

SECRET

FOCUS

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## TERRORISM

### AL-QAEDA CENTRAL COMMAND HAS PUBLISHED A THREATENING COMMUNIQUE IN SUPPORT OF HAMAS AND LEGITIMISING JIHAD

Al Qaeda's central command, based in Iran, delivered a statement on 13 October, entitled "the victory of Allah is close," through its *As Sahab* official propaganda outlet, calling on the world's Muslim community to support Palestinian groups against Israel.

Relaying a Mauritanian preaching calling for "opening the doors to jihad," broadcast on Palestinian television, the communiqué could give religious legitimacy to someone willing to act in the West or elsewhere.

Moreover, central Al-Qaeda has been rallying followers beyond jihadists to attack Israeli backers, Israeli embassies, American battleships, military bases, embassies, and airports in Muslim countries.

This statement illustrates the willingness of Central Al-Qaeda to take advantage of the current events to appear as a gatherer of the oppositions to Israel and its supporters, unlike the Islamic State which has not yet positioned itself.

### ATTACK ON TOURISTS IN UGANDA'S QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

On 17 October 2023, two British and South African tourists, accompanied by their Ugandan guide, were killed in Queen Elizabeth National Park in western Uganda, near the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

On 18 October, the responsibility for the attack was taken by the Central Africa Wilaya of the "Islamic State" (ISCAP), which Ugandan authorities had designated as responsible for the ambush from the very day of the attack.

Al-Qaeda thus continues its current sequence of gathering the Ummah and reviving the Al-Qaeda-related jihad by calling for solidarity with Palestine. Unofficial Al-Qaeda-linked foundations, which reinforce jihadist propaganda, are already disseminating this message widely, while producing their own threatening publications.

While it is difficult to assess the incentives for individual acts, this communiqué can help by conferring religious legitimacy on the individual.

Furthermore, the importance of what is happening will trigger a realignment within the global jihad movement. Al-Qaeda, for its part, is partly aligned with the nationalist agenda of Palestinian political-security groups, in contrast to the Islamic State, which, at this stage, has not officially voiced its position.

The bulletin can also generate terrorist actions against Israeli interests in the region and beyond.

The attack comes as ISCAP's operational projects targeting Ugandan territory have increased in recent weeks in response to the intensification of air and ground operations by Ugandan forces in the Congolese provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, areas of operations of the jihadist organisation.

The decision to target foreign travellers is intended to undermine tourism, one of Uganda's main economic resources, while generating wider media coverage of ISCAP's activities.

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## PROLIFERATION

### REGIONAL IRANIAN BALLISTIC THREAT UPDATE

Iran has a powerful medium-range ballistic arsenal to guarantee its ability to respond in kind to neighbours. If Iran claims to impose a 2,000-km limit on the range of its delivery vehicles, the regime can technically strike targets throughout the Middle East and Central Europe.

After relying on arms supplies from Iran and then Syria from 2010 to 2017, Hezbollah began producing rockets and short-range ballistic missiles in Syria, with the support of the Centre for Scientific Research and Studies (CSRS), a Syrian state body primarily responsible for developing weapons of mass

destruction and ballistic delivery systems and for conventional weapons production. Beginning in 2017, Iran deployed missile production lines to Lebanon to provide Hezbollah with an autonomous missile capability.

Today, Hezbollah has an arsenal of tens of thousands of weapons of various types, including modified Scud missiles and M-302 and Zelzal rockets capable of striking with precision of about ten meters. The conflict in Syria has given members of the Shi'a party a chance to master their use.

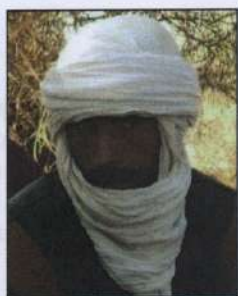
### DECISION OF THE DUMA REVOKING THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY

On 17 October 2023, Duma deputies voted to revoke ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). But Russia remains a signatory and has not announced its decision to conduct a nuclear test. We note that this latest development comes as Russian leaders have made aggressive statements about the use of nuclear weapons since the start of the war in Ukraine.

We believe this decision needs to be put in perspective with the refurbishment, since November 2022, of a test gallery at the Novaya Zemlya test site. Former general Deputy Guruliev said in a warning just after the Duma vote, "Our test site in Novaya Zemlya is fully ready."

## PERSONALITY

### FAKHANE AG TAKI, EMIR OF JAMAAT NUSRAT AL-ISLAM WAL MUSLIMIN'S WILAYA MANAKA



A Tuareg leader of AQIM, Ansar Eddin, and later the Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), Fakhane ag Taki alias "Abu Daud le Tergui" has been serving since 2018 as the Emir of the JNIM Wilaya of Menaka.

Fakhane ag Taki joined AQIM's Katiba al-Ansar in 2011, followed by Ansar

Eddin, the Tuareg jihadist group of Iyad ag Ghali. Relocated to Libya from 2013 at the request of Iyad ag Ghali, he plays a fundamental role in supplying arms to jihadist groups in northern Mali.

In 2018, he took over the JNIM Wilaya of Menaka following the neutralisation of its emirs. As regional emir, Fakhane ag Taki has been involved in negotiations with Tuareg tribes in his region to secure their support in the fight against the Wilaya Sahel of the "Islamic State" (WSIS).

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