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**Al-Qaeda** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) or [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl), [Template:IPA-ar](/wiki/Template:IPA-ar), translation: "The Base", "The Foundation" or "The Fundament" and alternatively spelled **al-Qaida**, al-Qæda and sometimes **al-Qa'ida**) is a militant [Sunni](/wiki/Sunni) [Islamist](/wiki/Islamist) global organization founded in 1988<ref name=bergen75>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb).</ref> by [Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden), [Abdullah Azzam](/wiki/Abdullah_Azzam),[[1]](#cite_note-1) and several other Arab volunteers who fought against the [Soviet invasion of Afghanistan](/wiki/Soviet–Afghan_War) in the 1980s.[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) It operates as a network made up of [Islamic extremist](/wiki/Islamic_extremist), [Salafist](/wiki/Salafist) [jihadists](/wiki/Jihadist). It has been designated as a [terrorist group](/wiki/List_of_designated_terrorist_groups) by the [United Nations Security Council](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council), the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](/wiki/North_Atlantic_Treaty_Organization) (NATO), the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union), the United States, Russia, India, and various other countries (see [below](/wiki/#Designation_as_terrorist_group)).

Al-Qaeda has mounted attacks on civilian and military targets in various countries, including the [1998 U.S. embassy bombings](/wiki/1998_U.S._embassy_bombings), the [September 11 attacks](/wiki/September_11_attacks), and the [2002 Bali bombings](/wiki/2002_Bali_bombings). The U.S. government responded to the September 11 attacks by launching the "[War on Terror](/wiki/War_on_Terror)". With the loss of key leaders, culminating in the [death of Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Death_of_Osama_bin_Laden), al-Qaeda's operations have devolved from actions that were controlled from the top down, to actions by franchise associated groups and lone-wolf operators. Characteristic techniques employed by al-Qaeda include [suicide attacks](/wiki/Suicide_attack) and the simultaneous bombing of different targets.[[5]](#cite_note-5) Activities ascribed to it may involve members of the movement who have made a pledge of loyalty to Osama bin Laden, or the much more numerous "al-Qaeda-linked" individuals who have undergone training in one of its camps in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq or Sudan.[[6]](#cite_note-6) Al-Qaeda ideologues envision a complete break from all foreign influences in [Muslim countries](/wiki/Muslim_world), and the creation of a new [caliphate](/wiki/Caliphatism) ruling over the entire Muslim world.[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9) Among the beliefs ascribed to al-Qaeda members is the conviction that a Christian–Jewish alliance is conspiring to destroy Islam.[[10]](#cite_note-10) As [Salafist jihadists](/wiki/Salafist_jihadism), they believe that the killing of [non-combatants](/wiki/Non-combatants) is religiously sanctioned, but they ignore any aspect of religious scripture which might be interpreted as forbidding the murder of non-combatants and internecine fighting.[[11]](#cite_note-11)<ref name=Ranstorp>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Al-Qaeda also opposes what it regards as [man-made laws](/wiki/Man-made_law), and wants to replace them with a strict form of [sharia law](/wiki/Sharia_law).[[12]](#cite_note-12) Al-Qaeda has carried out many attacks on targets it considers [*kafir*](/wiki/Kafir).[[13]](#cite_note-13) Al-Qaeda is also responsible for instigating [sectarian violence among Muslims](/wiki/Sectarian_violence_among_Muslims).[[14]](#cite_note-14) Al-Qaeda leaders regard [liberal Muslims](/wiki/Liberal_movements_within_Islam), [Shias](/wiki/Shia), [Sufis](/wiki/Sufi) and other sects as heretics and have attacked their mosques and gatherings.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Examples of sectarian attacks include the [Yazidi community bombings](/wiki/2007_Yazidi_communities_bombings), the [Sadr City bombings](/wiki/23_November_2006_Sadr_City_bombings), the [Ashoura massacre](/wiki/Ashoura_massacre) and the [April 2007 Baghdad bombings](/wiki/18_April_2007_Baghdad_bombings).[[16]](#cite_note-16) Since the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011 the group has been led by Egyptian [Ayman al-Zawahiri](/wiki/Ayman_al-Zawahiri).

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## Organization[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

Al-Qaeda's management philosophy has been described as "centralization of decision and decentralization of execution."[[17]](#cite_note-17) It is thought that al-Qaeda's leadership, following the [War on Terror](/wiki/War_on_Terror), has "become geographically isolated," leading to the "emergence of decentralized leadership" of regional groups using the al-Qaeda "brand".[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19) Many terrorism experts do not believe that the global jihadist movement is driven at every level by al-Qaeda's leadership. Although bin Laden still held considerable ideological sway over some [Muslim extremists](/wiki/Muslim_extremists) before his death, experts argue that al-Qaeda has fragmented over the years into a variety of regional movements that have little connection with one another. [Marc Sageman](/wiki/Marc_Sageman), a psychiatrist and former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer, said that al-Qaeda is now just a "loose label for a movement that seems to target the west. There is no umbrella organisation. We like to create a mythical entity called [al-Qaeda] in our minds, but that is not the reality we are dealing with."[[20]](#cite_note-20) This view mirrors the account given by Osama bin Laden in his October 2001 interview with [Tayseer Allouni](/wiki/Tayseer_Allouni):

"... this matter isn't about any specific person and... is not about the al-Qa'idah Organization. We are the children of an Islamic Nation, with Prophet Muhammad as its leader, our Lord is one... and all the true believers [mu'mineen] are brothers. So the situation isn't like the West portrays it, that there is an 'organization' with a specific name (such as 'al-Qa'idah') and so on. That particular name is very old. It was born without any intention from us. Brother Abu Ubaida... created a military base to train the young men to fight against the vicious, arrogant, brutal, terrorizing Soviet empire... So this place was called 'The Base' ['Al-Qa'idah'], as in a training base, so this name grew and became. We aren't separated from this nation. We are the children of a nation, and we are an inseparable part of it, and from those public \*\*\* which spread from the far east, from the Philippines, to Indonesia, to Malaysia, to India, to Pakistan, reaching Mauritania... and so we discuss the conscience of this nation."<ref name=islamicawakening>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

[Bruce Hoffman](/wiki/Bruce_Hoffman), however, sees al-Qaeda as a cohesive network that is strongly led from the Pakistani tribal areas.[[20]](#cite_note-20) [thumb|180px|Al-Qaeda militant in](/wiki/File:Al-Qaida_crée_une_brigade_dirigée_par_des_Touaregs_(8246938011).jpg) [Sahel](/wiki/Sahel), 2012 Al-Qaeda has the following direct affiliates: [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Islamic_Maghreb)
* [Al-Qaeda in Somalia](/wiki/Al-Shabaab_(militant_group))
* [Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Arabian_Peninsula)
* [Al-Qaeda in Syria](/wiki/Al-Nusra_Front)
* [Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Indian_Subcontinent)
* [Al-Qaeda in Lebanon](/wiki/Abdullah_Azzam_Brigades)
* [Al-Qaeda in the Malay Archipelago](/wiki/Tanzim_Qaedat_al-Jihad)
* [Al-Qaeda in Kurdistan](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_Kurdish_Battalions)[[21]](#cite_note-21)\* [Al-Qaeda in West Africa](/wiki/Al-Mourabitoun_(jihadist_group))[[22]](#cite_note-22)\* [Al-Qaeda in Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina)[[23]](#cite_note-23)\* [Al-Qaeda in Gaza](/wiki/Tawhid_al-Jihad_(Gaza_Strip))
* [Al Qaeda in Spain](/wiki/Abu_Hafs_al-Masri_Brigades)
* [Al-Qaeda in Sinai Peninsula](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_Sinai_Peninsula)

[Template:Div col end](/wiki/Template:Div_col_end) Al-Qaeda's indirect affiliates includes the following, some of which have left the organization and joined the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant): [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Al-Mulathameen Brigade](/wiki/Mokhtar_Belmokhtar)
* [Ansar Dine](/wiki/Ansar_Dine)
* [Abu Sayyaf](/wiki/Abu_Sayyaf) (pledged allegiance to ISIL[[24]](#cite_note-24))
* [Ansar al-Islam](/wiki/Ansar_al-Islam) (merged with ISIL on 29 August 2014)
* [East Turkestan Islamic Movement](/wiki/East_Turkestan_Islamic_Movement)
* [Caucasus Emirate](/wiki/Caucasus_Emirate)
* [Fatah al-Islam](/wiki/Fatah_al-Islam)
* [Islamic Jihad Union](/wiki/Islamic_Jihad_Union)
* [Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan](/wiki/Islamic_Movement_of_Uzbekistan)
* [Jaish-e-Mohammed](/wiki/Jaish-e-Mohammed)
* [Jemaah Islamiyah](/wiki/Jemaah_Islamiyah)
* [Lashkar-e-Taiba](/wiki/Lashkar-e-Taiba)
* [Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa](/wiki/Movement_for_Oneness_and_Jihad_in_West_Africa)
* [Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group](/wiki/Moroccan_Islamic_Combatant_Group)
* [Rajah Sulaiman movement](/wiki/Rajah_Sulaiman_movement)

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### Leadership[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[thumbnail|Al-Zawahiri and Bin Laden in 2001 interview with Hamid Mir in Kabul](/wiki/File:Hamid_Mir_interviewing_Osama_bin_Laden_and_Ayman_al-Zawahiri_2001.jpg) [Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) was the most historically notable [emir](/wiki/Emir), or commander, and Senior Operations Chief of al-Qaeda prior to his assassination on May 1, 2011 by US forces. [Ayman al-Zawahiri](/wiki/Ayman_al-Zawahiri), al-Qaeda's Deputy Operations Chief prior to bin Laden's death, assumed the role of commander, according to an announcement by al-Qaeda on June 16, 2011. He replaced [Saif al-Adel](/wiki/Saif_al-Adel), who had served as interim commander.[[25]](#cite_note-25) Bin Laden was advised by a [Shura Council](/wiki/Shura), which consists of senior al-Qaeda members, estimated by Western officials to consist of 20–30 people.

[Atiyah Abd al-Rahman](/wiki/Atiyah_Abd_al-Rahman) was alleged to be second in command prior to his death on August 22, 2011.[[26]](#cite_note-26) On June 5, 2012, Pakistan intelligence officials announced that al-Rahman's alleged successor [Abu Yahya al-Libi](/wiki/Abu_Yahya_al-Libi) had been killed in Pakistan.[[27]](#cite_note-27) [Nasir al-Wuhayshi](/wiki/Nasir_al-Wuhayshi) was said to have become second in command in 2013. He was the leader of Al Qaeda in Yemen until killed in a U.S. airstrike in June 2015.[[28]](#cite_note-28) Al-Qaeda's network was built from scratch as a conspiratorial network that draws on leaders of all its regional nodes "as and when necessary to serve as an integral part of its high command."[[29]](#cite_note-29)\* The Military Committee is responsible for training operatives, acquiring weapons, and planning attacks.

* The Money/Business Committee funds the recruitment and training of operatives through the [*hawala*](/wiki/Hawala) banking system. U.S-led efforts to eradicate the sources of [terrorist financing](/wiki/Terrorist_financing)[[30]](#cite_note-30) were most successful in the year immediately following the September 11 attacks.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Al-Qaeda continues to operate through unregulated banks, such as the 1,000 or so *hawaladars* in Pakistan, some of which can handle deals of up to $10 million.[[32]](#cite_note-32) It also provides air tickets and false passports, pays al-Qaeda members, and oversees profit-driven businesses.[[33]](#cite_note-33) In the [*9/11 Commission Report*](/wiki/9/11_Commission_Report), it was estimated that al-Qaeda required $30 million-per-year to conduct its operations.
* The Law Committee reviews [Sharia law](/wiki/Sharia_law), and decides whether particular courses of action conform to it.
* The Islamic Study/[*Fatwah*](/wiki/Fatwā) Committee issues religious edicts, such as an edict in 1998 telling Muslims to kill Americans.
* In the late 1990s, there was a publicly known Media Committee, which ran the now-defunct newspaper *Nashrat al Akhbar (Newscast)* and handled [public relations](/wiki/Public_relations).
* In 2005, al-Qaeda formed [As-Sahab](/wiki/As-Sahab), a media production house, to supply its video and audio materials.

### Command structure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

When asked about the possibility of al-Qaeda's connection to the [July 7, 2005 London bombings](/wiki/July_7,_2005_London_bombings) in 2005, [Metropolitan Police Commissioner](/wiki/Metropolitan_Police_Commissioner) [Sir Ian Blair](/wiki/Sir_Ian_Blair) said: "Al-Qaeda is not an organization. Al-Qaeda is a way of working... but this has the hallmark of that approach... al-Qaeda clearly has the ability to provide training... to provide expertise... and I think that is what has occurred here."[[34]](#cite_note-34) On August 13, 2005, however, [*The Independent*](/wiki/The_Independent) newspaper, quoting police and [MI5](/wiki/MI5) investigations, reported that the July 7 bombers had acted independently of an al-Qaeda terror mastermind someplace abroad.[[35]](#cite_note-35) What exactly al-Qaeda is, or was, remains in dispute. Certainly, it has been obliged to evolve and adapt in the aftermath of 9/11 and the launch of the 'war on terror'.

Nasser al-Bahri, who was Osama bin Laden's bodyguard for four years in the run-up to 9/11 gives a highly detailed description of how the group functioned at that time in his memoir.[[36]](#cite_note-36) He describes its formal administrative structure and vast arsenal, as well as day-to-day life as a member.

However, author and journalist [Adam Curtis](/wiki/Adam_Curtis) argues that the idea of al-Qaeda as a formal organization is primarily an American invention. Curtis contends the name "al-Qaeda" was first brought to the attention of the public in the 2001 trial of bin Laden and the four men accused of the [1998 US embassy bombings](/wiki/1998_US_embassy_bombings) in East Africa:

The reality was that bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri had become the focus of a loose association of disillusioned Islamist militants who were attracted by the new strategy. But there was no organization. These were militants who mostly planned their own operations and looked to bin Laden for funding and assistance. He was not their commander. There is also no evidence that bin Laden used the term "al-Qaeda" to refer to the name of a group until after September 11 attacks, when he realized that this was the term the Americans had given it.[[37]](#cite_note-37)

As a matter of law, the [US Department of Justice](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Justice) needed to show that bin Laden was the leader of a criminal organization in order to charge him [*in absentia*](/wiki/Trial_in_absentia) under the [Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act](/wiki/Racketeer_Influenced_and_Corrupt_Organizations_Act), also known as the RICO statutes. The name of the organization and details of its structure were provided in the testimony of [Jamal al-Fadl](/wiki/Jamal_al-Fadl), who said he was a founding member of the group and a former employee of bin Laden.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Questions about the reliability of al-Fadl's testimony have been raised by a number of sources because of his history of dishonesty, and because he was delivering it as part of a [plea bargain](/wiki/Plea_bargain) agreement after being convicted of conspiring to attack U.S. military establishments.[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[40]](#cite_note-40) Sam Schmidt, one of his defense lawyers, said:

There were selective portions of al-Fadl's testimony that I believe was false, to help support the picture that he helped the Americans join together. I think he lied in a number of specific testimony about a unified image of what this organization was. It made al-Qaeda the new Mafia or the new Communists. It made them identifiable as a group and therefore made it easier to prosecute any person associated with al-Qaeda for any acts or statements made by bin Laden.[[37]](#cite_note-37)

### Field operatives[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[thumb|300px|Pakistani journalist](/wiki/File:Hamid_Mir_interviewing_Osama_bin_Laden.jpg) [Hamid Mir](/wiki/Hamid_Mir) interviewing al-Qaeda leader [Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) in Afghanistan, in 1997 The number of individuals in the group who have undergone proper military training, and are capable of commanding insurgent forces, is largely unknown. Documents captured in the raid on bin Laden compound in 2011, show that the core al-Qaeda membership in 2002 was 170.[[41]](#cite_note-41) In 2006, it was estimated that al-Qaeda had several thousand commanders embedded in 40 different countries.[[42]](#cite_note-42) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), it was believed that no more than 200–300 members were still active commanders.[[43]](#cite_note-43) According to the award-winning 2004 BBC documentary [*The Power of Nightmares*](/wiki/The_Power_of_Nightmares), al-Qaeda was so weakly linked together that it was hard to say it existed apart from bin Laden and a small clique of close associates. The lack of any significant numbers of convicted al-Qaeda members, despite a large number of arrests on terrorism charges, was cited by the documentary as a reason to doubt whether a widespread entity that met the description of al-Qaeda existed.[[44]](#cite_note-44)

### Insurgent forces[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

According to [Robert Cassidy](/wiki/Robert_Cassidy), al-Qaeda controls two separate forces deployed alongside insurgents in Iraq and Pakistan. The first, numbering in the tens of thousands, was "organized, trained, and equipped as insurgent combat forces" in the Soviet-Afghan war.[[42]](#cite_note-42) It was made up primarily of foreign *mujahideen* from Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Many went on to fight in Bosnia and Somalia for global *jihad*. Another group, approximately 10,000 strong, live in Western states and have received rudimentary combat training.[[42]](#cite_note-42) Other analysts have described al-Qaeda's rank and file as being "predominantly Arab," in its first years of operation, and now also includes "other peoples" [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[45]](#cite_note-45) It has been estimated that 62% of al-Qaeda members have university education.[[46]](#cite_note-46)

### Financing[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Tone](/wiki/Template:Tone) Some financing for al-Qaeda in the 1990s came from the personal wealth of Osama bin Laden.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Other sources of income in 2001 included the [heroin trade](/wiki/Heroin_trade) and donations from supporters in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries.[[47]](#cite_note-47) A [WikiLeaks](/wiki/WikiLeaks) released memo from the United States Secretary of State sent in 2009 asserted that the primary source of funding of Sunni terrorist groups worldwide was Saudi Arabia.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Among the first pieces of evidence of Saudi Arabia’s conspicuous support for al-Qaeda was the so-called "[Golden Chain](/wiki/The_Golden_Chain)", a list of early al-Qaeda funders seized during a 2002 raid at the premises of the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) in Sarajevo by Bosnian police.[[49]](#cite_note-49) The hand-written list, validated by al-Qaeda defector Jamal al-Fadl, included the names of both donors and beneficiaries.[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50) Osama bin-Laden’s name appeared seven times among the beneficiaries, while 20 Saudi and Gulf-based businessmen and politicians were listed among the donors.[[49]](#cite_note-49) Besides Osama bin Laden, among the most notable Saudi recipients were Adel Batterjee (founder of BIF and designated as a terror financier by the U.S. Department of the Treasury in 2004) and Wael Hamza Julaidan (U.S.-terrorist designated in 2002 as one of al-Qaeda’s founder).[[49]](#cite_note-49) The most prominent Saudi figures among the donors included Saudi billionaire Saleh Kamel (CEO of Dallah Al-Baraka, accused of funding and supporting al-Qaeda operations), Sulaiman Abdul Aziz Al Rajhi (funder of SAAR Foundation, shut down within the framework of Operation Green Quest, and CEO of al-Rajhi Bank, investigated several times by U.S. authorities for its role in financing terrorism and al-Qaeda especially), and Ahmad Turki Yamani (son of former Saudi chief of Justice and former Saudi Minister of Petroleum).[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[51]](#cite_note-51) Saleh Kamel’s case in particular reinforces Saudi Arabia’s role as sponsor of al-Qaeda. For years, Omar al-Bayoumi, an associate of Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi, two 9/11 highjackers, received a stipend from al-Baraka, the financial group kamel directed.[[49]](#cite_note-49) Kamel invested for several years in a Sudanese bank that held accounts under the names of senior al-Qaeda affiliates.[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[52]](#cite_note-52) According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the Jidda-based al-Baraka Bank, one of the biggest subsidiaries of the financial group, was also suspected of providing banking services to al-Qaeda operatives.[[51]](#cite_note-51) In general, the documents seized during the 2002 Bosnia raid pointed out that al-Qaeda widely exploited charities to channel financial and material support to its operatives across the globe.[[53]](#cite_note-53) This was the case, for instance, with the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) and the Muslim World League (MWL). The former had solid ties with al-Qaeda associates worldwide, including al-Qaeda’s deputy Ayman al Zawahiri’s brother working for IIRO in Albania who had actively recruited on behalf of al-Qaeda and involved several Egyptian Islamic Jihad members in IIRO activities.[[54]](#cite_note-54) The latter was openly identified by al-Qaeda’s leader as one of the three charities al-Qaeda primarily relied upon for funding sources.[[54]](#cite_note-54) Qatar has provided financial support to al-Qaeda as well. On December 18, 2013 the U.S. Treasury designated Abd Al-Rahman al-Nuaimi, a Qatari citizen close to the al-Thani family and a human rights activist who founded the Swiss-based NGO Alkarama, as a global terrorist for his activities in support to al-Qaeda.[[55]](#cite_note-55) The U.S. Treasury claimed that Nuaimi, currently enjoying impunity in Qatar, "has facilitated significant financial support to al-Qa'ida in Iraq, and served as an interlocutor between al-Qa'ida in Iraq leaders and Qatar-based donors."[[55]](#cite_note-55) Nuaimi was also accused of overseeing a $2 million monthly transfer to al-Qaeda in Iraq for a period of time as part of his role as mediator between Iraq-based al-Qaeda senior officers and Qatari citizens.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) He also allegedly entertained relationships with Abu-Khalid al-Suri, al-Qaeda’s top envoy in Syria, who processed a $600,000 transfer to al-Qaeda in 2013.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) Moreover, Nuaimi is known to be associated with Abd al-Wahhab Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman al-Humayqani, a Yemeni politician and founding member of Alkarama listed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the U.S. Treasury in 2013.[[57]](#cite_note-57) The U.S. authorities claimed that Humayqani exploited his role in Alkarama to fundraise on behalf of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[57]](#cite_note-57) A prominent figure among AQAP ranks, he was also reported to have facilitated the flow of funding to AQAP affiliates based in Yemen. Nuaimi was accused of investing funds in the charity directed by Humayqani to ultimately fund AQAP.[[55]](#cite_note-55) About ten months after being sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury, Nuaimi was also restrained from doing business in the UK.[[58]](#cite_note-58) Another Qatari citizen, Kalifa Mohammed Turki Subayi, was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury on June 5, 2008 for his activities as a “Gulf-based al-Qaeda financier.”(10) Subayi’s name was added to the UN Security Council’s Sanctions List in 2008 upon charges of providing financial and material support to al-Qaeda senior leadership.[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[59]](#cite_note-59) Subayi allegedly moved al-Qaeda recruits to South Asia-based training camps.[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[59]](#cite_note-59) He also supported financially Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, a Pakistani national and senior al-Qaeda officer who is believed to be the mastermind behind the September 11 attack according to the 9/11 Commission Report.[[60]](#cite_note-60) His family publicly disowned him. There is controversy over whether and to what extent he continued to garner support from members of his family and/or the Saudi government.<ref name=CONTEXT-OF-SHORTLLY-AFTER-APRIL-1994>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

In June 1995, an even more ill-fated [attempt to assassinate Egyptian president Mubarak](/wiki/Attempted_assassination_of_President_Hosni_Mubarak) led to the expulsion of EIJ, and in May 1996, of bin Laden, by the Sudanese government.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

According to [Pakistani-American](/wiki/Pakistani-American) businessman [Mansoor Ijaz](/wiki/Mansoor_Ijaz), the Sudanese government offered the [Clinton Administration](/wiki/Clinton_Administration) numerous opportunities to arrest bin Laden. Ijaz's claims appeared in numerous [Op-Ed](/wiki/Op-Ed) pieces, including one in the [*Los Angeles Times*](/wiki/Los_Angeles_Times)[[105]](#cite_note-105) and one in [*The Washington Post*](/wiki/The_Washington_Post) co-written with former Ambassador to Sudan [Timothy M. Carney](/wiki/Timothy_M._Carney).[[106]](#cite_note-106) Similar allegations have been made by [*Vanity Fair*](/wiki/Vanity_Fair_(magazine)) contributing editor David Rose,[[107]](#cite_note-107) and [Richard Miniter](/wiki/Richard_Miniter), author of *Losing bin Laden*, in a November 2003 interview with [*World*](/wiki/World_(magazine)).[[108]](#cite_note-108) Several sources dispute Ijaz's claim, including the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the US (the [9/11 Commission](/wiki/9/11_Commission)), which concluded in part:

Sudan's minister of defense, Fatih Erwa, has claimed that Sudan offered to hand Bin Ladin over to the US. The Commission has found no credible evidence that this was so. Ambassador Carney had instructions only to push the Sudanese to expel Bin Ladin. Ambassador Carney had no legal basis to ask for more from the Sudanese since, at the time, there was no indictment out-standing.[[109]](#cite_note-109)

### Refuge in Afghanistan[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

After the fall of the Afghan communist regime in 1992, Afghanistan was effectively ungoverned for four years and plagued by constant infighting between various *mujahideen* groups.

The origins of the [Taliban](/wiki/Taliban) (literally "students") lay in the children of Afghanistan, many of them orphaned by the war, and many of whom had been educated in the rapidly expanding network of Islamic schools ([madrassas](/wiki/Madrassa)) either in [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar) or in the refugee camps on the Afghan-Pakistani border.

According to [Ahmed Rashid](/wiki/Ahmed_Rashid), five leaders of the Taliban were graduates of [Darul Uloom Haqqania](/wiki/Darul_Uloom_Haqqania), a madrassa in the small town of Akora Khattak.[[110]](#cite_note-110) The town is situated near Peshawar in Pakistan, but largely attended by [Afghan refugees](/wiki/Afghan_refugees).[[110]](#cite_note-110) This institution reflected [Salafi](/wiki/Salafi) beliefs in its teachings, and much of its funding came from private donations from wealthy Arabs. Bin Laden's contacts were still laundering most of these donations, using "unscrupulous" Islamic banks to transfer the money to an "array" of charities which serve as front groups for al-Qaeda, or transporting cash-filled suitcases straight into Pakistan.[[111]](#cite_note-111) Another four of the Taliban's leaders attended a similarly funded and influenced madrassa in Kandahar.

Many of the *mujahideen* who later joined the Taliban fought alongside Afghan warlord [Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi's](/wiki/Mohammad_Nabi_Mohammadi) Harkat i Inqilabi group at the time of the Russian invasion. This group also enjoyed the loyalty of most Afghan Arab fighters.

The continuing internecine strife between various factions, and accompanying lawlessness following the Soviet withdrawal, enabled the growing and well-disciplined Taliban to expand their control over territory in Afghanistan, and it came to establish an enclave which it called the [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan](/wiki/Islamic_Emirate_of_Afghanistan). In 1994, it captured the regional center of Kandahar, and after making rapid territorial gains thereafter, conquered the capital city [Kabul](/wiki/Kabul) in September 1996.

After the Sudanese made it clear, in May 1996, that bin Laden would never be welcome to return,[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify) Taliban-controlled Afghanistan—with previously established connections between the groups, administered with a shared militancy,[[112]](#cite_note-112) and largely isolated from American political influence and military power—provided a perfect location for al-Qaeda to relocate its headquarters. Al-Qaeda enjoyed the Taliban's protection and a measure of legitimacy as part of their Ministry of Defense,[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) although only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

While in Afghanistan, the Taliban government tasked al-Qaeda with the training of [Brigade 055](/wiki/055_Brigade), an elite part of the Taliban's army from 1997–2001. The Brigade was made up of mostly foreign fighters, many veterans from the Soviet Invasion, and all under the same basic ideology of the mujahideen. In November 2001, as [Operation Enduring Freedom](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001–present)) had toppled the Taliban government, many Brigade 055 fighters were captured or killed, and those that survived were thought to head into Pakistan along with bin Laden.[[113]](#cite_note-113) By the end of 2008, some sources reported that the Taliban had severed any remaining ties with al-Qaeda,[[114]](#cite_note-114) while others cast doubt on this.[[115]](#cite_note-115) According to senior US military intelligence officials, there were fewer than 100 members of al-Qaeda remaining in Afghanistan in 2009.[[116]](#cite_note-116)

### Call for global Salafi jihadism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Expand section](/wiki/Template:Expand_section) Around 1994, the Salafi groups waging [Salafi jihadism](/wiki/Salafi_jihadism) in Bosnia entered into a seemingly irreversible decline. As they grew less and less aggressive, groups such as EIJ began to drift away from the Salafi cause in Europe. Al-Qaeda stepped in and assumed control of around 80% of the terrorist [cells](/wiki/Clandestine_cell_system) in Bosnia in late 1995.

At the same time, al-Qaeda ideologues instructed the network's recruiters to look for [*Jihadi international*](/wiki/Jihadi_international) Muslims who believed that extremist-*jihad* must be fought on a global level. The concept of a "global Salafi *jihad*" had been around since at least the early 1980s. Several groups had formed for the explicit purpose of driving non-Muslims out of every Muslim land at the same time and with maximum carnage. This was, however, a fundamentally defensive strategy.[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify)

Al-Qaeda sought to open the "offensive phase" of the global Salafi *jihad*.[[117]](#cite_note-117) Bosnian Islamists in 2006 called for "solidarity with Islamic causes around the world", supporting the insurgents in Kashmir and Iraq as well as the groups fighting for a Palestinian state.[[118]](#cite_note-118)

### Fatwas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

In 1996, al-Qaeda announced its *jihad* to expel foreign troops and interests from what they considered Islamic lands. Bin Laden issued a *fatwa* (binding religious edict),[[119]](#cite_note-119) which amounted to a public declaration of war against the US and its allies, and began to refocus al-Qaeda's resources on large-scale, propagandist strikes.

On February 23, 1998, bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, a leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, along with three other Islamist leaders, co-signed and issued a *fatwa* calling on Muslims to kill Americans and their allies where they can, when they can.[[120]](#cite_note-120) Under the banner of the [World Islamic Front for Combat Against the Jews and Crusaders](/wiki/World_Islamic_Front), they declared:

[T]he ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [in Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah, 'and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,' and 'fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah'.[[121]](#cite_note-121)

Neither bin Laden nor al-Zawahiri possessed the traditional Islamic scholarly qualifications to issue a *fatwa*. However, they rejected the authority of the contemporary [*ulema*](/wiki/Ulema) (which they saw as the paid servants of [*jahiliyya*](/wiki/Jahiliyya) rulers), and took it upon themselves.[[122]](#cite_note-122)[Template:Unreliable source?](/wiki/Template:Unreliable_source?)

### Iraq[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

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Al-Qaeda is [Sunni](/wiki/Sunni), and often attacked the Iraqi [Shia](/wiki/Shia) majority in an attempt to incite [sectarian violence](/wiki/Sectarian_violence) and greater chaos in the country.[[123]](#cite_note-123) Al-Zarqawi purportedly declared an all-out war on Shiites[[124]](#cite_note-124) while claiming responsibility for Shiite mosque bombings.[[125]](#cite_note-125) The same month, a statement claiming to be by AQI rejected as "fake" a letter allegedly written by al-Zawahiri, in which he appears to question the insurgents' tactic of indiscriminately attacking Shiites in Iraq.[[126]](#cite_note-126) In a December 2007 video, al-Zawahiri defended the Islamic State in Iraq, but distanced himself from the attacks against civilians committed by "hypocrites and traitors existing among the ranks".[[127]](#cite_note-127) US and Iraqi officials accused AQI of trying to slide Iraq into a full-scale civil war between Iraq's majority Shiites and minority Sunni Arabs, with an orchestrated campaign of civilian massacres and a number of provocative attacks against high-profile religious targets.[[128]](#cite_note-128) With attacks such as the 2003 [Imam Ali Mosque](/wiki/Imam_Ali_Mosque) bombing, the 2004 Day of Ashura and Karbala and Najaf bombings, the 2006 [first al-Askari Mosque bombing](/wiki/2006_al-Askari_Mosque_bombing) in [Samarra](/wiki/Samarra), the deadly single-day [series of bombings in which at least 215 people were killed](/wiki/November_23,_2006_Sadr_City_bombings) in Baghdad's Shiite district of [Sadr City](/wiki/Sadr_City), and the [second al-Askari bombing](/wiki/2007_al-Askari_Mosque_bombing) in 2007, they provoked Shiite militias to unleash a wave of retaliatory attacks, resulting in [death squad](/wiki/Death_squad)-style killings and spiraling further sectarian violence which escalated in 2006 and brought Iraq to the brink of violent anarchy in 2007.[[129]](#cite_note-129) In 2008, sectarian bombings blamed on al-Qaeda in Iraq killed [at least 42 people](/wiki/2008_Karbala_bombing) at the [Imam Husayn Shrine](/wiki/Imam_Husayn_Shrine) in Karbala in March, and [at least 51 people](/wiki/17_June_2008_Baghdad_bombing) at a bus stop in Baghdad in June.

In February 2014, after a prolonged dispute with al-Qaeda in Iraq's successor organisation, the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant) (ISIS), al-Qaeda publicly announced it was cutting all ties with the group, reportedly for its brutality and "notorious intractability".[[130]](#cite_note-130)

### Somalia and Yemen[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Current military situation in Somalia:](/wiki/File:Somali_Civil_War_(2009-present).svg)[Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [thumb|Current military situation in Yemen:](/wiki/File:Yemeni_Civil_War.svg)[Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) In Somalia, al-Qaeda agents had been collaborating closely with its Somali wing, which was created from the al-Shabaab group. In February 2012, al-Shabaab officially joined al-Qaeda, declaring loyalty in a joint video.[[131]](#cite_note-131) The Somalian al-Qaeda actively recruit children for suicide-bomber training, and export young people to participate in military actions against Americans at the AfPak border.[[132]](#cite_note-132) The percentage of terrorist attacks in the West originating from the Afghanistan-Pakistan ([AfPak](/wiki/AfPak)) border declined considerably from almost 100% to 75% in 2007, and to 50% in 2010, as al-Qaeda shifted to Somalia and Yemen.[[133]](#cite_note-133) While al-Qaeda leaders are hiding in the tribal areas along the AfPak border, the middle-tier of the movement display heightened activity in Somalia and Yemen. "We know that South Asia is no longer their primary base," a US defense agency source said. "They are looking for a hide-out in other parts of the world, and continue to expand their organization."

In January 2009, al-Qaeda's division in Saudi Arabia merged with its Yemeni wing to form [al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Arabian_Peninsula).[[134]](#cite_note-134) Centered in Yemen, the group takes advantage of the country's poor economy, demography and domestic security. In August 2009, they made the first assassination attempt against a member of the Saudi royal dynasty in decades. President Obama asked his Yemen counterpart [Ali Abdullah Saleh](/wiki/Ali_Abdullah_Saleh) to ensure closer cooperation with the US in the struggle against the growing activity of al-Qaeda in Yemen, and promised to send additional aid. Because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US was unable to pay sufficient attention to Somalia and Yemen, which could cause problems in the near future.[[135]](#cite_note-135) In December 2011, US Secretary of Defense [Leon Panetta](/wiki/Leon_Panetta) said that the US operations against al-Qaeda "are now concentrating on key groups in Yemen, Somalia and North Africa."[[136]](#cite_note-136) Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula claimed responsibility for the 2009 bombing attack on [Northwest Airlines Flight 253](/wiki/Northwest_Airlines_Flight_253) by [Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab](/wiki/Umar_Farouk_Abdulmutallab).[[137]](#cite_note-137) The group released photos of Abdulmutallab smiling in a white shirt and white Islamic skullcap, with the al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula banner in the background. The AQAP declared the [Al-Qaeda Emirate in Yemen](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_Emirate_in_Yemen) in 31 of March 2011 after capturing the most of the [Abyan Governorate](/wiki/Abyan_Governorate).[[138]](#cite_note-138) As the [Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen](/wiki/Saudi_Arabian-led_intervention_in_Yemen) escalated in July 2015, *The Guardian* wrote: "As another 50 civilians die in the forgotten war, only Isis and al-Qaida are gaining from a conflict tearing Yemen apart and leaving 20 million people in need of aid."[[139]](#cite_note-139)

### United States operations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Anwar_al-Awlaki_sitting_on_couch,_lightened.jpg)[Anwar al-Awlaki](/wiki/Anwar_al-Awlaki) In December 1998, the Director of the CIA [Counterterrorism Center](/wiki/Counterterrorism_Center) reported to the president that al-Qaeda was preparing for attacks in the USA, including the training of personnel to hijack aircraft.[[140]](#cite_note-140) On September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda [attacked the United States](/wiki/September_11_attacks), hijacking four airliners within the country and deliberately crashing two into the twin towers of the [World Trade Center](/wiki/World_Trade_Center_(1973-2001)) in [New York City](/wiki/New_York_City), and the third into the western side of [the Pentagon](/wiki/The_Pentagon) in [Arlington County, Virginia](/wiki/Arlington_County,_Virginia). The fourth, however, failed to reach its intended target – either the [United States Capitol](/wiki/United_States_Capitol) or the [White House](/wiki/White_House), both located in [Washington, D.C.](/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) – due to the rebellion by the passengers to retake the airliner, and instead crashed into the field in [Shanksville, Pennsylvania](/wiki/Shanksville,_Pennsylvania).[[141]](#cite_note-141) In total, the attackers killed 2,977 victims and injured more than 6,000 others.[[142]](#cite_note-142) U.S. officials called [Anwar al-Awlaki](/wiki/Anwar_al-Awlaki) an "example of al-Qaeda reach into" the U.S. in 2008 after probes into his ties to the September 11 attacks hijackers. A former FBI agent identifies Awlaki as a known "senior recruiter for al-Qaeda", and a spiritual motivator.[[143]](#cite_note-143) Awlaki's sermons in the U.S. were attended by three of the 9/11 hijackers, as well as accused [Fort Hood shooter](/wiki/2009_Fort_Hood_shooting) [Nidal Malik Hasan](/wiki/Nidal_Malik_Hasan). U.S. intelligence intercepted emails from Hasan to Awlaki between December 2008 and early 2009. On his website, Awlaki has praised Hasan's actions in the Fort Hood shooting.[[144]](#cite_note-144) An unnamed official claimed there was good reason to believe Awlaki "has been involved in very serious terrorist activities since leaving the U.S. [after 9/11], including plotting attacks against America and our allies."[[145]](#cite_note-145) US President [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) approved the [targeted killing](/wiki/Targeted_killing) of al-Awlaki by April 2010, making al-Awlaki the first US citizen ever placed on the CIA target list. That required the consent of the [U.S. National Security Council](/wiki/U.S._National_Security_Council), and officials said it was appropriate for an individual who posed an imminent danger to national security.[[146]](#cite_note-146)[[147]](#cite_note-147)[[148]](#cite_note-148) In May 2010, [Faisal Shahzad](/wiki/Faisal_Shahzad), who pleaded guilty to the [2010 Times Square car bombing attempt](/wiki/2010_Times_Square_car_bombing_attempt), told interrogators he was "inspired by" al-Awlaki, and sources said Shahzad had made contact with al-Awlaki over the internet.[[149]](#cite_note-149)[[150]](#cite_note-150)[[151]](#cite_note-151) Representative [Jane Harman](/wiki/Jane_Harman) called him "terrorist number one", and [*Investor's Business Daily*](/wiki/Investor's_Business_Daily) called him "the world's most dangerous man".[[152]](#cite_note-152)[[153]](#cite_note-153) In July 2010, the [US Treasury Department](/wiki/U.S._Treasury_Department) added him to its list of [Specially Designated Global Terrorists](/wiki/Specially_Designated_Global_Terrorist), and the UN added him to its list of individuals associated with al-Qaeda.[[154]](#cite_note-154) In August 2010, al-Awlaki's father initiated a lawsuit against the U.S. government with the [American Civil Liberties Union](/wiki/American_Civil_Liberties_Union), challenging its order to kill al-Awlaki.[[155]](#cite_note-155) In October 2010, U.S. and U.K. officials linked al-Awlaki to the [2010 cargo plane bomb plot](/wiki/2010_cargo_plane_bomb_plot).[[156]](#cite_note-156) In September 2011, he was killed in a targeted killing drone attack in Yemen.[[157]](#cite_note-157) It was reported on March 16, 2012 that [Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) plotted to kill United States President [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama).<ref name=BBC-2012-03-07>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

### Death of Osama bin Laden[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|View of Osama bin Laden's compound in](/wiki/File:Osama_bin_Laden_compound1.jpg) [Abbottabad](/wiki/Abbottabad), Pakistan, where he was killed on May 1, 2011. On May 1, 2011 in Washington, D.C. (May 2, [Pakistan Standard Time](/wiki/Pakistan_Standard_Time)), U.S. President Barack Obama announced that Osama bin Laden had been killed by "a small team of Americans" acting under Obama's direct orders, [in a covert operation](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden's_hideout_compound) in [Abbottabad](/wiki/Abbottabad), Pakistan,[[158]](#cite_note-158)[[159]](#cite_note-159) about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) north of Islamabad.[[160]](#cite_note-160) According to U.S. officials a team of 20–25 [US Navy SEALs](/wiki/US_Navy_SEALs) under the command of the [Joint Special Operations Command](/wiki/Joint_Special_Operations_Command) and working with the CIA stormed bin Laden's compound in two helicopters. Bin Laden and those with him were killed during a firefight in which U.S. forces experienced no injuries or casualties.[[161]](#cite_note-161) According to one US official the attack was carried out without the knowledge or consent of the Pakistani authorities.[[162]](#cite_note-162) In Pakistan some people were reported to be shocked at the unauthorized incursion by US armed forces.[[163]](#cite_note-163) The site is a few miles from the [Pakistan Military Academy](/wiki/Pakistan_Military_Academy) in [Kakul](/wiki/Kakul).[[164]](#cite_note-164) In his broadcast announcement President Obama said that U.S. forces "took care to avoid civilian casualties."[[165]](#cite_note-165)Details soon emerged that three men and a woman were killed along with bin Laden, the woman being killed when she was "used as a shield by a male combatant".[[162]](#cite_note-162) DNA from bin Laden's body, compared with DNA samples on record from his dead sister,[[166]](#cite_note-166) confirmed bin Laden's identity.[[167]](#cite_note-167) The body was recovered by the US military and was in its custody[[159]](#cite_note-159) until, according to one US official, his body was [buried at sea](/wiki/Burial_at_sea) according to Islamic traditions.[[160]](#cite_note-160)[[168]](#cite_note-168) One U.S. official stated that "finding a country willing to accept the remains of the world's most wanted terrorist would have been difficult."[[169]](#cite_note-169) U.S State Department issued a "Worldwide caution" for Americans following bin Laden's death and U.S Diplomatic facilities everywhere were placed on high alert, a senior U.S official said.[[170]](#cite_note-170) Crowds gathered outside the [White House](/wiki/White_House) and in New York City's [Times Square](/wiki/Times_Square) to celebrate bin Laden's death.[[171]](#cite_note-171)

### Syria[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|right|200px|Military situation in the Syrian Civil War as of](/wiki/File:Syrian_civil_war.png) [Template:#invoke:Iraq Syria map date](/wiki/Template:#invoke:Iraq_Syria_map_date).  
[Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend)[thumb|The scene of an](/wiki/File:Saadallah_after_the_explosion.jpg) [October 2012 Aleppo bombings](/wiki/October_2012_Aleppo_bombings), for which al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility.[[172]](#cite_note-172) In 2003, President [Bashar al-Assad](/wiki/Bashar_al-Assad) revealed in an interview with a Kuwaiti newspaper that he doubted al-Qaeda even existed. He was quoted as saying, "Is there really an entity called al-Qaeda? Was it in Afghanistan? Does it exist now?" He went on further to remark about bin Laden commenting, he "cannot talk on the phone or use the Internet, but he can direct communications to the four corners of the world? This is illogical."[[173]](#cite_note-173) Following the mass protests that took place later in 2011 demanding the resignation of al-Assad, al-Qaeda affiliated groups and Sunni sympathizers soon began to constitute the most effective fighting force in the Syrian opposition.[[174]](#cite_note-174) Until then, al-Qaeda's presence in Syria was not worth mentioning, but its growth thereafter was rapid.[[175]](#cite_note-175) Groups such as the [al-Nusra Front](/wiki/Al-Nusra_Front) and the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant) (ISIS; sometimes ISIL) have recruited many foreign [Mujahideen](/wiki/Mujahideen) to train and fight in what has gradually become a highly sectarian war.[[176]](#cite_note-176)[[177]](#cite_note-177) Ideologically, the [Syrian Civil War](/wiki/Syrian_Civil_War) has served the interests of al-Qaeda as it pits a mainly Sunni opposition against a Shia backed government. Viewing [Shia Islam](/wiki/Shia_Islam) as heretical, al-Qaeda and other fundamentalist Sunni militant groups have invested heavily in the civil conflict, actively backing and supporting the [Syrian Opposition](/wiki/Syrian_Opposition) despite its clashes with moderate opposition groups such as the [Free Syrian Army](/wiki/Free_Syrian_Army) (FSA).[[178]](#cite_note-178)[[179]](#cite_note-179) On February 2, 2014, al-Qaeda distanced itself from ISIS and its actions in Syria,[[180]](#cite_note-180) but ISIS and al-Qaeda-linked [al-Nusra Front](/wiki/Al-Nusra_Front)[[181]](#cite_note-181) are still able to occasionally cooperate with each other when they fight against the Syrian government.[[182]](#cite_note-182)[[183]](#cite_note-183)[[184]](#cite_note-184) The Saudi/Turkish-backed[[185]](#cite_note-185) al-Nusra launched many attacks and [bombings](/wiki/List_of_bombings_during_the_Syrian_Civil_War), mostly against targets affiliated with or supportive of the Syrian government.[[186]](#cite_note-186) In October 2015, [Russian air strikes](/wiki/Russian_military_intervention_in_the_Syrian_Civil_War) targeted positions held by al-Nusra Front.[[187]](#cite_note-187)[[188]](#cite_note-188) In early 2016, a leading ISIL ideologue described al-Qaeda as the "Jews of jihad".[[189]](#cite_note-189)

### India[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

In September 2014 al-Zawahiri announced al-Qaeda was establishing a front in India to "wage jihad against its enemies, to liberate its land, to restore its sovereignty, and to revive its Caliphate." He nominated India as a beachhead for regional jihad taking in neighboring countries such as Myanmar and Bangladesh. The motivation for the video was questioned in some quarters where it was seen the militant group was struggling to remain relevant in light of the emerging prominence of ISIS.[[190]](#cite_note-190) Reaction amongst Muslims in India to the formation of the new wing, to be known as "Qaedat al-Jihad fi'shibhi al-qarrat al-Hindiya" or al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent [AQIS], was one of fury. Leaders of several Indian Muslim organizations rejected al-Zawahiri's pronouncement, saying they could see no good coming from it, and viewed it as a threat to Muslim youth in the country.[[191]](#cite_note-191) US intelligence analyst accused the Pakistan military of 'stage-managing' the terror outfit's latest advance into India. Bruce Riedel, a former CIA analyst and National Security Council official for South Asia, also said that Pakistan should be warned that it will be placed on the list of [State Sponsors of Terrorism](/wiki/State_Sponsors_of_Terrorism). Riedel also said that "Zawahiri made the tape in his hideout in Pakistan, no doubt, and many Indians suspect the [ISI](/wiki/Inter-Services_Intelligence) (Inter Services Intelligence) is helping to protect him," he wrote.[[192]](#cite_note-192)[[193]](#cite_note-193)[[194]](#cite_note-194)

## Attacks[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|360px|Map of major attacks attributed to al-Qaeda:  
1.](/wiki/File:RecentAlQaedaAttacks.svg) [The Pentagon, US](/wiki/September_11_attacks) – September 11, 2001  
2. [World Trade Center, US](/wiki/September_11_attacks) – September 11, 2001  
3. [Istanbul, Turkey](/wiki/2003_Istanbul_bombings) – November 15, 2003; November 20, 2003  
4. [Aden, Yemen](/wiki/USS_Cole_bombing) – October 12, 2000  
5. [Nairobi, Kenya](/wiki/1998_United_States_embassy_bombings) – August 7, 1998  
6. [Dar es Salaam, Tanzania](/wiki/1998_United_States_embassy_bombings) – August 7, 1998 [500px|thumbnail|right|al-Qaeda around the world.](/wiki/File:Main_countries_of_activity_of_Al-Qaeda.png) Al-Qaeda has carried out a total of six major terrorist attacks, four of them in its jihad against America. In each case the leadership planned the attack years in advance, arranging for the shipment of weapons and explosives and using its privatized businesses to provide operatives with safehouses and false identities.

Al-Qaeda usually does not disburse funds for attacks, and very rarely makes wire transfers.[[195]](#cite_note-195)

### 1992[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

On December 29, 1992, al-Qaeda's first terrorist attack took place as two bombs were detonated in [Aden](/wiki/Aden), Yemen. The first target was the Movenpick Hotel and the second was the parking lot of the Goldmohur Hotel.

The bombings were an attempt to eliminate American soldiers on their way to Somalia to take part in the international famine relief effort, [Operation Restore Hope](/wiki/Operation_Restore_Hope). Internally, al-Qaeda considered the bombing a victory that frightened the Americans away, but in the US, the attack was barely noticed.

No Americans were killed because the soldiers were staying in a different hotel altogether, and they went on to Somalia as scheduled. However, two people were killed in the bombing, an Australian tourist and a Yemeni hotel worker. Seven others, mostly Yemenis, were severely injured.<ref name=wright174>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb).</ref> Two fatwas are said to have been appointed by the most theologically knowledgeable of al-Qaeda's members, [Mamdouh Mahmud Salim](/wiki/Mamdouh_Mahmud_Salim), to justify the killings according to Islamic law. Salim referred to a famous fatwa appointed by [Ibn Taymiyyah](/wiki/Ibn_Taymiyyah), a 13th-century scholar much admired by Wahhabis, which sanctioned resistance by any means during the Mongol invasions.[[196]](#cite_note-196)[Template:Unreliable source?](/wiki/Template:Unreliable_source?)

### Late 1990s[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[left|thumb|upright|1998](/wiki/File:Kenya_bombing_1.jpg) [Nairobi embassy bombing](/wiki/1998_United_States_embassy_bombings) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) In 1996, bin Laden personally engineered a plot to assassinate Clinton while the president was in [Manila](/wiki/Manila) for the [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation](/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Economic_Cooperation). However, intelligence agents intercepted a message just minutes before the motorcade was to leave, and alerted the [U.S. Secret Service](/wiki/U.S._Secret_Service). Agents later discovered a bomb planted under a bridge.[[197]](#cite_note-197) On August 7, 1998, al-Qaeda [bombed the U.S. embassies in East Africa](/wiki/1998_U.S._embassy_bombings), killing 224 people, including 12 Americans. In retaliation, a barrage of [cruise missiles](/wiki/Cruise_missile) launched by the U.S. military devastated an al-Qaeda base in [Khost](/wiki/Khost), Afghanistan, but the network's capacity was unharmed. In late 1999/2000, Al-Qaeda planned [attacks to coincide with the millennium](/wiki/2000_millennium_attack_plots), masterminded by [Abu Zubaydah](/wiki/Abu_Zubaydah) and involving [Abu Qatada](/wiki/Abu_Qatada), which would include the bombing Christian holy sites in Jordan, the bombing of [Los Angeles International Airport](/wiki/Los_Angeles_International_Airport) by [Ahmed Ressam](/wiki/Ahmed_Ressam), and the bombing of the [Template:USS](/wiki/Template:USS).

On October 12, 2000, al-Qaeda militants in Yemen [bombed](/wiki/USS_Cole_bombing) the [missile destroyer](/wiki/Guided_missile_destroyer) [*USS Cole*](/wiki/USS_Cole_(DDG-67)) in a suicide attack, killing 17 U.S. servicemen and damaging the vessel while it lay offshore. Inspired by the success of such a brazen attack, al-Qaeda's command core began to prepare for an attack on the U.S. itself.

### September 11 attacks[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|upright|Aftermath of the September 11 attacks](/wiki/File:FEMA_-_4235_-_Photograph_by_Andrea_Booher_taken_on_09-28-2001_in_New_York.jpg) The September 11, 2001 attacks were the most devastating terrorist acts in American history, killing 2,977 victims, including 2,507 civilians, 343 firefighters, 72 law enforcement officers, and 55 military personnel. Two commercial airliners were deliberately flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, a third into the Pentagon, and a fourth, originally intended to target either the [United States Capitol](/wiki/United_States_Capitol) or the [White House](/wiki/White_House), crashed in a field in Stonycreek Township near [Shanksville, Pennsylvania](/wiki/Shanksville,_Pennsylvania). It was also the deadliest foreign attack on American soil since the [Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor](/wiki/Attack_on_Pearl_Harbor) on December 7, 1941.

The attacks were conducted by al-Qaeda, acting in accord with the [1998 *fatwa*](/wiki/Fatawā_of_Osama_bin_Laden#1998_Fatwa) issued against the U.S. and its allies by persons under the command of bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and others.[[198]](#cite_note-198) Evidence points to suicide squads led by al-Qaeda military commander [Mohamed Atta](/wiki/Mohamed_Atta) as the culprits of the attacks, with bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, [Khalid Sheikh Mohammed](/wiki/Khalid_Sheikh_Mohammed), and [Hambali](/wiki/Hambali) as the key planners and part of the political and military command.

Messages issued by bin Laden after September 11, 2001, praised the attacks, and explained their motivation while denying any involvement.[[199]](#cite_note-199) Bin Laden legitimized the attacks by identifying grievances felt by both mainstream and Islamist Muslims, such as the general perception that the U.S. was actively oppressing Muslims.[[200]](#cite_note-200) Bin Laden asserted that America was massacring Muslims in "[Palestine](/wiki/Palestinian_National_Authority), [Chechnya](/wiki/Chechnya), [Kashmir](/wiki/Kashmir) and Iraq" and that Muslims should retain the "right to attack in reprisal." He also claimed the 9/11 attacks were not targeted at people, but "America's icons of military and economic power," despite the fact he planned to attack in the morning where most of the people in the intended targets were present and thus generating massive amount of human casualties.[[201]](#cite_note-201) Evidence has since come to light that the original targets for the attack may have been nuclear power stations on the east coast of the U.S. The targets were later altered by al-Qaeda, as it was feared that such an attack "might get out of hand".<ref name=AL-QAIDA-LEADERS-SAY-NUCLEAR-POWER-STATIONS-WERE-ORIGINAL-TARGETS>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref><ref name=Al-Qaeda-SCALED-BACK-10-PLANE-PLOT>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

## Designation as terrorist group[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

Al-Qaeda is deemed a [designated terrorist group](/wiki/List_of_designated_terrorist_groups) by the following countries and international organizations: [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* Australia[[202]](#cite_note-202)\* Brazil[[203]](#cite_note-203)\* Canada[[204]](#cite_note-204)\* European Union[[205]](#cite_note-205)\* France[[206]](#cite_note-206)\* India[[207]](#cite_note-207)\* Ireland (Republic of)[[208]](#cite_note-208)\* Israel[[209]](#cite_note-209)[[210]](#cite_note-210)\* United States[[222]](#cite_note-222) [Template:Div col end](/wiki/Template:Div_col_end)

## War on Terror[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|US troops in Afghanistan](/wiki/File:Anaconda-helicopter.jpg) In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the US government [responded militarily](/wiki/Authorization_for_Use_of_Military_Force_Against_Terrorists), and began to prepare its [armed forces](/wiki/Military_of_the_United_States) to overthrow the Taliban regime it believed was harboring al-Qaeda. Before the US attacked, it offered Taliban leader [Mullah Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) a chance to surrender bin Laden and his top associates. The first forces to be inserted into Afghanistan were Paramilitary Officers from the CIA's elite [Special Activities Division](/wiki/Special_Activities_Division) (SAD).

The [Taliban](/wiki/Taliban) offered to turn over bin Laden to a [neutral country](/wiki/Neutral_country) for trial if the US would provide evidence of bin Laden's complicity in the attacks. US President [George W. Bush](/wiki/George_W._Bush) responded by saying: "We know he's guilty. Turn him over",[[223]](#cite_note-223) and British Prime Minister [Tony Blair](/wiki/Tony_Blair) warned the Taliban regime: "Surrender bin Laden, or surrender power".[[224]](#cite_note-224) Soon thereafter the US and its allies invaded Afghanistan, and together with the [Afghan Northern Alliance](/wiki/Northern_Alliance) removed the Taliban government in the [war in Afghanistan](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001–present)).

As a result of the US using its [special forces](/wiki/Special_forces) and providing [air support](/wiki/Close_air_support) for the [Northern Alliance](/wiki/Northern_Alliance) [ground forces](/wiki/Infantry), both [Taliban](/wiki/Taliban) and [al-Qaeda training camps](/wiki/Derunta_training_camp) were destroyed, and much of the operating structure of al-Qaeda is believed to have been disrupted. After being driven from their key positions in the [Tora Bora](/wiki/Tora_Bora) area of Afghanistan, many al-Qaeda fighters tried to regroup in the rugged [Gardez](/wiki/Gardez) region of the nation. [left|thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Khalid_Shaikh_Mohammed_after_capture.jpg)[Khalid Sheikh Mohammed](/wiki/Khalid_Sheikh_Mohammed) after his arrest in [Rawalpindi](/wiki/Rawalpindi), Pakistan, in March 2003.

Again, under the cover of intense [aerial bombardment](/wiki/Aerial_bombing_of_cities), US [infantry](/wiki/Infantry) and local Afghan forces attacked, shattering the al-Qaeda position and killing or capturing many of the militants. By early 2002, al-Qaeda had been dealt a serious blow to its operational capacity, and the Afghan invasion appeared an initial success. Nevertheless, a significant [Taliban insurgency](/wiki/Taliban_insurgency) remains in Afghanistan, and al-Qaeda's top two leaders, bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, evaded capture.

Debate raged about the exact nature of al-Qaeda's role in the 9/11 attacks, and after the US invasion began, the [US State Department](/wiki/United_States_State_Department) also released a [videotape](/wiki/Videos_of_Osama_bin_Laden#December_13,_2001) showing bin Laden speaking with a small group of associates somewhere in Afghanistan shortly before the Taliban was removed from power.[[225]](#cite_note-225) Although its authenticity has been questioned by a couple of people,[[226]](#cite_note-226) the tape definitively implicates bin Laden and al-Qaeda in the September 11 attacks and was aired on many [television channels](/wiki/Television_channels) all over the world, with an accompanying English translation provided by the [U.S. Defense Department](/wiki/U.S._Defense_Department).[[227]](#cite_note-227) In September 2004, the US government [9/11 Commission](/wiki/9/11_Commission) investigating the September 11 attacks officially concluded that the attacks were conceived and implemented by al-Qaeda operatives.[[228]](#cite_note-228) In October 2004, bin Laden appeared to claim responsibility for the attacks in a [videotape](/wiki/2004_Osama_bin_Laden_video) released through Al Jazeera, saying he was inspired by Israeli attacks on high-rises in the 1982 [invasion of Lebanon](/wiki/1982_Lebanon_War): "As I looked at those demolished towers in Lebanon, it entered my mind that we should punish the oppressor in kind and that we should destroy towers in America in order that they taste some of what we tasted and so that they be deterred from killing our women and children."[[229]](#cite_note-229) By the end of 2004, the U.S. government proclaimed that two-thirds of the most senior al-Qaeda figures from 2001 had been captured and interrogated by the CIA: [Abu Zubaydah](/wiki/Abu_Zubaydah), [Ramzi bin al-Shibh](/wiki/Ramzi_bin_al-Shibh) and [Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri](/wiki/Abd_al-Rahim_al-Nashiri) in 2002;[[230]](#cite_note-230) [Khalid Sheikh Mohammed](/wiki/Khalid_Sheikh_Mohammed) in 2003; and [Saif al Islam el Masry](/wiki/Saif_al_Islam_el_Masry) in 2004.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) [Mohammed Atef](/wiki/Mohammed_Atef) and several others were killed. The West was criticised for not being able to comprehend or deal with Al-Qaida despite more than a decade of the war. This also meant no progress has been made in global state security.[[231]](#cite_note-231)

## Activities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

### Africa[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Front page of](/wiki/File:The_Guardian_al-Qaeda_recruitment.jpg) [*The Guardian Weekly*](/wiki/The_Guardian_Weekly) on the eighth anniversary of the September 11 attacks. The article claimed that al-Qaeda's activity is "increasingly dispersed to 'affiliates' or 'franchises' in Yemen and North Africa."[[232]](#cite_note-232) [Al-Qaeda involvement in Africa](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_involvement_in_Africa) has included a number of bombing attacks in North Africa, as well as supporting parties in civil wars in Eritrea and Somalia. From 1991 to 1996, bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders were based in Sudan.

Islamist rebels in the [Sahara](/wiki/Sahara) calling themselves [al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Islamic_Maghreb) have stepped up their violence in recent years.[[233]](#cite_note-233) French officials say the rebels have no real links to the al-Qaeda leadership, but this is a matter of some dispute in the international press and amongst security analysts. It seems likely that bin Laden approved the group's name in late 2006, and the rebels "took on the al Qaeda franchise label", almost a year before the violence began to escalate.[[234]](#cite_note-234) In Mali, the [Ansar Dine](/wiki/Ansar_Dine) faction was also reported as an ally of Al-Qaeda in 2013.[[235]](#cite_note-235) The Ansar al Dine faction aligned themselves with the [AQIM](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Islamic_Maghreb).[[236]](#cite_note-236) Following the [Libyan Civil War](/wiki/2011_Libyan_Civil_War), the removal of [Gaddafi](/wiki/Gaddafi) and the ensuing period of [post-civil war violence in Libya](/wiki/Post-civil_war_violence_in_Libya) allowed various [Islamist](/wiki/Islamist) militant groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda to expand their operations in the region.[[237]](#cite_note-237) The [2012 Benghazi attack](/wiki/2012_Benghazi_attack), which resulted in the death of [US Ambassador](/wiki/US_Ambassador) [J. Christopher Stevens](/wiki/J._Christopher_Stevens) and 3 other Americans, is suspected of having been carried out by various [Jihadist](/wiki/Jihadist) networks, such as [Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Islamic_Maghreb), [Ansar al-Sharia](/wiki/Ansar_al-Sharia) and several other Al-Qaeda affiliated groups.[[238]](#cite_note-238)[[239]](#cite_note-239) The capture of [Nazih Abdul-Hamed al-Ruqai](/wiki/Nazih_Abdul-Hamed_al-Ruqai), a senior Al-Qaeda operative wanted by the United States for his involvement in the [1998 United States embassy bombings](/wiki/1998_United_States_embassy_bombings), on October 5, 2013 by [US Navy Seals](/wiki/U.S._Navy_Seals), [FBI](/wiki/FBI) and [CIA](/wiki/CIA) agents illustrates the importance the US and other Western allies have placed on North Africa.[[240]](#cite_note-240)

### Europe[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Prior to the [September 11 attacks](/wiki/September_11_attacks), [Al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al_Qaeda_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina) was present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its members were mostly former veterans of the [El Mudžahid](/wiki/Bosnian_mujahideen) detachment of the Bosnian Muslim [Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/Army_of_the_Republic_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina). Three members of al Qaeda carried out the [Mostar car bombing](/wiki/Mostar_car_bombing) in 1997. They were closely linked to and financed by the [Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/Saudi_High_Commission_for_Relief_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina) founed by then-prince King [Salman of Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Salman_of_Saudi_Arabia).

Before the 9/11 attacks and the US invasion of Afghanistan, recruits at Al-Qaeda training camps who had Western backgrounds were especially sought after by Al-Qaeda's military wing for conducting operations overseas. Language skills and knowledge of Western culture were generally found among recruits from Europe, such was the case with [Mohamed Atta](/wiki/Mohamed_Atta), an Egyptian national studying in Germany at the time of his training, and other members of the [Hamburg Cell](/wiki/Hamburg_Cell). [Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) and [Mohammed Atef](/wiki/Mohammed_Atef) would later designate Atta as the ringleader of the [9/11 hijackers](/wiki/9/11_hijackers). Following the attacks, Western intelligence agencies determined that Al-Qaeda cells operating in Europe had aided the hijackers with financing and communications with the central leadership based in Afghanistan.[[60]](#cite_note-60)[[241]](#cite_note-241) In 2003, Islamists carried out a series of bombings in [Istanbul](/wiki/Istanbul) killing fifty-seven people and injuring seven hundred. Seventy-four people were charged by the Turkish authorities. Some had previously met bin Laden, and though they specifically declined to pledge allegiance to al-Qaeda they asked for its blessing and help.[[242]](#cite_note-242)[[243]](#cite_note-243) In 2009, three Londoners, Tanvir Hussain, Assad Sarwar and Ahmed Abdullah Ali, were convicted of [conspiring to detonate bombs disguised as soft drinks on seven airplanes bound for Canada and the U.S.](/wiki/2006_transatlantic_aircraft_plot) The massively complex police and [MI5](/wiki/MI5) investigation of the plot involved more than a year of surveillance work conducted by over two hundred officers.[[244]](#cite_note-244)[[245]](#cite_note-245) British and U.S. officials said the plot—unlike many similar homegrown European Islamic militant plots—was directly linked to al-Qaeda and guided by senior al-Qaeda members in Pakistan.[[246]](#cite_note-246)[[247]](#cite_note-247) In 2012, Russian Intelligence indicated that al-Qaeda had given a call for "forest jihad" and has been starting massive forest fires as part of a strategy of "thousand cuts".[[248]](#cite_note-248)

### Arab world[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumb|right|USS *Cole* after the October 2000 attack](/wiki/File:INTEL-COGNITIVE-Cole.jpg) Following [Yemeni unification](/wiki/Yemeni_unification) in 1990, Wahhabi networks began moving missionaries into the country in an effort to subvert the capitalist north. Although it is unlikely bin Laden or Saudi al-Qaeda were directly involved, the personal connections they made would be established over the next decade and used in the [*USS Cole* bombing](/wiki/USS_Cole_bombing).[[249]](#cite_note-249) Concerns grow over Al Qaeda's group in [Yemen](/wiki/Yemeni_al-Qaeda_crackdown).[[250]](#cite_note-250) In Iraq, al-Qaeda forces loosely associated with the leadership were embedded in the [Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad](/wiki/Jama'at_al-Tawhid_wal-Jihad) group commanded by [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](/wiki/Abu_Musab_al-Zarqawi). Specializing in suicide operations, they have been a "key driver" of the [Sunni insurgency](/wiki/Iraqi_insurgency_(Iraq_War)).[[251]](#cite_note-251) Although they played a small part in the overall insurgency, between 30% and 42% of all suicide bombings which took place in the early years were claimed by Zarqawi's group.[[252]](#cite_note-252) Reports have indicated that oversights such as the failure to control access to the Qa'qaa munitions factory in [Yusufiyah](/wiki/Yusufiyah) have allowed large quantities of munitions to fall into the hands of al-Qaida.[[253]](#cite_note-253) In November 2010, the [Islamic State of Iraq](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq) militant group, which is linked to al-Qaeda in Iraq, threatened to "exterminate [Iraqi Christians](/wiki/Iraqi_Christians)".[[254]](#cite_note-254)[[255]](#cite_note-255) Significantly, it was not until the late 1990s that al-Qaeda began training Palestinians. This is not to suggest that resistance fighters are underrepresented in the network as a number of Palestinians, mostly coming from Jordan, wanted to join and have risen to serve high-profile roles in Afghanistan.[[256]](#cite_note-256) Rather, large groups such as [Hamas](/wiki/Hamas) and [Palestinian Islamic Jihad](/wiki/Palestinian_Islamic_Jihad)—which cooperate with al-Qaeda in many respects—have had difficulties accepting a strategic alliance, fearing that al-Qaeda will co-opt their smaller cells. This may have changed recently, as Israeli security and intelligence services believe al-Qaeda has managed to infiltrate operatives from the Occupied Territories into Israel, and is waiting for the right time to mount an attack.[[256]](#cite_note-256) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey are openly supporting the [Army of Conquest](/wiki/Army_of_Conquest),[[181]](#cite_note-181)[[257]](#cite_note-257) an umbrella rebel group fighting in the [Syrian Civil War](/wiki/Syrian_Civil_War) against the Syrian government that reportedly includes an al-Qaeda linked [al-Nusra Front](/wiki/Al-Nusra_Front) and another [Salafi](/wiki/Salafi_jihadism) coalition known as [Ahrar ash-Sham](/wiki/Ahrar_ash-Sham).[[185]](#cite_note-185)

### Kashmir[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri consider India to be a part of the 'Crusader-Zionist-Hindu' conspiracy against the Islamic world.[[258]](#cite_note-258) According to the 2005 report 'Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment' by [Congressional Research Service](/wiki/Congressional_Research_Service), bin Laden was involved in training militants for Jihad in Kashmir while living in Sudan in the early nineties. By 2001, Kashmiri militant group [Harkat-ul-Mujahideen](/wiki/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen) had become a part of the al-Qaeda coalition.[[259]](#cite_note-259) According to the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](/wiki/United_Nations_High_Commissioner_for_Refugees) al-Qaeda was thought to have established bases in Pakistan-administered Kashmir (in [Azad Kashmir](/wiki/Azad_Kashmir), and to some extent in [Gilgit–Baltistan](/wiki/Gilgit–Baltistan)) during the 1999 [Kargil War](/wiki/Kargil_War) and continued to operate there with tacit approval of Pakistan's Intelligence services.[[260]](#cite_note-260) Many of the militants active in Kashmir were trained in the same [Madrasahs](/wiki/Madrasah) as [Taliban](/wiki/Taliban) and al-Qaeda. [Fazlur Rehman Khalil](/wiki/Fazlur_Rehman_Khalil) of Kashmiri militant group [Harkat-ul-Mujahideen](/wiki/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen) was a signatory of al-Qaeda's 1998 declaration of [Jihad](/wiki/Jihad) against America and its allies.<ref name=CFRKashmir>[Kashmir Militant Extremists](http://www.cfr.org/publication/9135/), [Council on Foreign Relations](/wiki/Council_on_Foreign_Relations), July 9, 2009</ref> In a 'Letter to American People' written by bin Laden in 2002 he stated that one of the reasons he was fighting America is because of its support to India on the Kashmir issue.[[261]](#cite_note-261)[[262]](#cite_note-262) In November 2001, [Kathmandu](/wiki/Kathmandu) airport went on high alert after threats that bin Laden planned to hijack a plane from there and crash it into a target in New Delhi.[[263]](#cite_note-263) In 2002, US Secretary of Defense [Donald Rumsfeld](/wiki/Donald_Rumsfeld), on a trip to Delhi, suggested that al-Qaeda was active in Kashmir though he did not have any hard evidence.[[264]](#cite_note-264)<ref name=SMH>[Rumsfeld offers US technology to guard Kashmir border](http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/06/13/1023864326179.html), [The Sydney Morning Herald](/wiki/The_Sydney_Morning_Herald), June 14, 2002</ref> He proposed hi tech ground sensors along the line of control to prevent militants from infiltrating into Indian administered Kashmir.<ref name=SMH/> An investigation in 2002 unearthed evidence that al-Qaeda and its affiliates were prospering in Pakistan-administered Kashmir with tacit approval of Pakistan's National Intelligence agency [Inter-Services Intelligence](/wiki/Inter-Services_Intelligence)[[265]](#cite_note-265) In 2002, a special team of [Special Air Service](/wiki/Special_Air_Service) and [Delta Force](/wiki/Delta_Force) was sent into [Indian Administered Kashmir](/wiki/Indian_Administered_Kashmir) to hunt for bin Laden after reports that he was being sheltered by Kashmiri militant group [Harkat-ul-Mujahideen](/wiki/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen) which had previously been responsible for [1995 Kidnapping of western tourists in Kashmir](/wiki/1995_Kidnapping_of_western_tourists_in_Kashmir).[[266]](#cite_note-266) Britain's highest ranking al-Qaeda operative [Rangzieb Ahmed](/wiki/Rangzieb_Ahmed) had previously fought in Kashmir with the group [Harkat-ul-Mujahideen](/wiki/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen) and spent time in Indian prison after being captured in Kashmir.[[267]](#cite_note-267) US officials believe that al-Qaeda was helping organize a campaign of terror in Kashmir in order to provoke conflict between India and Pakistan.[[268]](#cite_note-268) Their strategy was to force Pakistan to move its troops to the border with India, thereby relieving pressure on al-Qaeda elements hiding in northwestern Pakistan.[[269]](#cite_note-269) In 2006 al-Qaeda claimed they had established a wing in Kashmir; this has worried the Indian government.[[270]](#cite_note-270)[[271]](#cite_note-271) However the Indian Army Lt. Gen. H.S. Panag, GOC-in-C Northern Command, said to reporters that the army has ruled out the presence of al-Qaeda in Indian-administered [Jammu and Kashmir](/wiki/Jammu_and_Kashmir); furthermore he said that there is nothing that can verify reports from the media of al-Qaeda presence in the state. He however stated that al-Qaeda had strong ties with Kashmiri militant groups [Lashkar-e-Taiba](/wiki/Lashkar-e-Taiba) and [Jaish-e-Mohammed](/wiki/Jaish-e-Mohammed) based in Pakistan.[[272]](#cite_note-272) It has been noted that [Waziristan](/wiki/Waziristan) has now become the new battlefield for Kashmiri militants fighting [NATO](/wiki/NATO) in support of al-Qaeda and Taliban.[[273]](#cite_note-273)[[274]](#cite_note-274)[[275]](#cite_note-275) [Dhiren Barot](/wiki/Dhiren_Barot), who wrote the *Army of Madinah in Kashmir*[[276]](#cite_note-276) and was an al-Qaeda operative convicted for involvement in the [2004 financial buildings plot](/wiki/2004_financial_buildings_plot), had received training in weapons and explosives at a militant training camp in Kashmir.[[277]](#cite_note-277) [Maulana Masood Azhar](/wiki/Maulana_Masood_Azhar), the founder of another Kashmiri group [Jaish-e-Mohammed](/wiki/Jaish-e-Mohammed), is believed to have met bin Laden several times and received funding from him.<ref name=CFRKashmir/> In 2002, [Jaish-e-Mohammed](/wiki/Jaish-e-Mohammed) organized the kidnapping and murder of [Daniel Pearl](/wiki/Daniel_Pearl) in an operation run in conjunction with al-Qaeda and funded by bin Laden.[[278]](#cite_note-278) According to American [counter-terrorism](/wiki/Counter-terrorism) expert [Bruce Riedel](/wiki/Bruce_Riedel), al-Qaeda and Taliban were closely involved in the 1999 hijacking of [Indian Airlines Flight 814](/wiki/Indian_Airlines_Flight_814) to [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar) which led to the release of [Maulana Masood Azhar](/wiki/Maulana_Masood_Azhar) & [Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh](/wiki/Ahmed_Omar_Saeed_Sheikh) from an Indian prison in exchange for the passengers. This hijacking, Riedel stated, was rightly described by then Indian Foreign minister [Jaswant Singh](/wiki/Jaswant_Singh) as a 'dress rehearsal' for September 11 attacks.[[279]](#cite_note-279) Bin Laden personally welcomed Azhar and threw a lavish party in his honor after his release, according to [Abu Jandal](/wiki/Abu_Jandal), bodyguard of bin Laden.[[280]](#cite_note-280)[[281]](#cite_note-281) Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, who had been in Indian prison for his role in [1994 kidnappings of Western tourists in India](/wiki/1994_kidnappings_of_Western_tourists_in_India), went on to murder [Daniel Pearl](/wiki/Daniel_Pearl) and was sentenced to death by Pakistan. Al-Qaeda operative [Rashid Rauf](/wiki/Rashid_Rauf), who was one of the accused in [2006 transatlantic aircraft plot](/wiki/2006_transatlantic_aircraft_plot), was related to Maulana Masood Azhar by marriage.[[282]](#cite_note-282) [Lashkar-e-Taiba](/wiki/Lashkar-e-Taiba), a Kashmiri militant group which is thought to be behind [2008 Mumbai attacks](/wiki/2008_Mumbai_attacks), is also known to have strong ties to senior al-Qaeda leaders living in Pakistan.[[283]](#cite_note-283) In Late 2002, top al-Qaeda operative [Abu Zubaydah](/wiki/Abu_Zubaydah) was arrested while being sheltered by [Lashkar-e-Taiba](/wiki/Lashkar-e-Taiba) in a safe house in [Faisalabad](/wiki/Faisalabad).<ref name=WSJ20081204>[Lashkar-e-Taiba Served as Gateway for Western Converts Turning to Jihad](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122834970727777709.html), [*The Wall Street Journal*](/wiki/The_Wall_Street_Journal), December 4, 2008</ref> The FBI believes that al-Qaeda and Lashkar have been 'intertwined' for a long time while the CIA has said that al-Qaeda funds Lashkar-e-Taiba.<ref name=WSJ20081204/> French investigating magistrate [Jean-Louis Bruguière](/wiki/Jean-Louis_Bruguière), who was the top French counter-terrorism official, told Reuters in 2009 that 'Lashkar-e-Taiba is no longer a Pakistani movement with only a Kashmir political or military agenda. Lashkar-e-Taiba is a member of al-Qaeda.'[[284]](#cite_note-284)[[285]](#cite_note-285) In a video released in 2008, senior al-Qaeda operative American-born [Adam Yahiye Gadahn](/wiki/Adam_Yahiye_Gadahn) stated that "victory in Kashmir has been delayed for years; it is the liberation of the jihad there from this interference which, Allah willing, will be the first step towards victory over the Hindu occupiers of that Islam land."[[286]](#cite_note-286) In September 2009, a US [drone strike](/wiki/Drone_attacks_in_Pakistan) reportedly killed [Ilyas Kashmiri](/wiki/Ilyas_Kashmiri) who was the chief of [Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami](/wiki/Harkat-ul-Jihad_al-Islami), a Kashmiri militant group associated with al-Qaeda.[[287]](#cite_note-287) Kashmiri was described by [Bruce Riedel](/wiki/Bruce_Riedel) as a 'prominent' al-Qaeda member[[288]](#cite_note-288) while others have described him as head of military operations for al-Qaeda.[[289]](#cite_note-289)[[290]](#cite_note-290) Kashmiri was also charged by the US in a plot against [Jyllands-Posten](/wiki/Jyllands-Posten), the Danish newspaper which was at the center of [Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy](/wiki/Jyllands-Posten_Muhammad_cartoons_controversy).[[291]](#cite_note-291) US officials also believe that Kashmiri was involved in the [Camp Chapman attack](/wiki/Camp_Chapman_attack) against the CIA.[[292]](#cite_note-292) In January 2010, Indian authorities notified Britain of an al-Qaeda plot to hijack an Indian airlines or Air India plane and crash it into a British city. This information was uncovered from interrogation of Amjad Khwaja, an operative of [Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami](/wiki/Harkat-ul-Jihad_al-Islami), who had been arrested in India.[[293]](#cite_note-293) In January 2010, US Defense secretary [Robert Gates](/wiki/Robert_Gates), while on a visit to Pakistan, stated that al-Qaeda was seeking to destabilize the region and planning to provoke a nuclear war between India and Pakistan.[[294]](#cite_note-294)

### Internet[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

Timothy L. Thomas claims that in the wake of its evacuation from Afghanistan, al-Qaeda and its successors have migrated online to escape detection in an atmosphere of increased international vigilance. As a result, the group's use of the Internet has grown more sophisticated, encompassing financing, recruitment, networking, mobilization, publicity, as well as information dissemination, gathering and sharing.[[295]](#cite_note-295) [Abu Ayyub al-Masri's](/wiki/Abu_Ayyub_al-Masri) al-Qaeda movement in Iraq regularly releases short videos glorifying the activity of jihadist suicide bombers. In addition, both before and after the death of [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](/wiki/Abu_Musab_al-Zarqawi) (the former leader of [al-Qaeda in Iraq](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_Iraq)), the umbrella organization to which al-Qaeda in Iraq belongs, the [Mujahideen Shura Council](/wiki/Mujahideen_Shura_Council_(Iraq)), has a regular [presence on the Web](/wiki/Web_presence). The range of multimedia content includes guerrilla training clips, stills of victims about to be murdered, testimonials of suicide bombers, and videos that show participation in jihad through stylized portraits of mosques and musical scores. A website associated with al-Qaeda posted a video of captured American entrepreneur [Nick Berg](/wiki/Nick_Berg) being decapitated in Iraq. Other decapitation videos and pictures, including those of [Paul Johnson](/wiki/Paul_Johnson_(hostage)), [Kim Sun-il](/wiki/Kim_Sun-il), and [Daniel Pearl](/wiki/Daniel_Pearl), were first posted on jihadist websites.

In December 2004 an audio message claiming to be from bin Laden was posted directly to a website, rather than sending a copy to [al Jazeera](/wiki/Aljazeera) as he had done in the past.

Al-Qaeda turned to the Internet for release of its videos in order to be certain it would be available unedited, rather than risk the possibility of al Jazeera editors editing the videos and cutting out anything critical of the [Saudi royal family](/wiki/Saudi_royal_family).[[296]](#cite_note-296) Bin Laden's December 2004 message was much more vehement than usual in this speech, lasting over an hour.

In the past, [Alneda](/wiki/Alneda).com and [Jehad.net](/wiki/Jehad.net) were perhaps the most significant al-Qaeda websites. Alneda was initially taken down by American [Jon Messner](/wiki/Jon_Messner), but the operators resisted by shifting the site to various servers and strategically shifting content.

The US charged a British information technology specialist, [Babar Ahmad](/wiki/Babar_Ahmad), on terrorism charges related to his operating a network of English-language al-Qaeda websites, such as Azzam.com. He was convicted and sentenced to 12-and-a-half years in prison.[[297]](#cite_note-297)[[298]](#cite_note-298)[[299]](#cite_note-299)

#### Online communications[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

In 2007, al-Qaeda released [Mujahedeen Secrets](/wiki/Mujahedeen_Secrets), encryption software used for online and cellular communications. A later version, [Mujahideen Secrets 2](/wiki/Mujahideen_Secrets_2), was released in 2008.[[300]](#cite_note-300)

### Aviation network[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

Al-Qaeda is believed to be operating a clandestine aviation network including "several [Boeing 727](/wiki/Boeing_727) aircraft", [turboprops](/wiki/Turboprops) and [executive jets](/wiki/Executive_jet), according to a 2010 [Reuters](/wiki/Reuters) story. Based on a U.S. [Department of Homeland Security](/wiki/Department_of_Homeland_Security) report, the story said that al-Qaeda is possibly using aircraft to transport drugs and weapons from South America to various unstable countries in West Africa. A Boeing 727 can carry up to 10 tons of cargo. The drugs eventually are smuggled to Europe for distribution and sale, and the weapons are used in conflicts in Africa and possibly elsewhere. Gunmen with links to al-Qaeda have been increasingly [kidnapping](/wiki/Kidnapping) some Europeans for ransom. The profits from the drug and weapon sales, and kidnappings can, in turn, fund more militant activities.[[301]](#cite_note-301)

### Involvement in military conflicts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[Template:Original research](/wiki/Template:Original_research) The following is a list of military conflicts in which Al-Qaeda and its direct affiliates have taken part militarily.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Start of conflict** | **End of conflict** | **Conflict** | **Continent** | **Location** | **Branches involved** |
| align=center|1991 | align=center|present | [Somali Civil War](/wiki/Somali_Civil_War) | Africa | Somalia | [Al-Shabaab](/wiki/Al-Shabaab_(militant_group)) |
| align=center|1992 | align=center|1996 | [Civil war in Afghanistan (1992–96)](/wiki/Civil_war_in_Afghanistan_(1992–96)) | Asia | [Islamic State of Afghanistan](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Afghanistan) | Al-Qaeda Central |
| align=center|1992 | align=center|present | [Al-Qaeda insurgency in Yemen](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_insurgency_in_Yemen) | Asia | Yemen | [Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Arabian_Peninsula) |
| align=center|1996 | align=center|2001 | [Civil war in Afghanistan (1996–2001)](/wiki/Civil_war_in_Afghanistan_(1996–2001)) | Asia | [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan](/wiki/Islamic_Emirate_of_Afghanistan) | Al-Qaeda Central |
| align=center|2001 | align=center|present | [War in Afghanistan (2001–present)](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001–present)) | Asia | Afghanistan | Al-Qaeda Central |
| align=center|2002 | align=center|present | [Insurgency in the Maghreb (2002–present)](/wiki/Insurgency_in_the_Maghreb_(2002–present)) | Africa | Algeria Chad Mali Mauritania Morocco Niger Tunisia | [Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_the_Islamic_Maghreb) |
| align=center|2003 | align=center|2011 | [Iraq War](/wiki/Iraq_War) | Asia | Iraq | [Al-Qaeda in Iraq](/wiki/Al-Qaeda_in_Iraq) [Islamic State of Iraq](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq) |
| align=center|2004 | align=center|present | [War in North-West Pakistan](/wiki/War_in_North-West_Pakistan) | Asia | Pakistan | Al-Qaeda Central |
| align=center|2009 | align=center|present | [Insurgency in the North Caucasus](/wiki/Insurgency_in_the_North_Caucasus) | Asia | Russia | [Caucasus Emirate](/wiki/Caucasus_Emirate) |
| align=center|2011 | align=center|present | [Syrian Civil War](/wiki/Syrian_Civil_War) | Asia | Syria | [al-Nusra Front](/wiki/Al-Nusra_Front) |

## Alleged CIA involvement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Experts debate whether or not the al-Qaeda attacks were an indirect result from the American CIA's "[Operation Cyclone](/wiki/Operation_Cyclone)" program to help the Afghan [mujahideen](/wiki/Islamic_mujahid_movement). [Robin Cook](/wiki/Robin_Cook), British Foreign Secretary from 1997 to 2001, has written that al-Qaeda and bin Laden were "a product of a monumental miscalculation by western security agencies", and that "Al-Qaida, literally 'the database', was originally the computer file of the thousands of mujahideen who were recruited and trained with help from the CIA to defeat the Russians."[[302]](#cite_note-302) [Munir Akram](/wiki/Munir_Akram), [Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations](/wiki/Permanent_Representative_of_Pakistan_to_the_United_Nations) from 2002 to 2008, wrote in a letter published in the [New York Times](/wiki/New_York_Times) on January 19, 2008:

The strategy to support the Afghans against Soviet military intervention was evolved by several intelligence agencies, including the C.I.A. and Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI. After the Soviet withdrawal, the Western powers walked away from the region, leaving behind 40,000 militants imported from several countries to wage the anti-Soviet jihad. Pakistan was left to face the blowback of extremism, drugs and guns.[[303]](#cite_note-303)

[thumb|The image of Afghan](/wiki/File:Shoot_down_of_Soviet_helicopter_by_Mujahedin_fighter_armed_with_Stinger_missile.jpg) [mujahideen](/wiki/Mujahideen) fighters shouldering [FIM-92 Stinger](/wiki/FIM-92_Stinger) missiles and shooting down Soviet helicopters, [CIA Museum](/wiki/CIA_Museum). A variety of sources—[CNN](/wiki/CNN) journalist [Peter Bergen](/wiki/Peter_Bergen), [Pakistani ISI](/wiki/Inter-Services_Intelligence) Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf, and CIA operatives involved in the Afghan program, such as [Vincent Cannistraro](/wiki/Vincent_Cannistraro)—deny that the CIA or other American officials had contact with the foreign mujahideen or bin Laden, let alone armed, trained, coached or indoctrinated them.

Bergen and others argue that there was no need to recruit foreigners unfamiliar with the local language, customs or lay of the land since there were a quarter of a million local Afghans willing to fight;[[304]](#cite_note-304) that foreign mujahideen themselves had no need for American funds since they received several hundred million dollars a year from non-American, Muslim sources; that Americans could not have trained mujahideen because Pakistani officials would not allow more than a handful of them to operate in Pakistan and none in Afghanistan; and that the Afghan Arabs were almost invariably militant Islamists reflexively hostile to Westerners whether or not the Westerners were helping the Muslim Afghans.

According to Bergen, known for conducting the first television interview with bin Laden in 1997, the idea that "the CIA funded bin Laden or trained bin Laden... [is] a folk myth. There's no evidence of this... Bin Laden had his own money, he was anti-American and he was operating secretly and independently... The real story here is the CIA didn't really have a clue about who this guy was until 1996 when they set up a unit to really start tracking him."[[305]](#cite_note-305) English journalist [Jason Burke](/wiki/Jason_Burke) wrote:[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

## Broader influence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Anders Behring Breivik](/wiki/Anders_Behring_Breivik), the perpetrator of the [2011 Norway attacks](/wiki/2011_Norway_attacks), was inspired by al-Qaeda, calling it "the most successful revolutionary movement in the world." While admitting different aims, he sought to "create a European version of al-Qaida."[[306]](#cite_note-306)[[307]](#cite_note-307)

## Criticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Extremism within Islam goes back to the 7th century to the [Kharijites](/wiki/Kharijites). From their essentially political position, they developed extreme doctrines that set them apart from both mainstream Sunni and Shiʿa Muslims. The Kharijites were particularly noted for adopting a radical approach to [Takfir](/wiki/Takfir), whereby they declared other Muslims to be unbelievers and therefore deemed them worthy of death.[[308]](#cite_note-308)[[309]](#cite_note-309) According to a number of sources there has been a "wave of revulsion" against al-Qaeda and its affiliates by "religious scholars, former fighters and militants" alarmed by al-Qaeda's [takfir](/wiki/Takfir) and killing of Muslims in Muslim countries, especially Iraq.[[310]](#cite_note-310) [Noman Benotman](/wiki/Noman_Benotman), a former Afghan Arab and militant of the [Libyan Islamic Fighting Group](/wiki/Libyan_Islamic_Fighting_Group), went public with an open letter of criticism to Ayman al-Zawahiri in November 2007 after persuading imprisoned senior leadership of his former group to enter into peace negotiations with the Libyan regime. While Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the affiliation of the group with al-Qaeda in November 2007, the Libyan government released 90 members of the group from prison several months later after "they were said to have renounced violence."[[311]](#cite_note-311) In 2007, around the sixth anniversary of the September 11 attacks and a couple of months before *Rationalizing Jihad* first appeared in the newspapers,[[95]](#cite_note-95) the Saudi sheikh [Salman al-Ouda](/wiki/Salman_al-Ouda) delivered a personal rebuke to bin Laden. Al-Ouda, a religious scholar and one of the fathers of the Sahwa, the fundamentalist awakening movement that swept through Saudi Arabia in the 1980s, is a widely respected critic of jihadism.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Al-Ouda addressed al-Qaeda's leader on television asking him

My brother Osama, how much blood has been spilt? How many innocent people, children, elderly, and women have been killed... in the name of al-Qaeda? Will you be happy to meet God Almighty carrying the burden of these hundreds of thousands or millions [of victims] on your back?<ref name=theunraveling>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb).</ref>

According to Pew polls, support for al-Qaeda has been slightly dropped for parts of the Muslim world in the years before 2008.[[312]](#cite_note-312) The numbers supporting suicide bombings in Indonesia, Lebanon, and Bangladesh, for instance, have dropped by half or more in the last five years. In Saudi Arabia, only 10 percent now have a favorable view of al-Qaeda, according to a December poll by Terror Free Tomorrow, a Washington-based [think tank](/wiki/Think_tank).[[313]](#cite_note-313) In 2007, the imprisoned [Sayyed Imam Al-Sharif](/wiki/Sayyed_Imam_Al-Sharif), an influential Afghan Arab, "ideological godfather of al-Qaeda", and former supporter of takfir, sensationally withdrew his support from al-Qaeda with a book [*Wathiqat Tarshid Al-'Aml Al-Jihadi fi Misr w'Al-'Alam*](/wiki/Sayyed_Imam_Al-Sharif#Rationalizing_Jihad_in_Egypt_and_the_World) (*Rationalizing Jihad in Egypt and the World*).

Although once associated with al-Qaeda, in September 2009 [LIFG](/wiki/Libyan_Islamic_Fighting_Group) completed a new "code" for jihad, a 417-page religious document entitled "Corrective Studies". Given its credibility and the fact that several other prominent Jihadists in the Middle East have turned against al-Qaeda, the LIFG's about face may be an important step toward staunching al-Qaeda's recruitment.[[314]](#cite_note-314)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

[Template:Wikipedia books](/wiki/Template:Wikipedia_books) [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Al Qaeda Network Exord](/wiki/Al_Qaeda_Network_Exord)
* [Bin Laden Issue Station](/wiki/Bin_Laden_Issue_Station) (former CIA unit for tracking bin Laden)
* [Mujahideen](/wiki/Mujahideen)
* [Fatawā of Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Fatawā_of_Osama_bin_Laden)
* [List of designated terrorist groups](/wiki/List_of_designated_terrorist_groups)
* [Operation Cannonball](/wiki/Operation_Cannonball)
* [Psychological warfare](/wiki/Psychological_warfare)
* [Religious terrorism](/wiki/Religious_terrorism)
* [Steven Emerson](/wiki/Steven_Emerson)
* [Takfir wal-Hijra](/wiki/Takfir_wal-Hijra)
* [Videos of Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Videos_of_Osama_bin_Laden)
* [List of armed groups in the Syrian Civil War](/wiki/List_of_armed_groups_in_the_Syrian_Civil_War) [List of wars and battles involving al-Qaeda](/wiki/List_of_wars_and_battles_involving_al-Qaeda)

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**Publications:**

* [*Al Qaeda Handbook*](/wiki/Al_Qaeda_Handbook)
* [*Management of Savagery*](/wiki/Management_of_Savagery)

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[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

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* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=46)]

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* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
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