The U.S. State Department notes that Baluku was born sometime between 1975 and 1976 while the U.N. Security Council estimates that Bakulu was born around 1977. Adopting the middle ground, we coded Bakulu's year of birth as 1976. U.S. Department of State, "Seka Musa Baluku," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/seka-musa-baluku/>; United Nations Sanctions Committee, "Sanctions Committee Concerning Democratic Republic of Congo Adds One Individual to Its Sanctions List," <https://press.un.org/en/2020/sc14101.doc.htm>.

¹³¹⁷ NTVUganda, "Who is Musa Baluku? - ADF Commander Took Over After Mukulu's Arrest," December 2, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsaf8Xpei0s>.

¹³¹⁸ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, "The Islamic state in Congo (GW Program on Extremism, 2021).

¹³¹⁹ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, "The Islamic state in Congo (GW Program on Extremism, 2021).

¹³²⁰ Tara Candland, Adam Finck, Haroro J. Ingram, Laren Poole, Lorenzo Vidino, and Caleb Weiss, "The Islamic state in Congo (GW Program on Extremism, 2021); Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Heni Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings, *The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefield* (Oxford University Press 2021).

¹³²¹ U.S. Department of State, "Seka Musa Baluku," <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/seka-musa-baluku/>.

¹³²² Acosta, B., Huang, R., & Silverman, D. (2022). Introducing ROLE: A database of rebel leader attributes in armed conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 60(2), 352-361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221077920>. Ahmed Rashid, "They're Only Sleeping: Why Militant Islamicists in Central Asia Aren't Going to Go Away," *The New Yorker*, January 14, 2002, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping.mention> mentions 1968 as his birth year.

¹³²³ Parliament of Australia. (2012). *Appendix C – Statement of reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. In *Review of the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam (AAI), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)*

trafficking between Afghanistan and Tajikistan before founding the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the summer 1998 together with Tahir Yuldashev.¹³²⁴ He is the military commander of the group.¹³²⁵ He met with bin Laden and Taliban leaders in Afghanistan and received financial support for IMU in 2000, besides IMU's resources from the opium trade.¹³²⁶ The IMU was listed as a US designated Foreign Terrorist Organization on September 25, 2000.¹³²⁷ Namangani was sentenced to death in absentia for bombings in Uzbekistan.¹³²⁸ He was reportedly killed in an U.S. airstrike in 2001, but subsequent information suggests he may have not been killed.¹³²⁹

Tahir Yuldashev

Tahir Yuldashev co-founded the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and was the leader after Nagamani's death in 2001.¹³³⁰ He was born in 1967, dropped out of college and was a local mullah in the city of Namanga.¹³³¹ He was a politician, heading the Adolat (Justice) Party which aimed for Sharia law in the city.¹³³² After the party was banned in 1992,¹³³³ he went into exile in Tajikistan

and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) as terrorist organisations (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security).

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/pjicis/four%20terrorist/report/Appendix%20C.

¹³²⁴ Ahmed Rashid, "They're Only Sleeping: Why Militant Islamicists in Central Asia Aren't Going to Go Away," *The New Yorker*, January 14, 2002, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>.

¹³²⁵ <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/359>;

¹³²⁶ Ahmed Rashid, "They're Only Sleeping: Why Militant Islamicists in Central Asia Aren't Going to Go Away," *The New Yorker*, January 14, 2002, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>.

¹³²⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>.

¹³²⁸ James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*, Nonproliferation.org, August 17, 2008, <https://nonproliferation.org/islamic-movement-of-uzbekistan-imu/>.

¹³²⁹ <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/359>; Rabasa, A., Chalk, P., Cragin, K., Daly, S. A., Gregg, H. S., Karasik, T. W., O'Brien, K. A., & Rosenau, W. (2006). *Beyond al-Qaeda: The global jihadist movement. Part 1*. RAND Corporation. Prepared for the United States Air Force; approved for public release, distribution unlimited. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg429af> (footnote 21, p. 113)

¹³³⁰ Parliament of Australia. (2012). *Appendix C – Statement of reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. In *Review of the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam (AAI), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) as terrorist organisations* (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security).

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/pjicis/four%20terrorist/report/Appendix%20C ; <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/359>

¹³³¹ Ahmed Rashid, "They're Only Sleeping: Why Militant Islamicists in Central Asia Aren't Going to Go Away," *The New Yorker*, January 14, 2002, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>.

¹³³² Parliament of Australia. (2012). *Appendix C – Statement of reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. In *Review of the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam (AAI), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) as terrorist organisations* (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security).

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/pjicis/four%20terrorist/report/Appendix%20C

¹³³³ Parliament of Australia. (2012). *Appendix C – Statement of reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. In *Review of the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam (AAI), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) as terrorist organisations* (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security).

and studied at a madrasah in Dushanbe.¹³³⁴ Yuldashev spent time in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and had ties to al-Qaida and the Taliban.¹³³⁵ Yuldashev has served on al-Qaida's Shura Majlis top council.¹³³⁶ He was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Pakistan in 2009.¹³³⁷

Abu Usman Adil

Usmon Odil became the leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) after Yuldashev's death. In October 2009, he appeared alongside TTP leader Hakimullah Mahsud in a video.¹³³⁸ He died in a U.S. drone strike in 2012 in Pakistan.¹³³⁹

Usamn Ghazi

After serving as the deputy leader, Usamn Ghazi was appointed as new leader after Adil's death.¹³⁴⁰ He was killed in 2015 during clashes with the Taliban in Afghanistan.¹³⁴¹ Significant numbers of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan fighters joined the Islamic State – Khorasan Province¹³⁴² while sources suggest Ghazi pledged loyalty to the Islamic State.¹³⁴³

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/pjicis/four%20terrorist/report/Appendix%20C.

¹³³⁴ Ahmed Rashid, "They're Only Sleeping: Why Militant Islamicists in Central Asia Aren't Going to Go Away," *The New Yorker*, January 14, 2002, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>.

¹³³⁵ Parliament of Australia. (2012). *Appendix C – Statement of reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. In *Review of the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam (AAI), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) as terrorist organisations* (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security).

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/pjicis/four%20terrorist/report/Appendix%20C.

¹³³⁶ Roggio, Bill. "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan confirms leader Tahir Yuldashev killed." *The Long War Journal*, 16 Aug. 2010. Web. 25 Aug. 2018; Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>.

¹³³⁷ Parliament of Australia. (2012). *Appendix C – Statement of reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. In *Review of the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam (AAI), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) as terrorist organisations* (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security).

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/pjicis/four%20terrorist/report/Appendix%20C.

¹³³⁸ Parliament of Australia. (2012). *Appendix C – Statement of reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. In *Review of the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam (AAI), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) as terrorist organisations* (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security).

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/pjicis/four%20terrorist/report/Appendix%20C.

¹³³⁹ Roggio, Bill. "2 IMU Leaders Captured in Northern Afghanistan." *The Long War Journal*, 09 Feb. 2013. Web. 25 Aug. 2018.

¹³⁴⁰ Uppsala Conflict Data Program, "IMU," <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/359>.

¹³⁴¹ Uppsala Conflict Data Program, "IMU," <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/359>.

¹³⁴² Uppsala Conflict Data Program, "IMU," <https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/359>.

¹³⁴³ Crenshaw, M., & Robinson, K. (2025). Mapping Militants Project. Rice University. <https://doi.org/10.25613/G0K4-WF70>.

Tunisia

Ansar al-Sharia - Tunisia

Seifallah Ben Hassine

Seifallah Ben Hassine, Abu Iyadh al-Tunisi, was born in November 1965 in Menzel Bourguiba, Tunisia.¹³⁴⁴ He reportedly undertook university studies in Morocco before traveling to Afghanistan and Pakistan to receive military training.¹³⁴⁵ Other reports note that Ben Hassine spent time studying in the United Kingdom under Abu Qatada al-Filistini.¹³⁴⁶ In Afghanistan, Ben Hassine joined al-Qaida and fought alongside Osama bin Laden.¹³⁴⁷ During his time in Afghanistan, he reportedly founded the Tunisian Combatant Group and participated in the Jalalabad battles in 2001.¹³⁴⁸ Ben Hassine was arrested in Turkey in 2003 and extradited to Tunisia.¹³⁴⁹ After spending eight years in prison, Ben Hassine was released from prison under the general amnesty in Tunisia and would subsequently found Ansar al-Sharia - Tunisia.¹³⁵⁰ The United States designated Ben Hassine as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist and Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2014.¹³⁵¹ Despite reports of his death in Libya in 2015,¹³⁵² a United Nations report noted that Ben Hassine remained active in 2017.¹³⁵³ In 2019, Ben Hassine's death was announced following a French military operation in Mali.¹³⁵⁴

¹³⁴⁴ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أبو عياض التونسي,”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/9/2/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A>.

¹³⁴⁵ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أبو عياض التونسي,”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/9/2/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A>.

¹³⁴⁶ https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/10/al_qaeda_ally_orches.php.

¹³⁴⁷ Mapping Militants Project, “Ansar al-Shariah (Tunisia).” Last modified August 1, 2018.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/328/>.

¹³⁴⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أبو عياض التونسي,”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/9/2/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A>.

¹³⁴⁹ Al Jazeera Arabic, “أبو عياض التونسي,”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2014/9/2/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A>.

¹³⁵⁰ Counter Extremism Project, “Seifallah Ben Hassine,” <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/seifallah-ben-hassine>.

¹³⁵¹ Counter Extremism Project, “Seifallah Ben Hassine,” <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/seifallah-ben-hassine>; National Counterterrorism Center, “Ansar al-Sharia,” https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/ansar_al_sharia.html.

¹³⁵² Carlotta Gall and Eric Schmitt, “Jihadist From Tunisia Died in Strike in Libya, U.S. Official Says,” *The New York Times*, July 2, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/world/africa/jihadist-from-tunisia-died-in-strike-in-libya-us-official-says.html>.

¹³⁵³ United Nations Security Council, “Seifallah Ben Omar Ben Mohamed Ben Hassine,”

https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/seifallah-ben-omar-ben-mohamed-ben-hassine.

¹³⁵⁴ Al Jazeera Arabic, “من تنظيم الشريعة بتونس للقاعدة بمالي.. نهاية رحلة أبو عياض,”

<https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2019/2/27/%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A->

Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade

Khaled Chaib

Khaled Chaib, also known as Lokman Abu Sakhr, was born in 1984 in Algeria's Tebessa Province.¹³⁵⁵ Chaib reportedly continued his studies until the university level and specialized in chemistry, providing him with unique insight into explosives manufacturing.¹³⁵⁶ Sources note that Chaib participated in rebel activity in Algeria, becoming a prominent leader in the Abu Fida Brigade before rising through the ranks of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.¹³⁵⁷ Chaib would later travel to Tunisia and found the Okba ibn Nafaa Brigade, which began attacks against Tunisian security forces in the Mount Chaambi region in 2012.¹³⁵⁸ Tunisian security forces stated that they killed Chaib during a military operation in the Gafsa region of Tunisia in 2015.¹³⁵⁹ Tunisia's Prime Minister Habib Essid stated that the death of Khaled Chaib "spared Tunisia from a security disaster."¹³⁶⁰

Mourad Chaib

Mourad Chaib succeeded his brother, Khaled Chaib, as leader of the Okba ibn Nafaa Brigade in 2015.¹³⁶¹ Mourad was born in November 1983 in Algeria's Tebessa Province.¹³⁶² Chaib reportedly participated in militant activities in Algeria as early as the late 1990s.¹³⁶³ Coordinating with al-Qaida, Chaib entered Tunisia as early as 2011 and would later command a company within the Okba ibn Nafaa Brigade.¹³⁶⁴ While some reports suggest that Mourad was killed during a Tunisian

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/4/3/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9>

¹³⁵⁵ Al Jazeera Arabic, "لقمان أبو صخر,"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/4/3/%D9%84%D9%82%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B5%D8%AE%D8%B1>

¹³⁵⁶ Al Jazeera Arabic, "لقمان أبو صخر,"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/4/3/%D9%84%D9%82%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B5%D8%AE%D8%B1>

¹³⁵⁷ Al Jazeera Arabic, "لقمان أبو صخر,"

<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/4/3/%D9%84%D9%82%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B5%D8%AE%D8%B1>

¹³⁵⁸ Garrett Nada, "The Islamist Spectrum - Tunisia: From Democrats to Jihadis," *Wilson Center*, August 7, 2017, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-islamist-spectrum-tunisia-democrats-to-jihadis>.

¹³⁵⁹ Reuters, "Tunisia Says Senior Militant Commander Killed in Raid," March 29, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/tunisia-says-senior-militant-commander-killed-in-raid-idUSKBN0MP0B7/>.

¹³⁶⁰ Lamine Ghanmi, "Tunisian Security Forces Kill Top al-Qaeda-Affiliated Commander," *The Arab Weekly*, October 26, 2019, <https://the arabweekly.com/tunisian-security-forces-kill-top-al-qaeda-affiliated-commander>.

¹³⁶¹ Aaron Y. Zelin, "Not Gonna Be Able to Do It: al-Qaeda in Tunisia's Inability to Take Advantage of the Islamic State's Setbacks," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 1 (2019): 63-77.

¹³⁶² Ahmad Sultan, "مراد الشايب.. قائد إرهابي تونس ومنسق القاعدة في المغرب," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/49526>.

¹³⁶³ Ahmad Sultan, "مراد الشايب.. قائد إرهابي تونس ومنسق القاعدة في المغرب," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/49526>.

¹³⁶⁴ Ahmad Sultan, "مراد الشايب.. قائد إرهابي تونس ومنسق القاعدة في المغرب," <https://www.islamist-movements.com/49526>.

military operation in 2017,¹³⁶⁵ Chaib continued to lead the organization until 2019.¹³⁶⁶ In 2019, Chaib was killed in a military ambush in the Kasserine region of western Tunisia.¹³⁶⁷ The Tunisian Interior Ministry claimed that Chaib was among “the most dangerous and bloodthirsty of all terrorist leaders.”¹³⁶⁸

Yemen

al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula

Nasir al-Wuhayshi

Nasir al-Wuhayshi, also known as Abu Baseer, became the founding leader of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in 2009.¹³⁶⁹ Al-Wuhayshi was born in October 1976 in the Mukayras region of Yemen.¹³⁷⁰ Shortly after studying at the Faculty of Sharia and Law at the University of Sana’a, al-Wuhayshi traveled to Afghanistan in 1998 and joined al-Qaida.¹³⁷¹ After fighting in the Battle of Tora Bora and fleeing Afghanistan in 2001,¹³⁷² al-Wuhayshi was arrested and imprisoned in Iran.¹³⁷³ Al-Wuhayshi reportedly spent nearly two years in prison before being extradited in late 2003 to Yemen, where he would remain in prison until 2006.¹³⁷⁴ Al-Wuhayshi was appointed as

¹³⁶⁵ Aaron Y. Zelin, “Not Gonna Be Able to Do It: al-Qaeda in Tunisia’s Inability to Take Advantage of the Islamic State’s Setbacks,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 1 (2019): 63-77.

¹³⁶⁶ Asharq al-Awsat, “تونس تعلن تفاصيل مقتل قيادي خطير جداً في القاعدة,” <https://aawsat.com/home/article/1955206/%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%C2%AB%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B%C2%BB-%D9%81%D9%8A-%C2%AB%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9%C2%BB?page=4>.

¹³⁶⁷ Al Jazeera Arabic, “تونس تعلن مقتل قيادي جزائري بتنظيم القاعدة,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2018/1/21/%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85>.

¹³⁶⁸ Lamine Ghanmi, “Tunisian Security Forces Kill Top al-Qaeda-Affiliated Commander,” *The Arab Weekly*, October 26, 2019, <https://thearabweekly.com/tunisian-security-forces-kill-top-al-qaeda-affiliated-commander>.

¹³⁶⁹ Mapping Militants Project. “Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.” Last modified October 12, 2024. <https://mappingmilitants.org/node/310/>.

¹³⁷⁰ Gregory D. Johnsen, “A Profile of AQAP’s Upper Echelon,” *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (2012): 6-8.

¹³⁷¹ Hussam Rodman, “Founder’s Death a Blow to AQAP, but not Fatal,” *Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies*, March 5, 2020.

¹³⁷² BBC, “Obituary: Yemen al-Qaeda Leader Nasser al-Wuhayshi,” June 16, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33150212>.

¹³⁷³ Al Jazeera Arabic, “ناصر الوحشي,” <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/6/16/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%8A>.

¹³⁷⁴ Gregory D. Johnsen, “A Profile of AQAP’s Upper Echelon,” *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (2012): 6-8.

al-Qaida in Yemen's commander shortly after escaping from prison in 2006.¹³⁷⁵ In 2009, al-Wuhayshi oversaw the merger of al-Qaida's branches in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, which led to the formation of AQAP.¹³⁷⁶ In June 2015, a U.S. drone strike killed al-Wuhayshi in southern Yemen.¹³⁷⁷

Qasim al-Raymi

Qasim al-Raymi succeeded Nasir al-Wuhayshi as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) leader in 2015. Al-Raymi was born in 1978 in Yemen's Raymah governorate.¹³⁷⁸ He studied alongside al-Wuhayshi at the Faculty of Sharia and Law at the University of Sana'a.¹³⁷⁹ Al-Raymi traveled to fight in Afghanistan during the 1990s, spending time at al-Qaida training camps.¹³⁸⁰ In 2004, al-Raymi was imprisoned in Yemen for plotting to attack foreign embassies.¹³⁸¹ After escaping from prison in 2006, al-Raymi played a key role in building al-Qaida's network in Yemen.¹³⁸² Following the formation of AQAP in 2009, al-Raymi became the organization's second-in-command and military leader.¹³⁸³ In early 2020, a U.S. airstrike killed al-Raymi in Yemen.¹³⁸⁴

Khalid Batarfi

Khalid Batarfi succeeded Qasim al-Raymi as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) leader in 2020. Batarfi was born in 1979 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.¹³⁸⁵ Batarfi graduated from high school in Jeddah prior to studying under several prominent Salafi sheikhs.¹³⁸⁶ In 1999, Batarfi traveled to

¹³⁷⁵ Hussam Radman, "Founder's Death a Blow to AQAP, but not Fatal," *Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies*, March 5, 2020.

¹³⁷⁶ Gregory D. Johnsen, "A Profile of AQAP's Upper Echelon," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (2012): 6-8.

¹³⁷⁷ BBC, "Yemen al-Qaeda Chief al-Wuhayshi Killed in US Strike," June 16, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33143259>.

¹³⁷⁸ Al Jazeera Arabic, "قاسم الريمي," <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2015/6/18/%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%8A>.

¹³⁷⁹ Hussam Radman, "Founder's Death a Blow to AQAP, but not Fatal," *Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies*, March 5, 2020.

¹³⁸⁰ Gregory D. Johnsen, "A Profile of AQAP's Upper Echelon," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (2012): 6-8.

¹³⁸¹ BBC, "Profile: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," June 16, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11483095>.

¹³⁸² Gregory D. Johnsen, "A Profile of AQAP's Upper Echelon," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (2012): 6-8.

¹³⁸³ BBC, "Profile: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," June 16, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11483095>.

¹³⁸⁴ Nikki Carvajal and Caroline Kelly, "White House Announces Death of Terror Leader Qassim al-Rimi," *CNN*, February 7, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/06/politics/white-house-announces-death-of-aqap-leader/index.html>.

¹³⁸⁵ Gregory D. Johnsen, "Khalid Batarfi and the Future of AQAP," *Lawfare*, March 22, 2020, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/khalid-batarfi-and-future-aqap>.

¹³⁸⁶ Gregory D. Johnsen, "Khalid Batarfi and the Future of AQAP," *Lawfare*, March 22, 2020, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/khalid-batarfi-and-future-aqap>.

Afghanistan, where he spent eight months training with al-Qaida and fighting with the Taliban.¹³⁸⁷ Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Batarfi was imprisoned in Iran before being extradited to Yemen. Batarfi was released in 2004 after spending two years in prison.¹³⁸⁸ In 2008, Batarfi joined al-Qaida's network in Yemen, later becoming a member of AQAP's Shura Council.¹³⁸⁹ Batarfi was later arrested in 2011 before escaping from prison in 2015.¹³⁹⁰ Batarfi led AQAP until his death in 2024.¹³⁹¹

¹³⁸⁷ Gregory D. Johnsen, "Khalid Batarfi and the Future of AQAP," *Lawfare*, March 22, 2020, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/khalid-batarfi-and-future-aqap>; Elisabeth Kendall, "Twenty Years After 9/11: The Jihadi Threat in the Arabian Peninsula," *CTC Sentinel* 14, no. 7 (2021): 63-75.

¹³⁸⁸ Gregory D. Johnsen, "Khalid Batarfi and the Future of AQAP," *Lawfare*, March 22, 2020, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/khalid-batarfi-and-future-aqap>.

¹³⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Rewards for Justice - Reward Offer for Information on Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Key Leaders," October 18, 2018, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/rewards-for-justice-reward-offer-for-information-on-al-qaida-in-the-arabian-peninsula-aqap-key-leaders/>; Gregory D. Johnsen, "Khalid Batarfi and the Future of AQAP," *Lawfare*, March 22, 2020, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/khalid-batarfi-and-future-aqap>.

¹³⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Rewards for Justice - Reward Offer for Information on Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Key Leaders," October 18, 2018, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/rewards-for-justice-reward-offer-for-information-on-al-qaida-in-the-arabian-peninsula-aqap-key-leaders/>; Gregory D. Johnsen, "Khalid Batarfi and the Future of AQAP," *Lawfare*, March 22, 2020, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/khalid-batarfi-and-future-aqap>.

¹³⁹¹ Assim al-Sabri, "Batarfi's Death and Al-Qaeda in Yemen's New Emir: What Comes Next?" *Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies*, May 31, 2024, <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/analysis/22765>.