



Syndicated News

## Sunni Jihad Groups Rise Up Against Al-Qaeda in Iraq

Posted 2007-03-22 13:38 GMT

In late February and early March 2007, the London dailies *Al-Hayat* and *Al-Quds Al-'Arabi* reported on an escalation of the conflict in western Iraq between the local population and the Al-Qaeda in Iraq organization. Fierce battles were reported in Al-Amariyah and Al-Falluja between Al-Qaeda and the local Al-Anbar tribes, resulting in the death of dozens of Al-Qaeda fighters and in the weakening of Al-Qaeda in these areas.

Thus, for example, *Al-Quds Al-'Arabi* reported: "For the past five months or so, fierce battles have been raging in the cities of Al-Anbar province between tribal [forces] and Al-Qaeda in Iraq, with dozens of fatalities on both sides... [According to the tribes,] Al-Qaeda accuses anyone who tries to help the police force to maintain security and stability of being an agent of the occupationâ!"

"On February 25, 2007, a truck-bomb exploded near a mosque in Al-Habbaniyah... killing over 50 people - most of them civilians - and wounding over 100... The local inhabitants said that the imam of the mosque... had criticized Al-Qaeda in his Friday sermon the day before the bombing... About two weeks earlier, a car bomb exploded in a market in the village of Al-Bu Alwan, killing 10 people and injuring 12... A leader of the Al-Bu 'Isa tribe said that his tribe has formed armed militias [in the region] between Al-Ramadi and Al-Falluja that keep strangers from entering the area out of fear that they may be suicide bombers." [\[1\]](#)

*Al-Hayat* reported: "A leader of the Zuba' tribe, a lecturer at Al-Anbar University, said: 'Al-Qaeda's popularity began to wane as it increased its attacks on civilians, soldiers, and policemen, on Shi'ites and also on Sunnis who oppose Al-Qaeda's methods. In the second half of 2006, [people] began to take action against Al-Qaeda... The nationalist factions, like... Kata'ib Thawrat Al-'Ishrin and Al-Jaysh Al-Islami in Iraq, refused to join the so-called [Al-Qaeda-based] 'Islamic State in Iraq'... As a consequence, their men and commanders became targets for abduction and killing [by Al-Qaeda], which led to a wide-scale conflict in the region."

The papers also reported that a body called the Al-Anbar Rescue Council, headed by Sheikh Rishawi, has been established to fight Al-Qaeda in Iraq. According to Rishawi, the council was formed by "25 tribes which have helped to recruit 6,000 men for the Al-Anbar police force, and have [also] formed an emergency force of 2,500 men under Rishawi's command... Rishawi added that, in the course of their activities, his men apprehended 80 armed fighters, some of them from Saudi Arabia and Syria, and placed them under arrest in Al-Ramadi prison." [\[2\]](#)

The current situation is the culmination of divisions that first appeared last year. Under the command of Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, Al-Qaeda in Iraq became the dominant jihad group in the country - a fact which generated resentment in the local Sunni jihad groups. The tension between

the sides mounted prior to the Iraqi elections on December 15, 2005, as Al-Qaeda used violence and threats in attempt to prevent the Sunnis from voting. Tensions rose even further in the aftermath of the elections, in light of the Sunnis' insistence on taking part in the democratic process, and following reports about talks held by local Sunnis with the elected Iraqi government and U.S. forces with an eye to collaborating with them against Al-Qaeda in Iraq. The conflict escalated to the point of violent clashes and mutual killings, which led to the expulsion of Al-Zarqawi's men from several Sunni-controlled areas.

Following these events, Al-Zarqawi attacked the Sunni Islamic Party in Iraq, accusing it of "selling out the faith and halting the jihad for the sake of parliamentary seats." He called on the Sunnis in Iraq to join the jihad and to stop their collaboration with the U.S., threatening that harm would come to them if they did not: "We call on the Islamic Party to abandon this crooked path and the deadly slope that it has taken... It would have been better for them to call people to jihad for the sake of Allah... This is the last call to the Sunnis in general and to the supporters of the Islamic Party in particular: Whither are they leading you, and on what path are you walking?... Oh people of the Sunna, you have sacrificed and invested much; those among us who were killed were killed for the sake of Islam and for the sake of preserving the Islamic nation. Accordingly, do not be the harbingers of evil for the nation of the Prophet [Muhammad], and do not choose for yourselves a destiny of failure - because its end is evil and lamentation." [3]

At the same time, Al-Zarqawi did not remain indifferent to the dissatisfaction of the local jihad groups. In order to mitigate the mounting resentment caused by the dominance of Al-Qaeda and appease the local jihad groups, Al-Zarqawi created the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters in Iraq, which comprised several Sunni groups and was presented as an umbrella organization that included Al-Qaeda but was not headed by it. An Iraqi *mujahid*, Abdallah Rashud Al-Baghdadi, was appointed to head the council, while Al-Qaeda, and Al-Zarqawi himself, were given no special status, in the hope that this would enable additional Sunni Iraqi jihad groups to join the organization.

On April 21, 2006, Al-Zarqawi announced: "I hereby declare to the nation the establishment of the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters in Iraq, which, with Allah's help, will constitute a core for the establishment of an Islamic state, in which the religion of Islam will be supreme. Allah be praised, coordinated activity [in this direction] has already begun, and hands are extended and shaken [in commitment to] obey Allah and His Messenger and [to carry out] jihad for His sake. This council will serve as an umbrella [framework] for every faithful jihad fighter. I am honored to be one of the members of this blessed council, with its blessed leadership, along with [my role as] commander of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, [and as] a servant of the jihad and the jihad fighters" [4]

Despite these attempts to appease the Iraqi Sunnis, clashes and counter-clashes between the two sides continued. Support for Al-Zarqawi began to wane among the Sunni population in the areas of the fighting, and soon enough, on June 8, 2006, his hideout was exposed and he was killed in a U.S. attack on his base.

This document outlines the development of the conflict since the time of Al-Zarqawi's death.

## **The Conflict between Al-Qaeda and the Local Sunni Jihad Groups After Al-Zarqawi's Death**

### **Al-Zarqawi's Successor to the Sunnis "Who Have Sold Their Soul to the Crusaders": "Our Swords Are Pointed at Your Throats... The Day of Reckoning Is Near:"**

Four days after Al-Zarqawi's death, Islamist websites posted a communiqué by the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters in Iraq, announcing the appointment of Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir as his successor.

In his first speech (June 13, 2006), Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir informed bin Laden of the establishment of the Shura Council and sought his approval. He adopted Al-Zarqawi's belligerent tone towards Sunnis who collaborate with the Iraqi government and with the Crusaders, and threatened to slit their throats: "You will [soon] see what we have prepared for you because of your treason; our swords are pointed at your throats and will not distinguish between apostates and others." [\[5\]](#)

In contrast to Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir, Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, commander of the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters in Iraq, was careful not to threaten the Iraqi Sunnis, but instead entreated them to preserve Al-Zarqawi's heritage of jihad. In a communiqué posted on Islamist websites on June 16, 2006, he said: "I also send a message to the Sunnis in Iraq and call upon them to honor commander [Al-Zarqawi] and to educate this generation in light of his principles, his jihad, and his bravery... " [\[6\]](#)

### **Bin Laden Sanctions Killing of Muslims (Sunni or Shi'ite) Who Collaborate with the Crusaders**

Bin Laden's response came in late June and early July, 2006, in two speeches given a few days apart. In the first speech, from June 29, 2006, he defended Al-Zarqawi's position regarding attacks on Sunni or Shi'ite Muslims "who collaborate with the Crusaders," saying: "To those who accuse the hero of our [Islamic] nation of killing Iraqis from certain sectors [i.e. Shi'ites], I say:... Abu Mus'ab had clear instructions to focus his [attacks] on the invaders and occupiers, headed by the Americans, and to leave alone anyone who wished to be neutral. But anyone who insists on fighting with the Crusaders against the Muslims must be killed, no matter who he is, regardless of his affiliation [i.e. whether he is a Sunni or Shi'ite] and his tribe - since aiding the infidels against the Muslims is one of the ten [gravest] sins, for which a Muslim loses his identity as a Muslim." [\[7\]](#)

### **Bin Laden Responds to the Establishment of the Shura Council and to Abu Hamza's Speech**

In his July 2, 2006 speech, bin Laden expressed his approval of Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir's appointment as Al-Zarqawi's successor, and praised the establishment of the Shura Council as a unifying body: "I have heard that my brothers the jihad fighters of Al-Qaeda have chosen the noble brother Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir to replace Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi as their commander. May Allah make him a worthy successor to [Al-Zarqawi], and may both he and I have patience

and piety, [and may we] continue our jihad [to make] Allah's word supreme. [Abu Hamza] must do his utmost to remain on the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters, since all dissent is bad while unity is grace... "

After expressing approval of Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir's appointment, Bin Laden addressed the conflict with the Iraqi Sunnis, and once again sanctioned attacks on Muslims who collaborate with the U.S.: "I advise [Abu Hamza] to focus his campaign on the Americans and on those who support and assist them in their war on the Muslims in Iraq. I pray that Allah will bless his jihad and all the jihad fighters in Iraq, and will help them to liberate Iraq from the Crusaders and hypocrites and to establish the rule of Islam... " [\[8\]](#)

### **Sunni Jihad Commander Abu Osama Al-Iraqi Calls upon Bin Laden to Renounce Al-Qaeda in Iraq; Threatens to Declare War on the Organization**

Three months later, on October 12, 2006, Islamist websites posted a video by "Sheikh Osama Al-Iraqi," who appeared masked and was identified as "one of the jihad commanders in the Land of the Two Rivers." [\[9\]](#) Abu Osama Al-Iraqi called upon bin Laden to renounce Al-Qaeda because it targets and kills Sunni civilians and Sunni jihad fighters belonging to other factions. He also accused Al-Qaeda of cooperating with the "Crusaders" and with the Shi'ites.

While declaring his loyalty to bin Laden, Al-Iraqi criticized him for appointing a non-Iraqi [namely Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir] to head Al-Qaeda in Iraq. He also stated that the Shura Council was formed only in order to satisfy bin Laden, and that it purports to represent organizations which never even joined it. Al-Iraqi warned that, if bin Laden failed to heed his call, the Sunni jihad fighters would not keep silent but would retaliate, stressing that the key to preventing civil war was in bin Laden's hands." [\[10\]](#)

### **Al-Qaeda Responds By Attempting to Rally the Sunni Organizations Around It - First By a New Oath of Allegiance, Then by Establishing the "Islamic State of Iraq"**

On the same day (October 12, 2006), with or without connection to the posting of Al-Iraqi's video, Islamist websites posted a video showing six white-clad, masked individuals taking a traditional Arab oath of allegiance known as *hilf al-mutayyabin* ("oath of the scented ones"). [\[11\]](#) These individuals are claimed to be representatives of the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters in Iraq and of three other Sunni jihad groups, as well as sheikhs loyal to Al-Qaeda in Iraq. They pledged to fight the oppression of the Sunnis at the hand of the "malicious Shi'ites and occupying Crusaders." [\[12\]](#)

Three days later, on October 15, 2006, the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters in Iraq announced that the organizations that took the oath had established the "Islamic State of Iraq" (ISI), in response to the de facto existence of both a Kurdish state and a Shi'ite state in Iraq. The official ISI spokesman added that the ISI had been established in order to unite the Sunni jihad fighters and prevent civil war among them, so that Allah's word would reign supreme. He also called upon all the Sunnis in Iraq to pledge allegiance to the leader of the ISI, "Commander of the Believers" [\[13\]](#) Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi. [\[14\]](#)

## **Abu Osama Al-Iraqi Responds to Al-Qaeda's Moves, Repeats His Denouncements and Threats Against Al-Qaeda**

On November 9, 2006, the Islamist website Al-Ikhlās posted another video by Abu Osama Al-Iraqi, again directly addressing bin Laden. In this video, Al-Iraqi mentioned Al-Qaeda's lack of response to his first address, and once again denounced Al-Qaeda in Iraq, calling its men "the new Khawarij." He said that when the farce of "the oath of the scented" proved to be ineffective, Al-Qaeda had decided to establish an Islamic Caliphate and Emirate, though the conditions for their establishment did not exist.

Al-Iraqi then announced the founding of a secret counter-alliance called "The Alliance of the Sword Drawn against the Khawarij," as well as a military branch of this alliance called "The Abdallah bin Al-Khabab bin Al-Arth Brigades." [\[15\]](#) This alliance, he said, includes six factions and 16 tribes, and has 3,000 members. Finally, Al-Iraqi threatened that if bin Laden did not respond within a week to Al-Iraqi's first video, Al-Iraqi and his allies would declare an all-out war on Al-Qaeda in Iraq, to be conducted in three stages. In the first stage, they would employ snipers against the Al-Qaeda; in the second, they would use explosive charges; and the third stage they would engage Al-Qaeda in direct armed confrontation. [\[16\]](#)

## **Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir Pledges Allegiance to His Appointee Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, Places All His Men Under Al-Baghdadi's Authority and Urges All Sunni Organizations to Join the ISI**

Al-Qaeda's reaction came the next day. On November 10, 2006, Islamist websites posted a 19-minute audio recording by Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir, titled "Judgment is Allah's Alone," in which he declared that signs of victory were evident, and that the enemy (i.e. the Coalition forces) was on the brink of fleeing Iraq. He announced that the first phase of jihad had ended, and that a new phase had begun with the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq, which is the cornerstone of the Islamic Caliphate.

After discussing the war against the Coalition forces, Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir pledged allegiance to ISI leader Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, and undertook to place under Al-Baghdadi's authority all bodies and military units established by Al-Qaeda in Iraq, including the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters (ostensibly not led by Al-Qaeda), as well as 12,000 soldiers, plus another 10,000 "who have not yet been fully equipped." This citing of figures was a response to Al-Iraqi's announcement regarding his rival alliance of 3,000 men and his threat to declare war on Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Finally, Al-Baghdadi urged the Sunni jihad groups Jaysh Al-Ansar, Al-Jaysh Al-Islami and Jaysh Al-Mujahideen to join the new Islamic state and pledge allegiance to its leader, and flattered them by stating that they surpass him and his men in both jihad and religious zeal. [\[17\]](#)

## **Senior Sunni Jihad Commander Supports Negotiations with the U.S., Says Circumstances Not Yet Ripe for the Establishment of the Islamic State Announced by Al-Qaeda**

On September 3, 2006, Islamist websites posted an interview from the Greek daily *Eleftherotypia* with Sheikh Ali Al-Nu'aimi, spokesman of the Sunni Iraqi jihad organization Al-Jaysh Al-Islami, which the paper characterized as "the axis competing with Al-Qaeda on every level." In the interview, Al-Nu'aimi admitted that his organization had offered to negotiate with the U.S., and stated that many support this position, openly or in secret. He added that his organization "had never received any official response from the Americans," emphasizing that "nobody is mediating [between us and the U.S.], and we have not authorized anyone to negotiate on our behalf." Al-Nu'aimi also stated that, in principle, he supports the establishment of an Islamic state in Iraq, but said that it should only be established after the occupation is completely eliminated. Addressing the issue of non-Iraqi fighters who fight in Iraq (like those of Al-Qaeda), he said: "in the [present] circumstances of the war, the presence of [non-Iraqi] Arab fighters [in Iraq] is problematic, security-wise." [\[18\]](#)

### **Al-Qaeda Publishes a Book to Establish the Legitimacy of the ISI**

On January 7, 2007 Islamist websites posted a book titled "Informing the Believers about the Emergence of the Islamic State," published by the ISI production company Al-Furqan. The book states that its goals are to lay out the legal, political and pragmatic considerations underpinning the *mujahideen's* vision for the ISI; to describe the circumstances that have led to the prompt realization of this vision; and to address the debate sparked by the establishment of the Islamic State.

The second chapter of the book addresses those who criticize the founding of the Islamic state (such as Abu Osama Al-Iraqi) and challenges their claim that its establishment was contrary to *shari'a*. The chapter lists three ways in which an individual can be appointed Emir: (1) The Muslim decision makers can appoint an Emir by pledging allegiance to him. (2) The previous Emir can name a certain individual as his heir, or can name a group of potential heirs, one of whom is chosen by the decision makers. (3) If the Muslims are engaged in internecine fighting and the decision makers are tardy in appointing a leader, an appointment can be imposed by the force of the sword. The chapter explains that "according to *shari'a*, the first two ways are obviously preferable when [circumstances] allow [them to be used]... However, there are times of crisis and disaster, when the nation has no leader or leadership - something that generally occurs when enemies occupy an Islamic country... as is the case in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq, or when apostates take control of the country, as is the case in the other Islamic states. In these circumstances, the first two ways are not possible... so [the Muslims] must use the way required by the circumstances [namely the third way]... [The Muslims] must appoint one who has proved his ability to look after [their] important and urgent interests, and [can] prevent the damage and corruption that are sure to occur... "

The last part of the chapter states: "Allah has granted success to those who took the 'oath of the scented ones' and they represent the [Iraqi] decision makers. [One of the parties] that took [the oath] was the Shura Council of the Jihad fighters [in Iraq], which includes seven jihad groups, whose names, leaders and members are known [to all] - contrary to claims made by some, who stated that [these organizations] do not exist. The people [who make these accusations] should be ashamed. By Allah, we would not have lied to people after shedding our blood. [We] consulted with over 60% of the Sunni tribal sheikhs in the places were the jihad fighters are present, and



encountered [only] positive responses and satisfaction [regarding the establishment of the ISI]. We also made an effort to consult with senior [members] of the other Sunni jihad organizations, and to meet with their commanders, but they refused, ostensibly for security reasons. Consequently, we had to choose the Emir [in consultation with] the decision makers who were available, and whom we were able to summon in these difficult circumstances. The pact was sealed after we made efforts to convene the decision makers." [\[19\]](#)

### **Al-Baghdadi Denounces Sunni Groups that Have Not Pledged Allegiance to the ISI, Accusing Them of "Defiance"**

In a February 2, 2007 speech, Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi addressed the Sunni jihad fighters who had not joined the ISI, saying: "To my brothers the *mujahideen* who have not yet pledged allegiance to the Islamic State [of Iraq], I wish to say that they are our brothers and we defend them with our bodies and tongues and do not [mean to] accuse them of heresy or corruption. But we regard their tardiness in rising to the demand of the hour - which is to unite, to adhere to the [way] of Allah and to join their brothers in the Islamic State [of Iraq] - as defiance, especially now that the infidels have united their ranks..." [\[20\]](#)

### **Mish'an Al-Jabouri Accuses Al-Qaeda of Dividing the Sunni Camp in Iraq and of Killing Sunnis Who Refuse to Join Its Ranks, Threatens Counter-Attack**

On February 16, 2007, Al-Zawra TV aired a 35-minute speech by Mish'an Al-Jabouri titled "a Message from Mish'an Al-Jabouri to Sheikh Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi." [\[21\]](#) Al-Jabouri accused Al-Qaeda of "shattering the national unity of Iraq," and of responsibility for "many of the terrorist attacks [carried out] among civilians in crowded places." He also denounced the attacks on the Shi'ite population, saying that this activity is "a crime by any standards" and that it serves the Shi'ite-Iranian agenda by giving [the Shi'ites] an excuse to kill hundreds of innocent Sunni civilians. Al-Jabouri accused Al-Qaeda of killing a number of Sunni Iraqi jihad commanders merely because they had not pledged allegiance to Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi as the Emir of the Islamic State of Iraq, or because they denounced Al-Qaeda. As examples, he mentioned at least seven individuals, among them imams and preachers that Al-Qaeda had killed.

In this context, Al-Jabouri said: "One of the operations that convinced me to make this address is the murder [by Al-Qaeda] of Names Khabar Ali, one of the heroes of the resistance who fought against the occupation [from the very beginning]... You murdered him, beheaded him... and then placed bombs beside the body so that his family members would be killed when they came to pick it up. This act we will not forgive. Today you have killed Names, and tomorrow you will kill everybody, if you can. We will not accept this behavior... We are against the Islamic state of Iraq, if this is the way it is governed... Because of these killings of yours, many of those who fought in Al-Ramadi have joined the Al-Ramadi Council of Revolutionaries in order to fight you."

Al-Jabouri stated further that he would hold Al-Qaeda responsible for any deterioration in its relationship with the [Sunni] tribes and jihad groups, and warned: "We [represent] the only Iraqi resistance. We do not need the help of [other] Arab volunteers... We will defeat the U.S. in Iraq..."

and liberate our country... with purely Iraqi forces... We warn you that the tendency - not only in Al-Ramadi, but in other places as well - is for all the forces to cooperate against you." [22]

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[1] *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (London), February 27, 2007.

[2] *Al-Hayat* (London), March 4, 2007.

[3] <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?p=320937> ;

See MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis No. 284, "Al-Zarqawi: A Post Mortem - Prior to His Killing, Al-Zarqawi Had Lost His Sunni Allies," June 30, 2006,  
[http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=IA28406#\\_edn8](http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=IA28406#_edn8).

[4] <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=60262> ; see MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis No. 284, "Al-Zarqawi: A Post Mortem. Prior to His Killing, Al-Zarqawi had Lost His Sunni Allies," June 30, 2006,  
[http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=IA28406#\\_edn8](http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=IA28406#_edn8).

[5] <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=68803>, June 13, 2006; MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 1188, "Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir: Al-Zarqawi's Death Will Not End the Jihad," June 20, 2006, <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP118806>.

[6] <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=69365>, June 16, 2006. See MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 1192, "Commander of Shura Council of Jihad Fighters in Iraq: Al-Zarqawi's Death Will Be Incentive for Jihad and Martyrdom," June 28, 2006,  
<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP119206>.

[7] <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=71932>, June 30, 2006.

[8] <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=72250>, July, 2, 2006.

[9] It should be noted that the name Abu Osama Al-Iraqi appears on Islamist websites as the nickname of Abd Al-Aziz Muhammad, who writes a series of lessons titled "Program for Jihad Fighters," distributed by GIMF (see, for example, Lesson No. 8: <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=105923>). However, Abd Al-Aziz Muhammad is a supporter of the Islamic state of Iraq (see: <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=106749> ), while Abu Osama is against it, as will be shown below. This rules out the possibility that Abd Al-Aziz Muhammad is the man in the video described here.

[10] See MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 1340, "Islamist Sheikh Abu Osama Al-Iraqi Denounces Al-Qaeda in Iraq for Atrocities against Sunnis," October 30, 2006,



<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP134006>. The recording is kept in the MEMRI archives.

[11] According to classical Islamic sources, *hilf al-mutayyabin* was an oath of allegiance taken in pre-Islamic times by several clans of the Quraysh tribe, in which they undertook to protect the oppressed and the wronged. The name "oath of the scented ones" apparently derives from the fact that the participants sealed the oath by dipping their hands in perfume and then rubbing them over the Ka'ba. This practice was later adopted by the Prophet Muhammad and incorporated into Islam.

[12] <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?p=731638#post731638>. On October 15, 2006, Jaysh Al-Fatihin, one of the groups claimed to have taken the oath, announced that although it would have been happy to take the oath, it was never informed of this initiative. The Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters in Iraq replied, on October 16, 2006, that this announcement must have come from the fifth brigade of Jaysh Al-Fatihin, which, unlike the organization's other four brigades, had not yet pledged allegiance to the Shura Council. The Council expressed its hope that this brigade would join its ranks soon.

[13] "Commander of the Believers" is a title traditionally reserved for the Muslim Caliphs.

[14] <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=90617>.

[15] According to one tradition, Abdallah bin Al-Khabab was sent by Ali Ibn Abi Talib in 657 CE to the Khawarij and was killed by them. According to a different tradition he met the Khawarij by chance and they decided to kill him. Before the battle of Naharwan, Ali demanded that the Khawarij surrender the killer of bin Khabab, and when they refused, he marched against them and defeated them. Muslim scholars debate whether bin Khabab was a Companion (*sahabi*) of the Prophet Muhammad or a Follower (*tabi'i*) of the Prophet (i.e., a member of the next generation after the Companions).

[16] Al-Ilkhas website, November 9, 2006. For a more comprehensive translation of this document, see Appendix One.

[17] <http://www.mohajroon.com/vb/showthread.php?t=33951>. For a more comprehensive translation of this document, see Appendix Two.

[18] *Eleftherotypia* (Greece), September 3, 2006.

[19] <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=104340>.

[20] <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?p=895334>. See MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 1454, "Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi: "We Find No [Blood] Sweeter Than That of the Byzantines [i.e. Christians],"" February 7, 2007, <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP145407>.

[21] Mish'an Al-Jabouri is a former Iraqi MP who is wanted by the Iraqi authorities, and has fled the country. He is the owner of Al-Zawra TV, which airs, among other things, videos of jihad operations against the U.S. forces, and has been closed down by the Iraqi government as an "anti-Shi'ite" channel. According to Al-Jabouri, his channel now broadcasts from secret locations in Iraq and in Europe.

[22] <http://switch3.castup.net/cunet/gm.asp?ClipMediaID=696368&ak=null>.

<http://www.aina.org/news/2007032293837.htm>