

AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

Name: AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

Type of Organization:

- Insurgent
- non-state actor
- religious
- terrorist
- transnational
- violent

Ideologies and Affiliations:

- Al-Qaeda affiliated group
- Islamist
- jihadist
- Qutbist
- Salafist
- Sunni
- takfiri

Place of Origin:

Saudi Arabia and Yemen

Year of Origin:

2009

Founder(s):

Nasir al-Wuhayshi, Said al-Shihri, Qasim al-Raymi, Mohamad al-Awfi

Places of Operation:

Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Abroad

Overview

Also Known As:

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula¹
- Al-Qaida al-Jihad in the Arabian Peninsula²
- Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula³
- Al-Qaida Organization in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)⁴
- Al-Quaida Organization in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)⁵
- Al-Qaida of Jihad Organization in the Arabian Peninsula⁶
- Al-Qaida of Jihad Organization in the Arabian Peninsula⁷
- Al-Qaida in Yemen (AQY)⁸
- Al-Qa'ida in Yemen (AQY)⁹
- Al-Qaida in the South Arabian Peninsula¹⁰
- Al-Qa'ida in the South Arabian Peninsula¹¹
- Al-Quaida in the South Arabian Peninsula¹²
- Ansar al-Shari'a (AAS)¹³
- Ansar al-Sharia (AAS)¹⁴
- Ansar al Shariah¹⁵
- Ansar al-Shariah¹⁶
- Civil Council of Hadramawt¹⁷
- Jama'at Ansar al-Shari'a¹⁸
- National Hadramawt Council¹⁹
- Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi-Jazirat al-Arab²⁰
- Sons of Abyan²¹
- Sons of Hadramawt²²
- Sons of Hadramawt Committee²³
- Supporters of Sharia²⁴
- Partisans of Islamic Law²⁵

Executive Summary:

AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is the union of [al-Qaeda](#) [1]'s branches in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. AQAP has carried out violent jihadist attacks both domestically and internationally in service of al-Qaeda's ideology. Although the group carries out most of its attacks inside Yemen, AQAP is widely known for carrying out the fatal shooting at the Paris offices of French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, as well as for its involvement in terrorist plots on U.S. soil, including the "Christmas Day Bomber" in 2009 and the "Times Square Bomber" in 2010.

After Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh's removal from office in early 2012, AQAP took advantage of the fractured political scene by establishing an insurgency in southern Yemen. Since Yemen descended into civil war in 2015, AQAP has benefited from the political vacuum by attempting to develop its own pseudo-state in the southern region. The civil war has coincidentally strengthened AQAP by causing Western forces to withdraw and the Yemeni and Saudi Arabia forces to focus on the opposing [Houthi](#) [2] rebels.²⁶ AQAP has been further strengthened by the material support its affiliates have received from the anti-Houthi coalition, as the coalition often turns a blind-eye to AQAP and its affiliates and regularly enters into alliances with the group.²⁷ In fact, three associates of the Saudi-backed President Mansour al-Hadi have appeared on a U.S. Treasury list of global terrorists for allegedly providing financial support to, and acting on behalf of, AQAP.²⁸ The United States responded with an expanded counterterrorism campaign, consisting primarily of drone strikes against AQAP leaders. An Associated Press investigation in August 2018 accused both the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia of integrating former AQAP fighters into their allied Yemeni forces. The report found that the UAE had paid local tribes, whose members were at the time allied with AQAP, in order to convince them to switch sides and help force out AQAP militants from those areas.²⁹ Senior UAE commanders further confirmed that they recruited "many AQAP 'fighters' [who] were just young men under their [AQAP] control who were coerced or persuaded to take up arms."³⁰

AQAP operates throughout Yemen, primarily in the country's southern and central regions.³¹ In many of these provinces, AQAP governs small pockets of territory with sharia (Islamic law) courts and a heavily armed militia. AQAP attempts to appeal to the Yemeni people by meeting their basic needs and integrating into the local population, including by conforming to the local governance structures. According to a February 2017 report by the International Crisis Group, AQAP has successfully presented itself as "part of a wider Sunni front against Houthi expansion," further providing the organization with local allies and room to operate in the country.³² In addition to controlling territory in Yemen, AQAP is believed to pose a major terrorist threat to the United States.³³

Doctrine:

In the group's inaugural video in 2009, AQAP's former leader [Nasir al-Wuhayshi](#) [3] announced the merging of al-Qaeda affiliates in Saudi Arabia and Yemen to form AQAP. In the video, Wuhayshi formally declared the group's intention to avenge its enemies "with blood and destruction," in order to establish an Islamic Caliphate and implement Sharia law.³⁴

Wuhayshi ended his opening speech with prayers tailored to AQAP's goals:
"O Allah! Bring conquest over the Holy Mosque and the Haramain [highway from Mecca to Medina] by our hands! O Allah Give us the honor by establishing the Islamic State with our hands!"³⁵

An AQAP document from 2012 expanded on these objectives. According to the document, AQAP's primary goals are to "[e]xpel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula" and "[e]stablish the Islamic Caliphate and Shari'ah rule which the apostate governments have suspended."³⁶

In pursuing these ends, AQAP champions a violent interpretation of jihad and offers a number of ways Muslims can support its agenda, such as "[i]nform[ing] the Mujahideen [jihadists] about spies and the presence of Jews, Christians and the greatest criminals." AQAP also encourages Muslims to "[b]e hostile to and hate the infidel" and "[r]aise children to love Jihad."³⁷

As a formal affiliate of al-Qaeda, AQAP's ideology and practices fall in line with al-Qaeda's broader goals of working towards global Islamist domination. AQAP seeks to execute its Islamist mission through violent jihad, and is believed to be

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the al-Qaeda affiliate most ideologically similar to al-Qaeda's core.³⁸ Although the group is based in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, members have attempted to carry out terrorist plots worldwide.

Organizational Structure:

According to a 2010 report from the think-tank New America, AQAP is "compartmentalized and hierarchical, with a distinct division of labor. It has a political leader who provides overall direction, a military chief to plan operational details, a propaganda wing that seeks to draw in recruits, and a religious branch that tries to justify attacks from a theological perspective while offering spiritual guidance."³⁹

Since mid-2017, however, AQAP has suffered from losses to its leadership and field commanders due to extensive Yemeni and international counterterrorism operations, according to the U.N. Analytical Support Sanctions Monitoring Team's July 2018 report.⁴⁰ Notably in late 2017, AQAP's chief bomb maker [Ibrahim al-Asiri](#) [4] was killed, creating an operational vacuum, as well as senior propagandist Abu Hajar al-Makki, severely disrupting the group's propaganda efforts. Additionally, when senior cleric [Ibrahim al-Rubaish](#) [5] was killed in 2015, AQAP left his position vacant before eventually appointing Yemeni jihadist Abdullah Mubarak to serve as the "new sharia official" more than two years later.⁴¹

In 2011, AQAP created a domestic affiliate called Ansar al Sharia (AAS). According to the International Crisis Group, AAS serves as AQAP's domestic insurgent arm, drawing in recruits who has been wary of AQAP, "which many Yemenis view as a regime instrument ... and likely to trigger a military backlash."⁴²

Political branch

AQAP was most recently headed by Khalid Batarfi, until his alleged arrest by Yemeni forces on October 2, 2020.⁴³ Batarfi was named emir following the death of AQAP emir and co-founder, [Qasim al-Raymi](#) [6], in a U.S. drone strike in January 2020.⁴⁴ Raymi filled this position on June 16, 2015, one day after former AQAP leader Nasir al-Wuhayshi died in a U.S. drone strike. Little is known about Raymi's specific role, but it is suspected that he has inherited Wuhayshi's responsibilities.⁴⁵ Wuhayshi was responsible for directing AQAP's entire program, as well as overseeing all of its individual branches. According to a classified U.S. State Department cable published by WikiLeaks, Wuhayshi's duties specifically included "approving targets, recruiting new members, allocating resources to training and attack planning, and tasking others to carry out attacks."⁴⁶

Military branch

The group's military branch plans all of AQAP's violent attacks, such as bomb and suicide missions, as well as guerilla attacks against the Yemeni government and military. It also organizes AQAP's kidnapping operations and robberies. Crucial to AQAP's military branch was its chief bomb maker, [Ibrahim al-Asiri](#) [4]. Asiri was responsible for AQAP's most high-profile bombing attempts, including the "Christmas Day Bomber" attempt in 2009 and the "Times Square Bomber" attempt in 2010. He was reportedly killed in a U.S. drone strike in late 2017.⁴⁷ U.N. experts consider his death a serious setback to AQAP's operational capabilities.⁴⁸ In 2018, AQAP appointed several regional leaders as well as a new "military commander," a lesser-known jihadist called Ammar al-San'ani.⁴⁹

Propaganda branch

AQAP relies heavily on its propaganda branch to attract recruits and build its base of support. This branch is also responsible for outreach beyond AQAP's base in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. One of AQAP's most notorious recruiters is [Anwar al-Awlaki](#) [7], who directed the "Christmas Day Bomber" in 2009⁵⁰ and was linked to the Fort Hood shooter in 2009⁵¹ and the "Times Square Bomber" in 2010.⁵² AQAP has a media channel entitled "al-Malahem," which has been called AQAP's "official propaganda arm."⁵³ Al-Malahem publishes a bi-monthly magazine in Arabic directed at its Yemeni audience, as well

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as an English-language periodical called *Inspire* directed at its Western audience.⁵⁴

AQAP also publishes *al-Masra*, a digital newsletter that is released several times per month. Though *al-Masra* is produced by AQAP, it includes news updates on the entire al-Qaeda network. For recruitment purposes, *al-Masra* also provides al-Qaeda's take on high-profile political developments in Western countries.⁵⁵

According to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), in December 2017, the United States and its allies repeatedly targeted AQAP's propaganda officials in counterterrorism operations, disrupting and reducing the group's propaganda production capabilities. For example, al-Malahem lost its main propagandist, Abu Hajar al-Makki, in an airstrike in 2017, and *al-Masra* was unable to maintain its ability to produce three publications per month.⁵⁶ In an attempt to revitalize AQAP's media operations, al-Badr Media Foundation announced its presence online in May 2018. The media group aims to refute so-called rumors about AQAP—in particular those perpetuated by Western and Arab media, incite Muslims to join their cause, and increase "security awareness" among the group. On May 24, al-Badr released its first publication via Telegram, a collection of statements and tips on how to avoid detection by U.S. drones and surveillance measures.⁵⁷

Moreover, AQAP senior leader Khalid Batarfi, a prominent spokesperson, appears to have taken over the group's propaganda operations to strengthen AQAP's global portfolio.⁵⁸ On February 23, 2020, following the death of former AQAP leader Qasim al-Raymi in a U.S. drone strike, AQAP confirmed that Batarfi was the group's new leader.⁵⁹ On October 2, it was alleged that Batarfi turned himself into Yemeni forces following a Saudi-led raid in al-Mahrah.⁶⁰

Religious branch

AQAP's religious branch was headed by senior cleric and former Guantanamo detainee [Ibrahim al-Rubaish](#) [5]. As "mufti" of AQAP, Rubaish carried the authority within AQAP to issue fatwas (religious rulings). Rubaish also released public statements in response to prominent religious clerics from around the world in order to advocate for AQAP's behavior and seek to justify its violent ideology.⁶¹ In this way, AQAP's religious branch serves as an extension of its propaganda branch. As AQAP anticipates the eventual institution of sharia (Islamic law), the group also maintains a designated religious expert. On April 13, 2015, AQAP confirmed that Rubaish was killed in a U.S. airstrike near the southern coastal city of Mukalla.⁶² Nearly two years later, AQAP's emir Qasim al-Raymi appointed Abdullah Mubarak, a Yemeni jihadist, as AQAP's "new sharia official."⁶³

Financing:

According to the U.S. State Department, AQAP's funding comes primarily from "theft, robberies, oil and gas revenue, kidnap-for-ransom operations, and donations from like-minded supporters."⁶⁴

In a 2012 letter to Algerian allies, AQAP founder Nasir al-Wuhayshi wrote that "most of the battle costs, if not all, were paid for through the spoils. Almost half the spoils [for a year-long operation in Yemen] came from hostages." Wuhayshi then called kidnapping "an easy spoil, which I may describe as a profitable trade and a precious treasure."⁶⁵ Between 2011 and 2013, AQAP received approximately \$30 million in ransom payments.⁶⁶

In addition to taking hostages, AQAP relies heavily on heists and armed robberies. In August 2009, WikiLeaks revealed that suspected AQAP members stole an estimated \$500,000 in a single heist.⁶⁷ There have also been reports of AQAP partaking in gun and drug smuggling, as well as local sex trafficking through forced marriages.⁶⁸ According to Yemeni analyst Ahmad Abd Allah al-Sufi, the group has trafficked opium.⁶⁹

AQAP held Yemen's third-largest port from April 2015 to April 2016, which allegedly generated millions of dollars for the group. The southeastern Yemeni port city of Mukalla purportedly housed 1,000 AQAP fighters, who controlled nearly 375 miles of the coastline. According to Yemeni officials and local tribal leaders, AQAP fighters patrolled the waters off its

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controlled coast and imposed taxes and tariffs on passing ships.⁷⁰ In this way, the terrorist group has reportedly generated between another two to five million a day from its port revenue.⁷¹ The Mukalla port, which has since been seized by forces from the United Arab Emirates, also reportedly functions as a hub for smuggling fuel.⁷²

AQAP has stolen from numerous banks across Yemen. While AQAP held Mukalla, the militants looted the city's central bank branch, netting an estimated \$100 million.⁷³ According to Yemeni security officials, the looting represented AQAP's "biggest financial gain to date" and was "enough to fund them at the level they have been operating at for at least another 10 years."⁷⁴ This access to additional sources of revenue discontinued when Yemeni government forces retook control of Mukalla in April 2016.⁷⁵

As a result of AQAP's violent operations, the group is largely self-funded.⁷⁶ However, another source of AQAP funding is donations from fraudulent charities⁷⁷ and "like-minded supporters,"⁷⁸ most of whom are reportedly Saudi nationals.⁷⁹

Recruitment:

AQAP has turned to print, digital, and social media to bolster recruitment.

In 2010, AQAP launched an English online magazine, *Inspire*, to reach Western sympathizers and potential recruits. *Inspire* answers questions about AQAP and its mission and how to support them, from building homemade bombs to calls for lone wolf attacks in the United States. Analyst Gregory Johnsen has said that *Inspire* helps AQAP "reach, influence and inspire other like-minded individuals in the west. No longer do these individuals need to travel to Yemen or read Arabic in order to take instructions from AQAP. Now they can just download and read the magazine in English."⁸⁰

Inspire's first issue in July 2010 included an article titled, "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom," which described how to make a bomb using everyday items.⁸¹ The August 2014 issue contained a nine-page guide on how to make car bombs, and suggested terror targets in the United Kingdom and the United States.⁸² Its December 2014 issue featured instructions on how to make a bomb that could evade airport security. The July 2017 issue elaborated on targeting public transportation as well as train derailling operations. It also analyzed recent lone jihad operations in Western countries—such as the 2016 Nice attack in France that killed 86 people—and referenced lessons learned. AQAP also highlighted these attacks in a series of five publications called "Inspire Guide."⁸³ In May 2017, AQAP released a video message of Qasim al-Raymi encouraging lone wolf attacks in the West—the first using the "Inspire Address" banner.⁸⁴

In 2012, AQAP released a recruitment guide called *Expectations Full*, primarily written by [Samir Khan](#) [8], the late editor of *Inspire*. The guide calls on potential Western-based recruits to forgo traveling to the region and requests they instead target America.⁸⁵ According to the guide, "attacking the enemy in their backyard" is one of the most helpful missions recruits can undertake, even more than fighting together with AQAP in Yemen.⁸⁶

AQAP turned to social media in 2012, posting messages on jihadist websites and forums to attract western recruits. One Arabic-language message on the Shumukh and al-Fidaa jihadist forums, posted by a user claiming to be a member of AQAP's military committee, calls on recruits to launch suicide missions in their home countries. According to the post, "individual jihad or the so-called lone wolf has become popular."⁸⁷ The messages provide email addresses for recruits to contact AQAP.

In recent years, AQAP has continued to exploit the opportunities for recruitment provided by social media sites. On Twitter, for example, as soon as an AQAP account is shut down, another emerges almost immediately, typically using a new name ("handle") with one character amended. In November 2014, AQAP even launched its own "AMA" (Ask Me Anything) Twitter account, providing official answers to questions such as "Why haven't there been further AQAP attacks inside the US? Why don't you move the war from Yemen to US soil?" The job of resolving such queries from prospective jihadists falls to [Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi](#) [9], the AQAP senior official who claimed responsibility for the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in January

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2015.⁸⁸

According to one spy who infiltrated AQAP, the group is increasingly demanding that prospective recruits coming to Yemen, Oman, Syria, and other Middle Eastern states have clean passports and clean names. Anyone who is suspected of being subject to government surveillance is excluded from the recruitment net.⁸⁹

Since [ISIS](#) [10] established its own affiliate branch in Yemen in November 2014, AQAP and ISIS have competed for recruits and influence, each seeking to dominate the Salafi-jihadist movement in Yemen.⁹⁰ According to Yemeni officials, a “real competition” developed between the groups in 2015, despite the fact that AQAP supporters numbered in the hundreds and ISIS supporters only in the dozens.⁹¹ Some AQAP cells have reportedly switched allegiance to ISIS due to factors such as ISIS's global reputation for victory and a higher pay rate.⁹²

Since the start of 2015, AQAP has been seizing territory throughout southern Yemen and providing public services to the local population. As a result of the Yemeni insurgency, many of the southern regions' security forces have left to fight alongside the coalition forces against the Houthi rebels in the north. AQAP has been attempting to fill the political vacuum to reportedly gain the trust of the southern population. In late March 2015, AQAP unveiled a new well in Yemen's southern, arid Hadramaut region. According to Middle East analyst Thomas Joscelyn, AQAP attempts to embed itself in the local population as opposed to gaining their submission through brutal violence, as ISIS has done in its strongholds in Iraq and Syria.⁹³ AQAP has reportedly constructed bridges, dug wells, built roads, and provided humanitarian assistance throughout the southern region and has highlighted these efforts on its social media accounts and in its Arabic-language propaganda magazine, *al-Masra*.⁹⁴ According to Jamestown Foundation analyst Michael Horton, AQAP's “more covert strategy” has enabled it “to expand its ties to local communities and to further enmesh itself within some forces battling the Houthis and their allies.”⁹⁵ Nonetheless, AQAP has also resorted to cash payments in exchange for support after the it seized control of Mukalla in April 2015.⁹⁶

According to the U.N. experts, AQAP is estimated to have between 6,000 and 7,000 fighters in Yemen, representing an increase from U.S. estimates in 2017 of “the low thousands.”⁹⁷ Dr. Gregory Johnsen, member of the U.N. Security Council's Panel of Experts on Yemen, notes that while the latest membership figures are accurate, they can be misleading. Even though AQAP's domestic insurgency has recorded an influx of recruits, the terror group has not increased as a threat to the West. He stated: “Contrary to the picture painted by the numbers, AQAP is the weakest it has ever been. Decimated by drone strikes and challenged by rivals, its international terrorist side is a shadow of its former self. Only its domestic insurgency side—bolstered by Yemen's messy war—is growing.”⁹⁸

Training:

AQAP's primary stronghold is located in the al-Mahfad area of the Abyan Province in southern Yemen.⁹⁹ In May 2014, a Yemeni official remarked that AQAP training camps were the “most active” in the al-Mahfad region.¹⁰⁰ AQAP training camps also operate in the governorates of Shabwa, Hadramawt, and Marib.¹⁰¹

On July 14, 2016, AQAP released a video showing its so-called special forces training at the Hamza al Zinjibari training camp in southern Yemen. The video depicts AQAP fighters conducting weapons training, physical workouts, live fire scenarios, and martial arts training. Senior AQAP member and former Guantanamo Bay detainee [Ibrahim al-Qosi](#) [11] was highlighted in the film stating “thousands of” AQAP fighters have been trained in these types of camps, which has “had a clear impact in different jihadi fronts.”¹⁰² The video also exhibits the militants' abilities to conduct assaults and kidnappings using SUVs and motorcycles.

[Said Kouachi](#) [12], one of the perpetrators of the January 2015 attack on *Charlie Hebdo*'s offices in Paris, trained with AQAP in Yemen between 2009 and 2011.¹⁰³ According to a senior Yemeni security official, Kouachi trained in and around Dammaj, a town in northwest Yemen that is home to the country's largest Salafist school.¹⁰⁴ Kouachi is believed to have

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trained in camps in the surrounding area in which hundreds of foreigners would train in “unmonitored... AQAP-controlled areas.”¹⁰⁵

AQAP has also disseminated training guides amongst recruits and sympathizers. AQAP’s largest guide, the “Encyclopedia of Jihad,”¹⁰⁶ is a collection of ‘textbooks’ that includes information on “making explosives; first aid; use of pistols, grenades and mines; espionage; security precautions; acts of sabotage; secure communication; brainwashing; reconnaissance; infiltration; how to attack; the history and design of tanks; physical fitness; use of compasses; how to read maps; and use of artillery guns, machine guns and armor-piercing weapons.”¹⁰⁷ There are only 30 copies of the “Encyclopedia.” Trainees were required to write down the text as it was dictated to them. The “Encyclopedia” became available on the Internet, in Arabic, in 2003.¹⁰⁸

¹ Moh Saaduddin, “Propaganda key to rise of IS in the Philippines,” *Manilla Times*, June 5, 2017, <http://www.manilatimes.net/propaganda-key-rise-philippines/331042/> [13].

² Jason Burke and Monica Mark, “Al-Qaida in Yemen uses video to claim responsibility for Charlie Hebdo attack,” *Guardian* (London), January 14, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/14/al-qaida-claims-responsibility-charlie-hebdo-attack-paris> [14].

³ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf> [15].

⁴ “CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK,” GOV.UK, last updated November 21, 2017, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].

⁵ “Regulations Establishing a List of Entities SOR/2002-284,” Canada Public Safety, July 23, 2002, <http://205.193.86.99/eng/regulations/SOR-2002-284/FullText.html> [17].

⁶ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf> [15].

⁷ “CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK,” GOV.UK, last updated November 21, 2017, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].

⁸ “CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK,” GOV.UK, last updated November 21, 2017, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].

⁹ “Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP),” Australian National Security, accessed January 28, 2015, <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/Al-QaidaintheArabianPeninsulaAQAP.aspx> [18].

¹⁰ “CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK,” GOV.UK, last updated November 21, 2017, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].

¹¹ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf> [15].

¹² “Regulations Establishing a List of Entities SOR/2002-284,” Canada Public Safety, July 23, 2002, <http://205.193.86.99/eng/regulations/SOR-2002-284/FullText.html> [17].

¹³ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf> [15].

¹⁴ “Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP),” Australian National Security, accessed January 28, 2015, <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/Al-QaidaintheArabianPeninsulaAQAP.aspx> [18].

¹⁵ “Specially Designated Nationals And Blocked Persons List,” Office of Foreign Assets Control, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/Details.aspx?id=2300> [19].

¹⁶ “Specially Designated Nationals And Blocked Persons List,” Office of Foreign Assets Control, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/Details.aspx?id=2300> [19].

¹⁷ “State Department Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Hizballah and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula,” U.S. Department of State, June 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/272090.htm> [20].

¹⁸ “UAE casts global net with anti-Islamist ‘terror list,’” *Gulf Times*, November 25, 2014, <http://www.gulf-times.com/story/417636/UAE-casts-global-net-with-anti-Islamist-terror-lis> [21].

¹⁹ “State Department Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Hizballah and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula,” U.S. Department of State, June 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/272090.htm> [20].

²⁰ “CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK,” GOV.UK, last updated November 21, 2017, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].

²¹ “State Department Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Hizballah and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula,” U.S. Department of State, June 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/272090.htm> [20].

²² “State Department Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Hizballah and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula,” U.S. Department of State, June 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/272090.htm> [20].

²³ “State Department Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Hizballah and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula,” U.S. Department of State, June 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/272090.htm> [20].

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- ²⁵ “Specially Designated Nationals And Blocked Persons List,” Office of Foreign Assets Control, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/Details.aspx?id=2300> [19].
- ²⁶ Katharine Zimmerman, “AQAP: A Resurgent Threat,” Combating Terrorism Center, September 11, 2015, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/aqap-a-resurgent-threat> [22].
- ²⁷ “Yemen’s al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base,” International Crisis Group, February 2, 2017, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-the-base.pdf> [23].
- ²⁸ “Yemen’s al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base,” International Crisis Group, February 2, 2017, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-the-base.pdf> [23].
- ²⁹ Maggie Michael, “US official says UAE paid Yemen tribes to push al-Qaida out,” *Washington Times*, August 15, 2018, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/aug/15/us-official-says-uae-paid-yemen-tribes-to-push-al/> [24].
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Key Leaders



Qasim al-Raymi
Emir (leader) of AQAP



Khalid Batarfi
Leader, media specialist, propagandist,
military commander



Ibrahim al-Asiri
Chief bomb maker



Ammar al-San'ani
Military commander



Ibrahim al-Qosi
Foreign fighter, facilitator, Osama bin
Laden's close aide



Abdullah Mubarak
Religious leader, "sharia official"

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History:

- **October 2, 2020:** A pro-ISIS Telegram channel claims that AQAP leader, Khalid Batarfi, turns himself into Yemeni forces following a Saudi-led raid in al Mahrah.
Allegedly, two key AQAP commanders are also killed in the raid. Sources: “Pro-ISIS Telegram Channel Alleges Al-Qaeda In The Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Leader Khalid Batarfi Turned Himself In To Yemeni Forces In Al-Mahrah During Raid That Killed Two Key Al-Qaeda Commanders,” The Middle East Media Research Institute, October 7, 2020, <https://www.memri.org/jttm/pro-isis-telegram-channel-alleges-al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-aqap-leader-khalid-batarfi-turned> [36]; “Gulf of Aden Security Review,” Critical Threats, October 5, 2020, https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/gulf-of-aden-security-review/gulf-of-aden-security-review-october-5-2020#_edn4528c5682c5f4a0d107d760023177f711 [37].
- **September 14, 2020:** A pro-AQAP media group releases a statement encouraging attacks in France in response to the magazine *Charlie Hebdo*'s republication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.
Brothers Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, who pledged allegiance to AQAP, killed 12 people in an attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in 2015, allegedly in retaliation for the cartoons' publication. The magazine republished the cartoons as a trial in France began for individuals allegedly tied to the attack. Source: “Extremist Content Online: Pro-Al-Qaeda Group Encourages Attacks Following Charlie Hebdo Comic Republication,” Counter Extremism Project, September 14, 2020, <https://www.counterextremism.com/press/extremist-content-online-pro-al-qaeda-group-encourages-attacks-following-charlie-hebdo-comic> [88].
- **February 23, 2020:** AQAP announces that Khalid Batarfi is the group's new leader.
Source: “Al-Qaida Confirms Death of AQAP Leader,” Voice of America, February 23, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/al-qaeda-confirms-death-aqap-leader> [51].
- **January 25, 2020 - January 31, 2020:** On January 25, local media reports that the U.S. launched a drone strike in Yemen's Marib province.
On January 31, the U.S. announced that it launched a drone strike against Qasim al-Raymi—the leader of AQAP. Officials have expressed confidence that the AQAP leader was killed in the strike, however they are still waiting on confirmation of his death before making a public announcement. The drone strike against Raymi was not carried out by the U.S. military, and instead was orchestrated by the C.I.A., following months of tracking Raymi through aerial surveillance and other intelligence. The State Department previously offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to Raymi's capture. Sources: Gordon Lubold and Warren P. Strobel, “U.S. Targets Yemen Al Qaeda Leader in Drone Strike,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-targets-yemen-al-qaeda-leader-in-drone-strike-11580511550> [89]; Rukmini Callimachi, Eric Schmitt and Julian E. Barnes, “U.S. Strikes at Leader of Qaeda in Yemen,” *New York Times*, January 31, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/world/middleeast/qaeda-yemen-alrimi.html> [90].
- **January 20, 2020:** According to a report published by the United Nations, Houthi and ISIS militants have begun to engage in limited cooperation against AQAP in central Yemen.
In a short-term alliance, Houthi forces have provided ISIS fighters with access to its military camps as a way to repel their shared adversary. Source: “Twenty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities,” United Nations, January 20, 2020, <https://undocs.org/S/2020/53> [91].
- **November 7, 2019:** The U.S. Department of State offers a \$4 million reward for information on Ibrahim al-Qosi, a Sudanese member of AQAP's leadership team who was convicted of war crimes at Guantanamo and later repatriated in 2012.
Qosi pled guilty at Guantánamo in 2010 to providing support for terrorism and al-Qaeda in exchange for his repatriation. Three years after his repatriation, Qosi began appearing in videos and other publications for AQAP, encouraging lone-wolf attacks against the United States in online propaganda. Source: Carol Rosenberg, “U.S. Offers Up to \$4 Million for Location of Freed Guantánamo Convict,” *New York Times*, November 7, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/07/us/politics/gitmo-reward.html> [92].
- **October 10, 2019:** U.S. President Donald Trump confirms reports from August 2018 claiming the death of Ibrahim Hassan al-Asiri, a bomb-maker from al-Qaeda who built the explosives for several high-profile terrorist plots.
Trump's announcement states that it was likely that al-Asiri was killed in a drone strike in Yemen in 2017. Source: Michael Crowley, “Trump Confirms 2017 Killing of Feared Bomb Maker for Al Qaeda,” *New York Times*, October 10, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/10/world/middleeast/qaeda-bomber-death-trump.html> [93].
- **August 9, 2019:** A federal grand jury charges a Yemeni national living in Arkansas for providing support to a terrorist organization.
Bilal al-Rayanni was charged with supporting al-Qaeda between October and December of 2014 while he was in Yemen. He was initially charged on July 11 with making a false statement on a passport application in May. If found guilty, al-Rayanni will face 20 years in prison and up to 15 years for lying on a passport application. Source: “Arkansas man charged with helping al-Qaida,” Associated Press, August 9, 2019, <https://apnews.com/42833112924d456db8351f80c8eab055> [94].; “Helena-West Helena Resident Indicted for Supporting a Terrorist Organization,” U.S. Department of Justice, August 9, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edar/pr/helena-west-helena-resident-indicted-supporting-terrorist-organization> [95].
- **July 31, 2019:** AQAP members release a video featuring four detained ISIS fighters in Yemen.
The hostages are heard criticizing ISIS for betraying its soldiers and refusing to negotiate prisoner swaps with AQAP. One detainee states that he has been held for over a year. Source: “Jihad and Terrorism Threat Monitor (JTTM) Weekend Summa,” Middle East Media Research Institute, August 3, 2019, <https://www.memri.org/reports/jihad-and-terrorism-threat-monitor-jttm-weekend-summary-365> [96].
- **June 25, 2019:** U.S. forces launch drone airstrikes in al-Bayda.
The strikes kill at least five members of AQAP. Source: “3 U.S. drone airstrikes kill 5 al-Qaida members in central Yemen,” Xinhua, June 25, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-06/25/c_138172653.htm [97].
- **May 18, 2019:** Yemeni security forces arrest Bilal al-Wafi in the mountain area of Habashi.
Al-Wafi was a key leader in AQAP and helped carry out the 2012 bombing of a Yemeni military parade that killed dozens of troops. Source: “Yemen's government forces arrest key al-Qaeda leader,” Al Arabiya, May 20, 2019, <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2019/05/20/Yemen-s-government-forces-arrest-key-al-Qaeda-leader.html> [98].

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- **May 7, 2019:** A U.S. drone strike kills four AQAP militants in central Yemen. The strike targeted the rebels' vehicle as they were heading to a farm in Marib province. Source: "Drone strike 'kills 4 Qaeda suspects' in Yemen," Gulf Times, May 7, 2019, <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/630902/Drone-strike-kills-4-Qaeda-suspects-in-Yemen> [99].
- **April 26, 2019:** AQAP releases statements on militant-linked websites vowing to avenge the 37 beheadings of AQAP members carried out by Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia reports to have executed 37 suspects convicted of terrorism-related charges and claims that most were Shiites, but one was a Sunni militant. Source: "Yemen's al-Qaida branch vows to revenge over Saudi executions," Associated Press, April 26, 2019, <https://www.apnews.com/194be9830310414caad611a786e40e79> [100].
- **April 7, 2019:** Yemeni security forces carry out anti-terror raids to clear a number of AQAP hideouts in the mountains and valleys of Mahfad town, Abyan province. While numbers are unconfirmed, the security forces reportedly capture a number of insurgents and seize a variety of arms and ammunition. Source: "UAE-backed Yemeni security forces raid al-Qaida hideouts in south Yemen," Xinhua, April 8, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-04/08/c_137958029.htm [101].
- **April 2, 2019:** U.S. Central Command reports to have targeted AQAP eight times in the months of January and March 2019. The strikes took place in Al Bayda and Marib, with one strike in January killing veteran al Qaeda member Jamal al-Badawi. Source: Bill Roggio, "US targets AQAP 8 times in past 3 months," Long War Journal, April 2, 2019, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/04/us-targets-aqap-8-times-in-past-3-months.php> [102].
- **April 1, 2019:** Yemeni security forces launch an anti-terror raid and arrest Abdul-Qadir al-Mut in Abyan. Al-Mut was the explosives expert for AQAP. Source: Mu Xuequan, "UAE-backed Yemeni security forces arrest al-Qaida explosives expert," Xinhua, April 1, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-04/01/c_137938906.htm [103].
- **January 7, 2019:** U.S. Central Command confirms that at least 26 airstrikes were conducted against AQAP in 2018. The strikes were targeted in the governorates of Abyan, al Bayda, Hadramawt, Shabwah and Zamakh. Source: Rebecca Kheel, "Central Command: US conducted 36 strikes against al Qaeda, ISIS in Yemen in 2018," The Hill, January 7, 2019, <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/424196-central-command-us-conducted-36-strikes-against-al-qaeda-isis-in-yemen-in-2018> [104].
- **January 2, 2019:** U.S. forces confirm that Jamal Al Badawi was killed in an air raid in Marib province the day prior. Al Badawi was the mastermind behind the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 which killed 17 and injured a further 39. Source: Dan Cancian, "Jamal Al Badawi, Terrorist Behind USS Cole Bombing, Reportedly Killed in Airstrike in Yemen," Newsweek, January 5, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/jamal-al-badawi-terrorist-behind-2000-uss-cole-bombing-reportedly-killed-1280332> [105].
- **December 16, 2018:** French authorities arrest Peter Cherif, also known as Abou Hamza, a high-ranking member of AQAP who has been on the run for seven years. Djibouti authorities arrested Cherif after he arrived from Yemen carrying a fake ID. Cherif was placed on the U.S. blacklist of foreign terrorists in 2015. Source: "Key French jihadist Peter Cherif set to return behind bars," December 27, 2018, <https://www.france24.com/en/20181227-key-french-jihadist-peter-cherif-set-return-behind-bars> [106].
- **December 12, 2018:** Security Belt Forces launch a military operation in Abyan province. Two AQAP commanders, Abu al-Darda al-Baydhani and Abu Qusai al-Adeni, are killed in the operation. Source: Ali Mahmood, "Al Qaeda commanders killed in clashes with UAE-backed forces in Yemen," The National, December 12, 2018, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/al-qaeda-commanders-killed-in-clashes-with-uae-backed-forces-in-yemen-1.802128> [107].
- **December 10, 2018:** The U.S. Department of Justice announces that Damon M. Joseph, also known as Abdullah Ali Yusuf, has been arrested for allegedly planning to open fire at a synagogue in Toledo, Ohio. He was inspired by the teachings of Anwar al-Awlaki, the AQAP cleric who espoused individual jihad while also plotting more professional attacks. Sources: Thomas Joscelyn, "Ohio man allegedly inspired by Anwar al-Awlaki, Islamic State," Long War Journal, December 11, 2018, <https://longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/12/ohio-man-allegedly-inspired-by-anwar-al-awlaki-islamic-state.php> [108]; "Ohio man arrested and charged in federal court after planning an attack on a synagogue in the Toledo area," U.S. Department of Justice, December 10, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndoh/pr/ohio-man-arrested-and-charged-federal-court-after-planning-attack-synagogue-toledo-area> [109].
- **November 26, 2018:** The U.S. launches a drone strike in Al Bayda. Six AQAP fighters and two commanders are killed in the attack. Source: Ali Mahmood, "Al Qaeda militants killed by drone strike in Yemen," The National, November 26, 2018, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/al-qaeda-militants-killed-by-drone-strike-in-yemen-1.796068> [110].
- **September 4, 2018:** AQAP releases a video titled, "The Preliminary Introduction [to] Demolishing the Espionage," in which they claim that a Saudi spy network has infiltrated their network leading to the death of senior leaders including Nasir al-Wuhayshi, al Qaeda's former deputy emir. They claim to have neutralized the suspects, and further lambast Saudi Arabia for their "clear loyalty" to Americans. Source: Thomas Joscelyn, "AQAP claims Saudi spy network targeted its leaders," Long War Journal, September 4, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/09/aqap-claims-saudi-spy-network-targeted-its-leaders.php> [111].
- **August 26, 2018:** Yemeni officials confirm that a senior AQAP leader has been killed during an altercation between the Houthis and AQAP. The exact date of his death is unconfirmed, but was expected to be around a week prior to confirmation of his death. Source: "Yemen tribal leaders say senior Al-Qaeda leader killed in Marib clash," Arab News, August 26, 2018, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1362031/middle-east> [112].
- **August 6, 2018:** The Associated Press reports that the Saudi-backed coalition has been paying some AQAP commanders to leave key cities and towns while letting others retreat with weapons, equipment, and money. The report also claims that hundreds of AQAP members were recruited to join the coalition as soldiers. Key figures in the deal-making said the United States was aware of the arrangements and held off on drone attacks against the armed group. U.S. officials deny this claim as Navy Commander Sean Robertson, a Pentagon spokesman, stated, "since the beginning of 2017, we have conducted more than 140 strikes to remove key AQAP leaders and disrupt its ability to use ungoverned spaces to recruit, train and plan operations against the U.S. and our partners across

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- the region.” Sources: “Report: Saudi-UAE coalition 'cut deals' with al-Qaeda in Yemen,” Al Jazeera, August 6, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/report-saudi-uae-coalition-cut-deals-al-qaeda-yemen-180806074659521.html> [113]; Maggie Michael, Trish Wilson, And Lee Keath, “Yemen: U.S. Allies Spin Deals with al-Qaida in War on Rebels,” August 6, 2018, Pulitzer Center, <https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/yemen-us-allies-spin-deals-al-qaeda-war-rebels> [114].
- **June 28, 2018:** AQAP religious judge Abu Bishr Muhammad Darama is killed in a U.S. drone strike. Source: “Jihadists Report Death of AQAP Judge in U.S. Airstrike in Yemen,” Site Intel Group, June 28, 2018, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/jihadists-report-death-of-aqap-judge-in-us-airstrike-in-yemen.html> [115].
 - **June 20, 2018:** In a press release, AQAP leader Khalid Batarfi claims that the group has uncovered a Saudi Arabian spy network in Yemen. In the same press release, Batarfi referenced ISIS, stating “we have not spared any effort to open channels of communication with these groups [ISIS], whom we still invite to work with us to fight this Crusader-[Shia] campaign against Muslims.” Source: “Al-Qaeda in Yemen says group will strike hard when time is right,” BBC, June 20, 2018, <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c1d9db8k> [116].
 - **April 15, 2018:** AQAP claims that 18 of its fighters have escaped from a political security prison in Bayda. Sources: “AQAP Reports 18 Fighters Escaping from Prison in al-Bayda”, Claims Attacks on Houthis and SBF,” Site Intel Group, April 15, 2018, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/aqap-reports-18-fighters-escaping-from-prison-in-al-bayda-claims-attacks-on-houthis-and-sbf.html> [117]; Office of the Spokesperson, “State Department Terrorist Designation of Khalid Batarfi,” US Department of State, January 23, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/01/277593.htm> [118].
 - **January 23, 2018:** The U.S. Department of State designates AQAP leader Khalid Batarfi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist the day after AQAP releases a propaganda video featuring Batarfi. Source: Thomas Joscelyn, “Senior AQAP leader added to US terror list by State Department,” Long War Journal, January 23, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/01/senior-aqap-leader-added-to-us-terror-list-by-state-department.php> [119].
 - **January 2018 - September 2018:** The United States conduct 36 airstrikes in Yemen, all but one of which targeted AQAP. Throughout 2017 and 2018, airstrikes against the al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen have decreased significantly to roughly a quarter of the previous year’s record high of 131 strikes. Source: Bill Roggio and Alexandra Gutowski, “Yemen strikes wane, but AQAP still poses ‘a significant threat,’” Long War Journal, November 7, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/11/yemen-strikes.php> [120].
 - **November 2017 - December 2017:** AQAP celebrates the defection of “many brothers” from ISIS in Yemen to AQAP. Throughout the month of December, U.S. airstrikes kill six AQAP commanders. On December 15, Miqdad al Sana’ani, an external operations facilitator, is killed in the Bayda governorate. On December 19, Habib al-Sana’ani, a deputy arms facilitator, is killed in Marib governorate. On December 20, Abu Umar al-Sana’ani, a member of AQAP’s dawah, Mujahid al-Adani (a.k.a. Mohammad Shukri), and Abu Layth al-Sanaani are killed in Marib. On December 20, a U.S. airstrike kills Abu Hajar al-Makki, an AQAP propaganda official who had reportedly previously fought in Afghanistan. AQAP fails in an attempt to rob banks in Mukalla in December 2017. Sources: Elisabeth Kendall, “What’s next for jihadists in Yemen?” *Washington Post*, February 23, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/02/23/whats-next-for-jihadists-in-yemen/?utm_term=.799167411639 [121]; Bill Roggio and Alexandra Gutowski, “US killed three ‘key’ AQAP leaders in Yemen,” Long War Journal, January 11, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/01/us-killed-three-key-aqap-leaders.php> [122]; Thomas Joscelyn, “AQAP propaganda official reportedly killed in US drone strike,” Long War Journal, December 22, 2017, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/12/aqap-propaganda-official-reportedly-killed-in-us-drone-strike.php> [123]; U.N. Security Council, “Twenty-second report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities,” July 27, 2018, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2018/705&referer=/english/&Lang=E [34].
 - **October 10, 2017:** A U.S. airstrike kills AQAP commander Mohammed Ammar al Adani and four of his fighters. Source: Bill Roggio, “US kills local AQAP commander in airstrike,” Long War Journal, October 11, 2017, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/10/us-kills-local-aqap-commander-in-airstrike.php> [124].
 - **August 3, 2017:** Yemeni troops, backed by the U.S. and the UAE, conduct raids against AQAP in Shabwa province. The number of casualties and injuries is unreported. Source: “U.S.-backed Yemeni troops attack al Qaeda in southern state,” Reuters, August 3, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-usa-emirates-idUSKBN1AJ2UW> [125].
 - **August 2017:** U.S. officials report that Ibrahim al-Asiri, AQAP’s chief bomb maker, is killed in a U.S. drone strike. The U.S. designated Asiri, 36, as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist” in 2011. Before joining AQAP, al-Asiri was part of an al-Qaeda cell in Saudi Arabia and was allegedly involved in planned bombings of oil facilities in the kingdom. Source: “Chief al-Qaeda bomb maker 'killed in Yemen strike' - US reports,” BBC News, August 21, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45257631> [126].
 - **June 2017 - August 2017:** A U.S. airstrike in June kills the AQAP emir of Shabwah province, Abu Khattab al Awlaqi, in Yemen. In late June, the U.S. Department of State amends its classification of AQAP to include the aliases “Sons of Abyan, Sons of Hadramawt, Sons of Hadramawt Committee, Civil Council of Hadramawt, and National Hadramawt Council,” reflecting AQAP’s continued ability to govern parts of southern Yemen. During July and August, AQAP renews attacks on Houthi positions in the Bayda governorate and attacks government troops in the Shabwah and Abyan governorates. On August 4, U.S. air and ground forces assist Yemeni and UAE troops in pushing AQAP militants out of the Shabwah governorate. A week later, AQAP releases a guide on how to derail trains in the United States and Europe. Sources: Bill Roggio, “US kills AQAP provincial emir in Yemen airstrike,” Long War Journal, June 22, 2017, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/06/us-kills-aqap-provincial-emir-in-yemen-airstrike.php> [127] “State Department Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Hizballah and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula,” U.S. Department of State, June 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/272090.htm> [20] “Yemen troops killed in suspected Qaeda attack: army,” Al-Monitor, July 16, 2017, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/afp/2017/07/yemen-conflict-qaeda.html> [128] “AQAP Video Shows Attacks on Houthi Positions in Six Areas in al-Bayda,” Site Intelligence Group, July 2, 2016, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/aqap-video-shows-attacks-on-houthi-positions-in-six-areas-in-al-bayda.html> [129] Maher Farrukh, Coy Ozias and Tyler Parker, “Yemen Situation Report,” Critical Threats, August 11, 2017, <https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/yemen-situation-report/2017-yemen-crisis-situation-report-august-11> [130] “US-backed Yemeni troops 'push al-Qaeda' out of Shabwa,” BBC News, August 4, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40833914> [131] Thomas Joscelyn, “AQAP publishes guide for derailing trains in the US, Europe,” Long War Journal, August 13, 2017,

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<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/08/aqap-publishes-guide-for-derailing-trains-in-the-us-europe.php> [132].

- **March 2017 - May 2017:**The United States conducts 30 air strikes in the first days of March, matching its previous yearly average of airstrikes in Yemen.
The United States launches 20 airstrikes in early April as well, bringing 2017's total to 75. On May 8, Raymi reiterates calls for lone-wolf attacks on Western targets. On May 23, a U.S. raid in Marib kills seven AQAP militants. Sources: Bill Roggio, "US blitzes AQAP in Yemen with an unprecedented 30 airstrikes," Long War Journal, March 4, 2017, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/03/us-blitzes-aqap-in-yemen-with-more-than-30-airstrikes.php> [133] Bill Roggio, "US military hits AQAP with more than 20 airstrikes," Long War Journal, April 4, 2017, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/04/us-military-hits-aqap-with-more-than-20-airstrikes.php> [134] Thomas Joscelyn, "AQAP leader calls for 'simple' attacks in the West," Long War Journal, May 8, 2017, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/05/aqap-leader-calls-for-simple-attacks-in-the-west.php> [135] Bill Roggio, "US special forces raid al Qaeda compound in central Yemen," Long War Journal, May 23, 2017, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/05/us-special-forces-raid-al-qaeda-compound-in-central-yemen.php> [136].
- **August 2016 - February 2017:**Despite losing its major territorial holdings in southern Yemen, AQAP continues to exert control over civilian populaces due to the inroads it made the previous year.
During this period, the United States conducts nine anti-AQAP strikes and raids in Yemen—seven of them in the Bayda province—killing dozens of militants, including high ranking members Sultan al-Dhahab and Abdulrauf al-Dhahab. After these raids, Raymi releases an audio message taunting U.S. President Donald Trump. Sources: "Yemen's al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base," International Crisis Group, February 2, 2017, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-the-base.pdf> [23] Bill Roggio, "US military says AQAP leaders killed in Yemen raid," Long War Journal, February 3, 2017, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/02/us-military-says-aqap-leaders-killed-in-raid.php> [137] Luis Martines, "US military conducts ground raid in Yemen on AQAP compound," ABC News, May 22, 2017, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/us-military-conducts-ground-raid-yemen-aqap-compound/story?id=47572579> [138] Euan McKirdy, Jim Sciutto, Eli Watkins, and Ryan Browne, "Al Qaeda leader mocks Trump after Yemen raid," CNN, February 8, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/07/politics/yemen-raid-al-qaeda/index.html> [139].
- **February 2016 - July 2016:**In February, AQAP finishes expanding into five more towns in Yemen's southern provinces.
In the following months, however, AQAP loses territory as it is attacked by a Saudi-led Arab coalition and its leaders are targeted by several U.S. airstrikes. In February, a U.S. airstrike kills AQAP senior member Jalal Belaidy and two others in the southwestern region of Abyan. In March, U.S. airstrikes target major AQAP locations, including its intelligence center and a training camp. Coalition-backed operations carried out during these two months also diminish AQAP's presence in Aden. On April 26, a U.S. airstrike kills AQAP chief financial officer Hossam al-Zanjibari in Yemen's southwest region of Abyan. Also in April, a UAE-led force captures the group's major port stronghold in Mukalla. U.S. airstrikes target AQAP throughout July. Sources: Katherine Zimmerman, "AQAP Expanding behind Yemen's Frontlines," Critical Threats, February 17, 2016, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/zimmerman-aqap-expanding-behind-yemens-frontlines-february-17-2016> [140] "Strikes kill at least 50 at Qaeda Yemen camp; medics, official," Reuters, March 23, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-yemen-strike-idUSKCN0WQ37I> [141] Katherine Zimmerman and Jon Diamond, "Challenging the Yemeni State: ISIS in Aden and Al Mukalla," Critical Threats, June 9, 2016, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/zimmerman-diamond-challenging-yemeni-state-isis-in-aden-al-mukalla-june-9-2016> [75] Ahmed Alwly, "Despite Arab, US attacks, AQAP still holding out in Yemen," Al-Monitor, May 13, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05/yemen-al-qaeda-us-terrorism-hadi-mukalla-drones.html> [142] Thomas Joscelyn, "Arab coalition enters AQAP stronghold in port city of Mukalla, Yemen," Long War Journal, April 25, 2016, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/04/arab-coalition-enters-aqap-stronghold-in-port-city-of-mukalla-yemen.php> [143] Bill Roggio, "US targeted AQAP operatives in 4 airstrikes in July," Long War Journal, August 2, 2016, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/us-targeted-aqap-operatives-in-4-airstrikes-in-july.php> [144].
- **February 2015 - July 2015:**AQAP expands its territorial control in southern and central Yemen again.
In April, militants seize the southern city of Mukalla, Yemen's fifth largest city, and free 270 inmates from government security facilities. AQAP governs Mukalla for one year before being expelled. In May, Shihri falls to AQAP and in December the group takes control of Ja'ar and Zinjibar. On June 16, AQAP confirms that Wuhayshi was killed in a U.S. drone strike, and that he has been succeeded by military chief Qasim al-Raymi. In July, Raymi releases a video message calling for attacks on the United States. Sources: Katherine Zimmerman, "AQAP Expanding behind Yemen's Frontlines," Critical Threats, February 17, 2016, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/zimmerman-aqap-expanding-behind-yemens-frontlines-february-17-2016> [140] Saeed al-Batati and K. Faheem, "Affiliate of Al Qaeda Seizes Major Yemeni City, Driving Out the Military," *New York Times*, April 3, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/04/world/middleeast/al-qaeda-al-mukalla-yemen.html> [145] "Yemen's al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base," International Crisis Group, Middle East Report N°174, February 2, 2017, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-the-base.pdf> [23] Thomas Joscelyn, "Arab coalition enters AQAP stronghold in port city of Mukalla, Yemen," Long War Journal, April 25, 2016, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/04/arab-coalition-enters-aqap-stronghold-in-port-city-of-mukalla-yemen.php> [143] "AQAP Fast Facts," CNN, September 1, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/middleeast/aqap-fast-facts/index.html> [146] Dana Ford, "New AQAP chief calls for attacks on U.S.," CNN, July 10, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/09/middleeast/aqap-leader-message/index.html> [147].
- **December 2014 - January 2015:**December 2014 marks the end of a three-month AQAP campaign against Houthi forces during which AQAP conducted 149 attacks, mostly in the Bayda.
AQAP calls for attacks against U.S. airliners in the 13th issue of its English-language magazine, Inspire. The day before, AQAP threatened the French oil company Total. On January 7, gunmen kill 12 at the Paris offices of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, in an attack claimed by AQAP. Sources: Oren Adaki, "AQAP claims 149 attacks in Yemen since late September," The Long War Journal, December 19 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/12/aqap_attack_map.php [148] "Extremism and Terrorism," Anti-Defamation League, December 24, 2014, <http://blog.adl.org/extremism/aqap-al-qaeda-inspire-english-magazine-13> [149] "AQAP Threatens French Oil Company," Al Bawaba News, December 23, 2014, <http://www.albawaba.com/news/aqap-threatens-french-oil-company-635760> [150] "AQAP Fast Facts," CNN, September 1, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/middleeast/aqap-fast-facts/index.html> [146].
- **November 2014 - December 2014:**In early November, Yemeni security forces kill AQAP leader Turki al-Asiri, also known as Marwan al-Mekki, a local commander in Lahj province.
Following this loss, AQAP military commander Qasim al-Raymi accuses the Houthis of acting as a proxy for the United States. One week later, Houthi rebels push AQAP out of one of its strongholds in central Yemen. In late November, AQAP cleric Harith al-Nadhari rejects ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's November 13 declaration of ISIS-controlled provinces in Yemen and reiterates AQAP's loyalty to al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahri. Throughout November and December, U.S. and Yemeni forces attempt to free Luke Somers, an American hostage held in Yemen. The first raid succeeds in freeing eight hostages, but Sommers and four other hostages remain captive. A second attempt is made on December 5, but Sommers and a South African hostage die of their gunshot wounds. Sources: "Senior al Qaeda leader killed in south Yemen: officials,"

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- Reuters, November 7, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/07/us-yemen-security-qaeda-idUSKBN0IR1R620141107> [151] “Yemen’s AQAP says Houthis will pay for push into country,” Reuters, November 21, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/21/us-yemen-qaeda-warning-idUSKCN0J518B20141121> [152] Mohammed Ghobari, “Yemen Shi’ites capture key district from al Qaeda, 35 people dead,” Reuters, November 14, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/14/us-yemen-security-idUSKCN0IY1Q120141114> [153] Vasudevan Sridharan, “Yemeni Al-Qaeda Derides ISIS’s Islamic Caliphate Announcement,” International Business Times, November 22, 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/yemeni-al-qaeda-derides-isis-islamic-caliphate-announcement-1476027> [154] Ahmed al-Haj and Robert Burns, “American among hostages targeted in Yemen raid,” Associated Press, November 26, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/803e9c0f3b1e4905984f3ce1005f3045/6-killed-rebel-attack-house-yemen-leader> [155] “U.S. Discloses failed attempt to rescue American in Yemen,” Reuters, December 4, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/04/us-mideast-crisis-yemen-usa-idUSKCN0I0Y320141204> [156] Jeff Mason and Mohammed Ghobari, “Yemen Rescue Failed as Captors Alerted to Approaching U.S. Commandos: Officials,” Reuters, December 6, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/07/us-yemen-usa-hostage-forces-idUSKBN0JK0Q720141207> [157].
- October 2014:** In early October, AQAP launches four major attacks against government and Houthi targets, including three bombings.
 On October 14, the U.S. government offers rewards of up to \$10 million for information on the whereabouts of AQAP’s leader, Nasir al-Wuhayshi, and up to \$5 million for seven of his deputies. Sources: “Explosion Kills Two Soldiers in Yemen’s Hadramawt Region,” Reuters, October 11, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/11/us-yemen-security-idUSKCN0I00BV20141011> [158] Mohammed Ghobari, “Suicide Bombings in Yemen Kill 67 after Premier Quits,” Reuters, October 9, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/09/us-yemen-security-idUSKCN0HY0FR20141009> [159] “Al Qaeda Attacks South Yemen Town of Al-Bayda, Four Soldiers Killed,” Reuters, October 8, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/08/us-yemen-security-attacks-idUSKCN0HX0KU20141008> [160] Lee, “US Offers \$45 Million for Info on AQAP Leaders,” Associated Press, October 14, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/798b2a2de69145dea2bdb3c916780dce/us-offers-45-million-info-aqap-leaders> [161].
 - April 2014:** Yemeni security officials announce the beginning of a “massive and unprecedented” offensive against “high-level AQAP targets” in the provinces of Abyan and Shabwa.
 Three days after the offensive begins, CNN reports that the operation has killed at least 65 suspected AQAP-linked militants, among them chief bomb maker Ibrahim al-Asiri. However, DNA tests on the remains, conducted by Saudi Arabia several days after the operation, conclude that Asiri was not one of the people killed. Sources: Mohammed Jamjoom, “Source: ‘Massive’ Attack Targets Al Qaeda in Yemen,” CNN, April 20, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/20/world/meast/yemen-drone-strike/> [162], Mohammed Jamjoom, Barbara Starr and Holly Yan, “Did Yemen, U.S. Kill Al Qaeda’s Chief Bomb Maker?” CNN, April 23, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/23/world/meast/yemen-terror-operation/> [163], Paul Cruickshank, Mohammed Jamjoom and Nic Robertson, “DNA Test: Remains from Airstrike in Yemen not those of Al Qaeda Bomb-Maker,” CNN, April 28, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/28/world/meast/yemen-dna-al-qaeda/> [164].
 - July 2013 - December 2013:** AQAP confirms that deputy leader Said al-Shihri is killed in a drone strike carried out by the United States.
 Al-Shihri had been reported killed on numerous occasions, including in December 2009, February 2010, and September 2012. Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri named AQAP leader Nasir al-Wuhayshi his deputy in August and reportedly gives him “clear orders” to carry out an attack, prompting the United States to temporarily shut down its embassies and consulates in the Middle East and North Africa. On December 6, AQAP militants launched a suicide car bombing and assault on the defense ministry in Sanaa, killing 52 people and wounding at least 167 others. Sources: Bill Roggio, “AQAP Confirms Deputy Emir Killed in US Drone Strike,” *Long War Journal*, July 17, 2013, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/07/aqap_confirms_deputy.php# [165] Eli Lake, “Meet al Qaeda’s New General Manager: Nasser al-Wuhayshi,” *Daily Beast*, August 9, 2013, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/08/09/meet-al-qaeda-s-new-general-manager-nasser-al-wuhayshi.html> [166] Ellen Nakashima and Anne Gearan, “Al-Qaeda Leader Zawahiri Is Said to Have Ordered Terrorist Attack; U.S. Citizens Urged to Leave Yemen,” *Washington Post*, August 5, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/al-qaeda-leader-zawahiri-is-said-to-have-ordered-terrorist-attack/2013/08/05/9eb4799e-fe1b-11e2-bd97-676ec24f1f3f_story.html [167] “Al-Qaida claims responsibility for Yemen car bomb attack,” *Guardian* (London), December 6, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/06/al-qaeda-claims-yemen-car-bomb-attack-sanaa-52-killed> [168].
 - March 2012 - June 2012:** Militants abduct Saudi envoy Abdullah al-Khalidi in Yemen’s southern port city of Aden in March, demanding a ransom and the release of prisoners from Saudi jails.
 In May, the Central Intelligence Agency and foreign intelligence services foil an attempt by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to send a suicide bomber carrying an “experimental bomb aboard an airliner” travelling to the U.S. On May 6, AQAP senior leader Fahd al-Quso, wanted by the U.S. for his involvement in the 2000 attack on the U.S.S. Cole and the 2009 Christmas Day airliner plot, is killed by a U.S. drone strike in Yemen’s Shabwa province. On May 21, a suicide bomber kills over 100 soldiers and wounds more than 300 others in Sanaa in an attack claimed by AAS. By mid-June, government forces force AQAP out of its Abyan stronghold of Zinjibar. Sources: Kristin Deasy, “Abdullah Al-Khalidi, Saudi Diplomat, Abducted in Yemen,” *Global Post*, March 28, 2012, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/saudi-arabia/120328/abdullah-al-khalidi-saudi-diplomat-abducted-ye> [169] Scott Shane and Eric Schmitt, “Qaeda Plot to Attack Plane Foiled, U.S. Officials Say,” *New York Times*, May 7, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/08/world/middleeast/us-says-terrorist-plot-to-attack-plane-foiled.html> [170] Bill Roggio, “USS Cole Bomber Killed in US Drone Strike in Yemen,” *Long War Journal*, May 6, 2012, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/05/uss_cole_bomber_kill.php# [171] “AQAP Fast Facts,” CNN, September 1, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/middleeast/aqap-fast-facts/index.html> [146] Hakim Almasari and Mohammed Jamjoom, “Huge suicide blast kills more than 100 troops in Yemen,” CNN, May 21, 2012, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/21/world/meast/yemen-violence/> [172] “Yemeni army drives fighters from Zinjibar,” *Al-Jazeera*, June 12, 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/06/201261271339613508.html> [173].
 - May 2011 - September 2011:** In May 2011, Ansar al-Sharia, a newly formed local branch of AQAP in Yemen, captures territory in the Abyan governorate, including the capital of Zinjibar.
 AQAP governs these towns until mid-2012 when Yemeni forces expel them. In September 2011, Awlaki and Samir Khan, both American citizens and members of AQAP in Yemen, are killed in a drone strike carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency. According to the White House, Awlaki had assumed “the lead role in planning and directing the efforts to murder innocent Americans.” Sources: “Yemen’s al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base,” International Crisis Group, Middle East Report N°174, February 2, 2017, <https://d2071andvip0wi.cloudfront.net/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-the-base.pdf> [23] Bill Roggio, “Al Qaeda seizes more territory in southern Yemen,” *Long War Journal*, February 11, 2016, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/02/al-qaeda-seizes-more-territory-in-southern-yemen.php> [174] Mark Mazzetti, Eric Schmitt, and Robert Worth, “Two-Year Manhunt Led to Killing of Awlaki in Yemen,” *New York Times*, September 30, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/01/world/middleeast/anwar-al-awlaki-is-killed-in-yemen.html?pagewanted=all> [175].
 - November 2009 - January 2010:** On November 5, Army Major Nidal Hasan kills 13 soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, in an

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attack linked to AQAP recruiter Anwar al-Awlaki.

On December 25, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempts to bomb a commercial airliner in Detroit, on behalf of AQAP. On January 19, 2010, the U.S. Department of State classifies AQAP as a foreign terrorist organization. Source: "AQAP Fast Facts," CNN, September 1, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/middleeast/aqap-fast-facts/index.html> [146].

- **November 2007 - January 2009:** In early November 2007, Said al-Shihri and Mohamed al-Awfi are transferred from Guantanamo Bay prison to Saudi Arabia's custody, where they enter into the government sponsored rehabilitation program.
In January 2009, after separately launching terror attacks against Western and Arab targets for six years, Nasir al-Wuhayshi and Qasim al-Raymi, along with the recently released Said al-Shihri and Mohamed al-Awfi, announce that the Saudi and Yemeni branches of al-Qaeda have merged, forming al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Sources: "The Guantanamo Docket: Said Ali al Shihri," New York Times, accessed January 18, 2015, <http://projects.nytimes.com/guantanamo/detainees/372-said-ali-al-shihri> [176] "The Guantanamo Docket: Muhammad Al Awfi," New York Times, accessed January 18, 2015, <http://projects.nytimes.com/guantanamo/detainees/333-muhammad-al-awfi> [177] Jane Novak, "Arabian Peninsula Al Qaeda Groups Merge," Long War Journal, January 26, 2009, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/01/arabian_peninsula_al.php# [178].
- **February 3, 2006:** 23 alleged al-Qaeda militants in Yemen escape from prison, including Qasim al-Raymi and Nasir al-Wuhayshi, who becomes the leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula when it officially opens operations in Yemen in January 2009.
Source: Gregory D. Johnsen, "Tracking Yemen's 23 Escaped Jihadi Operatives - Part 2," *Terrorism Monitor* 5, no. 19, October 24, 2007, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4466#.VBxQ0Z3D-P8 [179].
- **September 2001 - November 2002:** Said al-Shihri is captured in Afghanistan and transferred to U.S. custody at the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba.
Source: Gregory D. Johnsen, "A Profile of AQAP's Upper Echelon," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (2012): 7.
- **1990 - 2000:** The men who eventually create AQAP in 2009—Nasir al-Wuhayshi, Said al-Shihri, Qasim al-Raymi, and Mohamed al-Awfi—travel to Afghanistan and spend time at al-Qaeda-sponsored training camps there.
Al-Wuhayshi serves as Osama bin Laden's personal secretary in Afghanistan between 1998 until late 2001, when the two are separated during the U.S.-led Battle of Tora Bora. Source: Gregory D. Johnsen, "A Profile of AQAP's Upper Echelon," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (2012): 6-8.

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Violent history:

- **December 1992:** Bombs explode at a hotel in Aden, Yemen where U.S. troops had stayed before traveling to Somalia. Two Austrian tourists die in the attack.¹⁰⁹
- **Late 1990s-Early 2000s:** The men who eventually create AQAP in 2009—Nasir al-Wuhayshi, Said al-Shihri, Qasim al-Raymi, and Mohamed al-Awfi—all travel to Afghanistan and spend time at al-Qaeda-sponsored training camps there.¹¹⁰ Al-Wuhayshi serves as Osama Bin Laden’s personal secretary in Afghanistan between 1998 until about late 2001, when the two are separated during the U.S.-led Battle of Tora Bora.¹¹¹
- **October 12, 2000:** Suicide bombers driving an inflatable raft packed with explosives ram into the U.S.S. Cole as it is mooring a U.S. Navy destroyer to a buoy in the Port of Aden, killing 17 U.S. service members and injuring at least 40. Both bombers are Yemenis, and six men are arrested in connection with the plot, including Saudi national Abdel Rahim al-Nashiri, who is reportedly al-Qaeda’s chief of naval operations in the Persian Gulf.¹¹²
- **October 2002:** Al-Qaeda reportedly carries out attacks on a French oil tanker in Yemen on October 6, killing one crewmember. On October 8, the group claims responsibility for attacking and killing two U.S. Marines on Faylaka Island in Kuwait.¹¹³
- **May 2003:** On May 12, al-Qaeda militants in Saudi Arabia attack Western housing compounds in Riyadh, killing 35 people.¹¹⁴
- **November 8, 2003:** Suicide bombers driving vehicles disguised as police cars attack another residential compound in Riyadh, killing 17 and injuring 122.¹¹⁵
- **June 2004:** Al-Qaeda militants kidnap and behead Paul Johnson, an American defense contractor for Lockheed Martin.¹¹⁶ Days after Johnson’s body is found dumped outside of Riyadh, Saudi security forces kill Abdulaziz al-Muqrin, who is—at the time—the purported leader of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia and the kingdom’s most wanted man. Muqrin is thought to be behind the kidnapping and several other attacks, including the November 8, 2003 residential compound attack in Riyadh that kills 17, as well as the May 2004 attacks on the al-Khobar Petroleum Center and Oasis residential compound that leave 22 dead.¹¹⁷
- **December 2004:** On December 6, al-Qaeda launches an attack against the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, killing 5 non-American employees.¹¹⁸ Then on December 29, militants attack Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Interior in Riyadh. Saudi forces kill seven of the assailants.¹¹⁹
- **February 3, 2006:** 23 alleged al-Qaeda militants in Yemen escape from prison, including Qasim al-Raymi and Nasir al-Wuhayshi, who becomes the leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula when it officially opens operations in Yemen in January 2009.¹²⁰
- **July 2, 2007:** A suicide bomber detonates himself at a tourist site in Maarib, Yemen, killing 7 Spaniards and two Yemenis.¹²¹
- **January 19, 2008:** Gunmen in Hadramout fire on a convoy of tourists, killing 2 Belgians and 2 Yemenis.¹²²
- **March 18, 2008:** Militants fire three mortar rounds at the U.S. embassy in Sanaa, missing and hitting a high school for girls next to it. The attack kills one security guard and wounds 18 people.¹²³
- **September 17, 2008:** Militants from an al-Qaeda-affiliated group called Islamic Jihad disguise themselves as soldiers and detonate two car bombs outside of the U.S. embassy in Sanaa, killing 18.¹²⁴
- **March 16, 2009:** A suicide bomber detonates himself in Yemen’s historic old city of Shibam, killing 4 South Korean tourists.¹²⁵
- **August 27, 2009:** Al-Qaeda operative Abdullah Asiri meets with Saudi Arabia’s Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, then Assistant Minister of Interior for Security Affairs, ostensibly to turn himself in and repent for joining al-Qaeda. Instead, Asiri detonates a bomb that is hidden in his underwear, killing himself and injuring the Saudi minister.¹²⁶

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- **November 5, 2009:** Nidal Hasan, a U.S. Army psychiatrist who exchanged dozens of emails with U.S.-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, embarks on a shooting rampage at an army base in Fort Hood, Texas, killing 12 and wounding 31.¹²⁷
- **December 25, 2009:** Nigerian citizen Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempts to detonate explosives hidden in his underwear aboard a Northwest Airlines flight travelling from Amsterdam to Detroit, but is subdued by passengers after setting his pants on fire. Abdulmutallab allegedly received training and explosives from AQAP in Yemen.¹²⁸
- **April 26, 2010:** A suicide bomber targets the British ambassador's convoy as it travels to the British embassy in Sanaa, narrowly missing the ambassador while killing himself and wounding two security guards.¹²⁹
- **May 1, 2010:** Faisal Shahzad, a naturalized American citizen from Pakistan who was allegedly inspired by Anwar al-Awlaki, attempts to detonate a car bomb in Times Square. The plot collapses when the explosives fail to detonate.¹³⁰
- **June 20, 2010:** Four gunmen break into the Yemeni intelligence headquarters in Aden, killing several security guards and freeing suspected al-Qaeda detainees. The attack leaves 11 people dead.¹³¹
- **November 2010:** Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula attempts to mail bombs loaded in printer cartridges via UPS and FedEx to Jewish community centers in Chicago. The bombs make their way from Yemen to Britain and Dubai before a last minute tip from Saudi intelligence alerts officials in each country to the cargo and foils the plot.¹³²
- **March 2012:** Militants abduct Saudi envoy Abdullah al-Khalidi in the Yemeni southern port city of Aden, demanding a ransom and the release of prisoners from Saudi jails.¹³³
- **May 2012:** The Central Intelligence Agency and foreign intelligence services foil an attempt by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to send a suicide bomber carrying an "experimental bomb aboard an airliner" travelling to the U.S.¹³⁴
- **May 21, 2012:** A suicide bomber dressed in a Yemeni army uniform detonates himself during rehearsals for a military parade in Sanaa, killing 90 soldiers and injuring more than 200.¹³⁵
- **August 2013:** Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri names AQAP leader Nasir al-Wuhayshi his deputy,¹³⁶ and reportedly gives him "clear orders" to carry out an attack, prompting the U.S. to temporarily shut down its embassies and consulates in the Middle East and North Africa.¹³⁷
- **December 16, 2013:** After AQAP militants slam a vehicle packed with explosives into the hospital at the Yemeni Defense Ministry complex in Sanaa, a group of gunmen engage security forces in a shootout that leaves 52 people dead.¹³⁸ AQAP senior leader Qasim al-Raymi later apologizes for the attack, saying, "We offer our apologies and condolences to the families of the victims... We did not want your lost ones; we did not target them on purpose."¹³⁹
- **February 13, 2014:** AQAP militants carry out an attack on the central prison in Sanaa, freeing 29 prisoners, including 19 suspected of affiliation with AQAP. A suicide bomber reportedly detonates a car outside the prison, followed by two units of fighters, one that engages security guards outside the prison, and another that battles with guards inside. At least 7 soldiers are killed in the attack.¹⁴⁰
- **April 8, 2014:** Militants from AQAP attack a military checkpoint in Hadramout, Yemen, killing 8 soldiers.¹⁴¹
- **April 24, 2014:** Two suspected AQAP kidnappers attempt to abduct two Americans –one Special Operations commando and one CIA officer—from a barbershop in Sanaa. The Americans reportedly shoot and kill both suspects and flee in an SUV parked nearby.¹⁴²
- **May 2014:** On May 14, AQAP militants carry out simultaneous attacks in Azzan and Gol al Rayda, killing 10 soldiers.¹⁴³ On May 23, al-Qaeda militants kill 12 Yemeni troops and wound 11 in southern Hadramout.¹⁴⁴
- **June 2014:** On June 5, al-Qaeda militants kill at least 14 soldiers and government-allied tribesmen at an army checkpoint in southern Shabwa.¹⁴⁵ On June 26, AQAP carries out simultaneous attacks in Seyoun. Militants reportedly kill three soldiers at Seyoun Airport, while a suicide car bomber detonates himself at the entrance of an army base, killing five Yemeni soldiers.¹⁴⁶

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- **July 15, 2014:** Suspected al-Qaeda members rob a post office and kill a police officer in Hadramout.¹⁴⁷
- **August 2014:** On August 7, AQAP tries to attack an army facility and briefly gains control over several government buildings. On August 8, alleged AQAP militants kidnap and kill 14 Yemeni soldiers.¹⁴⁸
- **September 1, 2014:** AQAP executes three local men suspected of aiding U.S. drone strikes in Yemen's Hadramout province.¹⁴⁹
- **September 1, 2014:** AQAP kills 13 Yemeni soldiers and wounds 40 in an attack in Shabwa.¹⁵⁰
- **September 25, 2014:** AQAP executes a Yemeni intelligence officer and four other Yemeni officials.¹⁵¹
- **September 27, 2014:** AQAP launches a rocket at the U.S. embassy in Sanaa, Yemen, wounding several guards.¹⁵²
- **September 28, 2014:** An AQAP suicide bomber detonates a car bomb at a hospital-turned-Houthi base, killing 15. Five more die in an AQAP ambush in the south of Yemen.¹⁵³
- **September 29, 2014:** AQAP claims credit for at least four attacks against the Yemeni military and Shiite rebels, killing at least 20.¹⁵⁴
- **October 1, 2014:** AQAP conducts three attacks against the Yemeni military and Shiite rebels, killing at least four soldiers and wounding five.¹⁵⁵
- **October 8, 2014:** AQAP fighters attack security and government buildings in southern Yemen with guns and rocket-propelled grenades, killing at least four soldiers before they are forced to retreat.¹⁵⁶
- **October 9, 2014:** Suicide bombers kills at least 67 people in two separate attacks. A suicide bomber detonates at a Houthi checkpoint in Sanaa, killing at least 47, including four children. A suicide car bombing and a gun attack on an army outpost in eastern Yemen kills at least 20 soldiers. AQAP does not immediately claim responsibility, but the bombings mirror past AQAP attacks.¹⁵⁷
- **October 11, 2014:** An explosion near a military checkpoint in Yemen's Hadramout province kills two soldiers and injures four others. AQAP and its local wing, Ansar al-Sharia, are suspected.¹⁵⁸
- **October 15, 2014:** AQAP fighters storm the town of Odein, killing three soldiers. AQAP holds the town for nine hours before it withdraws.¹⁵⁹
- **October 17, 2014:** At least 15 are killed in fighting between Houthi rebels and Sunni Muslim tribesman in and around the Yemeni city of Ibb.¹⁶⁰
- **December 3, 2014:** AQAP militants detonate a car bomb outside of the Iranian ambassador's residence in Yemen, killing three.¹⁶¹
- **December 8, 2014:** Five roadside bombs target Shiite Houthi fighters and wound several people in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa. AQAP is believed to be behind the attacks.¹⁶²
- **December 9, 2014:** Two AQAP suicide bombers attempt to drive explosive-laden cars into a military compound in east Yemen, killing five soldiers.¹⁶³
- **December 16, 2014:** AQAP launches attack in Radaa. Two simultaneous car bombs kill 31, including 20 schoolgirls.¹⁶⁴
- **December 24, 2014:** AQAP calls for attacks against U.S. airliners in the 13th issue of its English-language magazine, [Inspire](#) [180].¹⁶⁵
- **December 31, 2014:** An AQAP bomb attack kills 26 people in a street celebration.¹⁶⁶
- **January 7, 2015:** Said and Cherif Kouachi attack the offices of French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, killing 12. They claimed to act in the name of AQAP, according to witnesses.¹⁶⁷ On January 14, AQAP officially claims

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responsibility for the attack.¹⁶⁸

- **January 7, 2015:** A car bomb detonates outside a police college in Sanaa, killing 40 and wounding 71. AQAP is suspected.¹⁶⁹
- **January 26, 2015:** AQAP militants attack a military checkpoint in southern Yemen, killing one soldier and wounding two others.¹⁷⁰
- **February 12, 2015:** AQAP fighters seize Yemeni army base located in Yemen's southern province of Shabwa, killing an undetermined number of troops and imprisoning others.¹⁷¹
- **March 2, 2015:** AQAP militants attack a Yemeni army base in Mahfad in the southwestern Abyan province, killing two soldiers.¹⁷²
- **April 2, 2015:** AQAP militants seize the southern city of Mukalla, Yemen's fifth largest city, and free 270 inmates from government security facilities. AQAP governs Mukalla for one year before being expelled.¹⁷³
- **May 2015:** AQAP militants seize control of al Shihr in Yemen's southeastern region of Hadramawt.¹⁷⁴
- **June 16, 2015:** AQAP confirms that its leader Nasir al-Wuhayshi was killed in a U.S. drone strike.¹⁷⁵
- **December 2015:** AQAP fighters take control of Ja'ar and Zinjibar in the southwestern region of Abyan.¹⁷⁶
- **February 2016:** AQAP militants seize five towns throughout Yemen's southern provinces, including Azzan, Habban, Mahfad, Saqra, and Ahwar. On February 4, a U.S. airstrike kills AQAP senior member Jalal Belaidy and two others in the southwestern region of Abyan.¹⁷⁷
- **March 2016:** U.S. airstrikes target major AQAP locations, including its intelligence center and a training camp.¹⁷⁸
- **April 2016:** AQAP suffers territorial losses to UAE forces, including losing control of the group's major port stronghold in Mukalla. On April 26, a U.S. airstrike kills AQAP chief financial officer Hossam al-Zanjibari in Yemen's southwest region of Abyan.¹⁷⁹
- **July 2016:** U.S. airstrikes target AQAP throughout the month.¹⁸⁰
- **August 2016:** AQAP targets Houthi rebels in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa. On August 19, militants kill three Houthi officials in Sanaa. AQAP claims responsibility. The group is targeted by U.S. airstrikes later in the month.¹⁸¹
- **September 2016:** September 2016: AQAP targets Yemeni officials in southern Yemen. On September 1, AQAP militants kill a total of 31 Yemeni Security Belt Forces in Yemen's southwest province of Abyan. On September 4, a U.S. airstrike kills six AQAP militants and wounds one more in southern Yemen.¹⁸²
- **November 8, 2016 - November 17, 2016:** AQAP claims a series of near-daily attacks on Security Belt Forces (SBF) in Yemen's Abyan governorate.¹⁸³
- **January 2017 - February 2017:** AQAP continues to attack Houthi and Saleh-aligned forces across the country, detonating at least two IEDs and using grad rockets to attack rebel positions.¹⁸⁴ A U.S. Navy SEAL is killed in a firefight between U.S. armed forces and AQAP militants in central Yemen on January 29.¹⁸⁵
- **March 31, 2017:** AQAP claims responsibility for the SVBIED attack on a government building in Lahj, southern Yemen, which left 10 people dead, including four civilians.¹⁸⁶
- **April 2017:** Twenty U.S. airstrikes target AQAP militants early in the month, bringing the total number of airstrikes for 2017 to an unprecedented 75. Later in April, AQAP militants assassinate a Houthi commander in Yarim, northern Yemen.¹⁸⁷
- **July 2, 2017:** AQAP releases footage of six attacks on Houthi positions across the Bayda governorate.¹⁸⁸
- **July 16, 2017:** AQAP militants kill five government troops in an attack in the Shabwah governorate. This attack follows

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a series of raids on government checkpoints throughout Yemen.¹⁸⁹

- **July 18, 2017:** AQAP carries out a suicide bombing on a Saudi-backed pro-Hadi military base in Shabwa governorate's Belhaf area.¹⁹⁰
- **August 8, 2017:** AQAP carries out a suicide bomb attack on a Yemeni army camp in Abyan governorate. The terrorist group hit the camp with mortars two days prior.¹⁹¹
- **August 20, 2017:** AQAP claims to have killed 25 Houthi fighters in clashes in Rada'a, Abyan governorate.¹⁹²
- **August 26-29, 2017:** AQAP claims responsibility for four attacks on Houthi fighters in al-Bayda governorate between August 26 and August 29.¹⁹³
- **October 2017:** AQAP carries out two bombings in Handramawt and attacks Houthi and UAE-backed Security Belt Forces in Abyan and al-Bayda on October 4. On October 7, AQAP conducts two separate car bombings targeting Security Belt Forces and rapid intervention forces in Abyan governorate. On October 23, AQAP carries out a raid on UAE-backed forces in Abyan governorate, as well as targeting Houthi fighters in al-Bayda.¹⁹⁴
- **November 2017:** AQAP carries out seven attacks on Security Belt Forces in Abyan governorate between November 15 and November 23 and five attacks on Houthi fighters in Ibb and al-Bayda' governorates between November 18 and November 27, as well as again targeting Security Belt Forces in Abyan.¹⁹⁵
- **December 2017:** AQAP claims nine attacks in Abyan, al-Bayda, and Shabwa governorates between November 30 and December 20. On December 26, AQAP claims five attacks on Elite Forces, Houthi fighters, and Security Belt Forces in Hadramawt, al-Bayda, and Abyan governorates, respectively.¹⁹⁶
- **January 2018:** AQAP wounds 20 Yemeni fighters in a car bombing in Shabwa governorate and detonates two car bombs in al-Bayda targeting Houthi fighters on January 11. On January 22, AQAP targets Security Belt Forces, Houthis, and Elite forces in al-Bayda, Abyan, and Hadramawt governorates.¹⁹⁷
- **February 2018:** On February 13, AQAP conducts a bombing and raid on a Houthi headquarters in al-Bayda governorate. AQAP also carries out four attacks between February 11 and February 19 using explosives, rockets, and "silenced weapons" in Abyan, Ibb, and Hadramawt governorates.¹⁹⁸
- **March 15, 2018:** AQAP captures five Houthi fighters in a raid on Houthi position in Radaa, al-Bayda governorate.¹⁹⁹
- **March 28, 2018:** Twelve UAE-backed fighters are killed, including several who were beheaded, in Mukalla. No group claims responsibility but AQAP is suspected.²⁰⁰
- **April 11, 2018:** AQAP detonates a car bomb in Handramawt killing 10 Houthi fighters.²⁰¹
- **April 23, 2018:** AQAP releases a video of a raid on a UAE-backed Shabwani Elite forces barracks in Ataq, Shabwa governorate.²⁰²
- **May 13, 2018:** AQAP claims five separate attacks on Houthi fighters and UAE-backed Security Belt Forces in al-Bayda and Abyan governorates.²⁰³
- **May 29, 2018:** AQAP releases footage of a rocket attack on a Houthi camp in Handramawt.²⁰⁴
- **June 15, 2018:** AQAP carries out a suicide bombing and raid on Security Belt Forces in Abyan Governorate.²⁰⁵
- **June 26, 2018:** AQAP bombs and ambushes UAE-backed forces in the Shabwa governorate.²⁰⁶
- **July 2, 2018 - July 11, 2018:** AQAP claims it has killed 8 Houthis, including a commander, in the Bayda governorate over the past 10 days.²⁰⁷
- **July 12, 2018:** A recently formed pro-AQAP group has its first clashes with ISIS.²⁰⁸
- **August 3, 2018:** Suspected AQAP members attack a military base of newly recruited Yemeni troops in Abyan. The

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gunmen possessed rocket-propelled grenades. An unconfirmed number of soldiers are killed.²⁰⁹

- **August 4, 2018:** AQAP conducts a suicide bombing on Security Belt Forces in Abyan governorate.²¹⁰
- **February 13, 2019:** Yemeni security forces strike a roadside bomb in Abyan province. Three personnel are killed and several others injured. The bomb was planted to target the newly recruited Yemeni troops backed by the UAE.²¹¹
- **May 3, 2019:** A roadside bomb planted by AQAP detonates in Hadramaut. The blast kills six civilians.²¹²
- **May 4, 2019:** An ISIS militant detonates a bomb in Bayda province. The suicide attack kills four suspected AQAP members.²¹³
- **June 11, 2019:** A security vehicle strikes a roadside bomb in Abyan province. The explosion kills at least three soldiers and injures an additional four. It is suspected that AQAP is responsible for the attack as roadside bombs heavily feature throughout their insurgent strategy.²¹⁴
- **June 18, 2019:** Suspected AQAP gunmen open fire and kill a security member in Hadramout. It is unreported if there were any other casualties or injuries.²¹⁵
- **July 19, 2019:** AQAP members attack a military checkpoint in Abyan. At least five soldiers are killed. The soldiers were newly recruited security forces backed by the United Arab Emirates. It is reported that AQAP has been intensifying their armed attacks against the pro-government Yemeni forces over the past couple of months.²¹⁶
- **August 1, 2019:** A suicide bomber drives his explosive-laden car into a police station in Aden. The attack kills 13 policemen. No one claims responsibility for the attack, although AQAP often uses such attacks to target military bases and police stations.²¹⁷
- **August 2, 2019:** AQAP militants attack the al-Mahfad army base in southern Abyan province. The insurgents killed at least 19 soldiers.²¹⁸
- **August 27, 2019 - September 11, 2019:** According to the Long War Journal, AQAP and Islamic State in Yemen (ISIS-Y) have engaged in more than 29 attacks against one another in Yemen's Qayfa region. The attacks occurred in a period from August 27 through September 11, 2019. AQAP allegedly carried out the majority of the attacks (23 out of the reported 29).²¹⁹
- **November 11, 2019 - April 16, 2020:** A man wielding a knife rushes onto a stage at King Abdullah Park in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The assailant, identified as 33-year-old Yemeni resident Emad Abdelqau al-Mansouri, stabs three performers before being tackled by a security guard. Saudi state TV reports that al-Mansouri acted on an order of a senior leader of AQAP. On December 30, a court in Saudi Arabia finds al-Mansouri guilty of tampering with national security and creating chaos and terror. The court sentences him to death. On April 16, 2020, Saudi Arabia executes al-Mansouri.²²⁰
- **December 6, 2019 - February 02, 2020:** On December 6, a member of the Saudi Air Force goes on a shooting rampage in a classroom building at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola. Armed with a handgun, Second Lt. Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani kills three people and injures eight others. Alshamrani was one of hundreds of military trainees at the base. A sheriff's deputy eventually shoots Alshamrani dead during the attack. On February 2, AQAP releases a posthumous recording from AQAP leader Qasim al-Raymi that claims responsibility for directing the December shooting. The group does not provide evidence of training the gunman, but offers copies of his will and correspondence that indicate his affiliation with AQAP.²²¹
- **April 23, 2020:** AQAP militants ambush a security checkpoint in Abyan province. The attack kills one Yemeni security member and another was kidnapped.²²²
- **August 15, 2020:** AQAP militants shoot Motthar al-Youssoufi in al-Bayda province. They crucify his body and leave it outside a health clinic. The jihadists claimed al-Youssoufi guided U.S. drone strikes against the militants.²²³
- **August 25, 2020:** AQAP militants detonate a bomb in the Soma district of al-Bayda province. The attack destroys a health center where alleged al-Qaeda dissident Mottar al-Youssoufi, was killed and crucified days earlier.²²⁴

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Designations:

Designations by the U.S. Government:



January 19, 2010: The Department of State designates Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act).²²⁵

January 19, 2010: The Department of State designates Said al-Shihri as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²²⁶ He is delisted on November 26, 2014.²²⁷

January 19, 2010: The Department of State designates Nasir al-Wuhayshi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²²⁸ He is delisted on November 17, 2015.²²⁹

May 11, 2010: The Department of State designates Qasim al-Raymi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³⁰

May 11, 2010: The Department of State designates Nayif al-Qahtani as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³¹ He is delisted on June 27, 2013.²³²

July 6, 2010: The Department of the Treasury designates Anwar al-Awlaki as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³³

December 7, 2010: The Department of State designates Fahd Mohamed Ahmed al-Quso as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³⁴ He is delisted on September 26, 2013.²³⁵

July 6, 2010: The Department of State designates Ibrahim Hassan Tali al-Asiri as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³⁶

March 24, 2011: The Department of State designates Ibrahim Hassan Tali Al-Asiri as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³⁷

June 16, 2011: The Department of State designates Othman al-Ghamdi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³⁸

October 7, 2013: The Department of the Treasury designates Muhammed Jamal Abd-al Rahim Ahmad as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²³⁹

December 18, 2013: The Department of the Treasury designates Abd al-Rahman Umayr al-Nuaymi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴⁰

December 18, 2013: The Department of the Treasury designates Abd al-Wahhab Abd Muhammad Abd al-Rahamn Humayqani as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴¹

June 17, 2014: The Department of State designates Shawki Ali Ahmed al-Badani as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴²

July 15, 2014: The Department of State designates Anders Cameroon Ostensvig Dale as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴³

December 18, 2014: The Department of State designates Ibrahim al-Rubaysh as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴⁴

September 29, 2015: The Department of State designates Peter Cherif as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴⁵

January 5, 2017: The Department of State designates Ibrahim al-Banna as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴⁶

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January 4, 2018: The Department of State designates Muhammad al-Ghazali as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴⁷

January 23, 2018: The Department of State designates Khalid Batarfi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).²⁴⁸

Designations by Foreign Governments and Organizations:



United Kingdom—listed Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as an Asset Freeze Target on January 20, 2010.²⁴⁹

United Kingdom—listed Abdul Mohsen Abdallah Ibrahim al Charekh (Sanafi al-Nasr) as an Asset Freeze Target on January 20, 2010.²⁵⁰

United Kingdom—listed Nasir Abd-al-Karim Abdullah al-Wahishi as an Asset Freeze Target on January 20, 2010²⁵¹ and eventually delisted him.²⁵²

United Kingdom—listed Qasim Yahya Mahdi al-Rimi as an Asset Freeze Target on May 26, 2010.²⁵³

United Kingdom—listed Anwar Nasser Abdulla al-Aulaqi as an Asset Freeze Target on July 30, 2010.²⁵⁴

United Kingdom—listed Ibrahim Hassan Tali al-Asiri as an Asset Freeze Target on April 1, 2011.²⁵⁵

United Kingdom—listed Othman Ahmed Othman al-Ghamdi as an Asset Freeze Target on June 27, 2011.²⁵⁶

United Kingdom—listed Muhammad Jamal Abd-al Rahim Ahmad al-Kashif as an Asset Freeze Target on November 5, 2013.²⁵⁷

United Kingdom—listed Abdullah al-Zaidi Ghalib as an Asset Freeze Target on February 25, 2017.²⁵⁸

United Kingdom—listed Salih Salim al-Qaysi Nayif as an Asset Freeze Target on February 25, 2017.²⁵⁹



United Nations—listed Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahri as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on October 6, 2001.²⁶⁰

United Nations—listed Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) under the category "Entities and other groups and undertakings associated with Al Qaida" on January 19, 2010.²⁶¹

United Nations—listed Nasir 'abd-al-Karim 'Abdullah al-Wahishi as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on January 19, 2010.²⁶² He was delisted on October 11, 2016.²⁶³

United Nations—listed Said Ali al-Shihri as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on January 19, 2010.²⁶⁴ He was delisted on March 16, 2015.²⁶⁵

United Nations—listed Qasim Yaha Mahdi al-Rimi as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on May 11, 2010.²⁶⁶

United Nations—listed Anwar Nasser Abdulla al-Aulaqi as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on July 20, 2010.²⁶⁷

AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

United Nations—listed Ibrahim Hassan Tali al-Asiri as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on March 24, 2011.²⁶⁸

United Nations—listed Othman Ahmed Othman al-Ghamdi as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on June 16, 2011.²⁶⁹

United Nations—listed Muhammad Jamal Abd-Al Rahim Ahmad Al-Kashif as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on October 21, 2013.²⁷⁰

United Nations—listed Anders Cameroon Ostensvig Dale as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on September 23, 2014.²⁷¹

United Nations—listed Abd Al-Aziz Aday Zimin al-Fadhil as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on September 21, 2015.²⁷²

United Nations—listed Mu'tassim Yahya 'Ali Al-Rumaysh as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on September 29, 2015.²⁷³

United Nations—listed Peter Cherif as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on September 29, 2015.²⁷⁴

United Nations—listed Ghalib Abdullah Al-Zaidi as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on February 22, 2017.²⁷⁵

United Nations—listed Nayif Salih Salim al-Qaysi as an Individual associated with Al Qaida on February 22, 2017.²⁷⁶



Australia—listed Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as a terrorist organization on November 26, 2010; re-listed in 2013 and 2016.²⁷⁷



Canada—listed Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as a terrorist entity on December 23, 2010.²⁷⁸



Israel—listed Anwar Nasser Abdulla al-Aulaqi as a declared individual.²⁷⁹



European Union—listed Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as an entity associated with the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida organizations on January 19, 2010.²⁸⁰

²²⁵ "Designations of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Senior Leaders," U.S. Department of State, January 19, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143208.htm> [285].

²²⁶ "Designations of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Senior Leaders," U.S. Department of State, January 19, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143208.htm> [285].

²²⁷ "Individuals and Entities Designated by the State Department Under E.O. 13224," U.S. Department of State, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143210.htm> [286].

²²⁸ "Designations of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Senior Leaders," U.S. Department of State, January 19, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143208.htm> [285].

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- ²³⁰ "Designations of AQAP Leaders Qasim Al-Rimi and Nayif Al-Qahtani," U.S. Department of State, May 11, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143206.htm> [39].
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- ²³³ "Treasury Designates Anwar Al-Aulaqi, Key Leader of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabia Peninsula," U.S. Department of the Treasury, July 16, 2010, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg779.aspx> [287].
- ²³⁴ "Secretary of State Designation of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula Operative Fahd Mohammed Ahmed al-Quso," U.S. Department of State, December 7, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/12/152455.htm> [288].
- ²³⁵ "Individuals and Entities Designated by the State Department Under E.O. 13224," U.S. Department of State, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143210.htm> [286].
- ²³⁶ "Department of State's Terrorist Designation of Ibrahim Assan Tali Al-Asiri," U.S. Department of State, March 24, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/03/158911.htm> [289].
- ²³⁷ "Individuals and Entities Designated by the State Department Under E.O. 13224," U.S. Department of State, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143210.htm> [286].
- ²³⁸ "Terrorist Designations of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Operative Othman Al-Ghamdi," U.S. Department of State, June 16, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/06/166288.htm> [290].
- ²³⁹ "Anti-Terrorism Designations," U.S. Department of Treasury, October 7, 2013, <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20131007.aspx> [291].
- ²⁴⁰ "Treasury Designates Al-Qa'ida Supporters in Qatar and Yemen," U.S. Department of the Treasury, December 18, 2013, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2249.aspx> [292].
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- ²⁴⁵ "Individuals and Entities Designated by the State Department Under E.O. 13224," U.S. Department of State, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143210.htm> [286].
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- ²⁴⁷ "Individuals and Entities Designated by the State Department Under E.O. 13224," U.S. Department of State, accessed October 22, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/143210.htm> [286].
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- ²⁴⁹ "CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK," GOV.UK, last modified September 3, 2014, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].
- ²⁵⁰ "CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK," GOV.UK, last modified September 3, 2014, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].
- ²⁵¹ "CONSOLIDATED LIST OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS TARGETS IN THE UK," GOV.UK, last modified September 3, 2014, <http://hmt-sanctions.s3.amazonaws.com/sanctionsconlist.htm> [16].
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AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

Associations:

Ties to Extremist Entities:



ISIS [10]

In August 2014, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula announced its support for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria via Twitter,²⁸¹ and made operative recommendations to ISIS in a statement published on its website.²⁸² Although al-Qaeda distanced itself from the brutal group based in Iraq and Syria, no break has since been reported between al-Qaeda and its affiliate in the Arabian Peninsula as a result of AQAP's support for ISIS. In August 2018, AQAP fought against ISIS in Yemen for the first time in four years. Dr. Gregory Johnsen, member of the U.N. Security Council's Panel of Experts on Yemen, therefore believes that the relationship between AQAP and ISIS has shifted from its previous "tacit non-aggression pact" into a direct conflict with one another.²⁸³ In November 2014, AQAP chief cleric Harith al-Nadhari accused ISIS of "planting... disunity" among Islamic factions fighting in Syria.²⁸⁴ In an official AQAP statement, al-Nadhari criticized ISIS of "extending the caliphate to a number of countries in which [it has] no power." Al-Nadhari's criticism came one week after a November 13 declaration by ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in which Baghdadi claimed the 'caliphate' to have spread to Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt and Qatar.²⁸⁵



Khorasan [304]

Khorasan is a Syria-based al-Qaeda offshoot considered in September 2014 an "imminent threat" to U.S. national security.²⁸⁶ According to then-Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr., "in terms of threat to the homeland, Khorasan may pose as much of a danger as the Islamic State [in Iraq and al-Sham]."²⁸⁷ Khorasan's connection to AQAP runs deep. The U.S. described Khorasan as a "network of seasoned al Qaeda veterans."²⁸⁸ U.S. Representative Adam Schiff (D-CA), a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, indirectly referred to Khorasan as "an unholy mix of people... some who come from AQAP."²⁸⁹ Khorasan has plotted with AQAP members, including chief bomb maker Ibrahim al-Asiri, to plan concealed bombs for terrorist plots against the United States. According to CNN, al-Asiri plotted three strikes against American aviation between 2009 and 2012, after which he was supposedly "transferred" to the Khorasan Group.²⁹⁰

AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)



[Al-Shabab](#) [305]

Al-Shabab is al-Qaeda’s Somali-based branch. According to Somali Foreign Minister Abdisalam Omer, the chaos of the Yemeni insurgency has enabled terrorists and weapons to flow between Yemen and Somalia.²⁹¹ According to Omer, al-Shabab fighters have been able to obtain new weapons and develop tactics from AQAP, including the use of laptop explosives and more destructive car bombs. Ties between AQAP and al-Shabab reportedly existed before the Somali-based group pledged its allegiance to the al-Qaeda network in 2012. In 2010, AQAP deputy leader Said Al Shihri released a statement calling for the two groups to target the United States together.²⁹² U.S. intelligence officers have also claimed AQAP was training al-Shabab fighters and providing them with weapons since 2011.²⁹³



[Taliban](#) [306]

Prior to the September 11, 2001, terror attacks, the Taliban provided al-Qaeda with safe havens in Afghanistan in the 1990s.²⁹⁴ More recently, al-Qaeda leaders have been featured in Taliban propaganda videos. AQAP senior official Sheikh Khalid Bartafi appeared in a Taliban video released in 2016, affirming his support and praise for the Taliban.²⁹⁵

Prominent Leaders:

Abdullah bin Khalid al-Thani

The royal family of Qatar has been tied to al-Qaeda central command as well as its branch in the Arabian Peninsula. Qatar’s former interior minister and royal family member Abdullah bin Khalid al-Thani tipped off the 9/11 attacks mastermind, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, before he could be captured by the U.S.²⁹⁶ In 2010, an arm of the Qatari government made a \$1.2 million donation to help build a Yemeni mosque for Abdel Wahab al-Humayqani, who was already a designated fundraiser for AQAP.²⁹⁷

²⁸¹ “Yemen’s AQAP calls on Islamists to Target America After Iraq Air Strikes,” Reuters, August 14, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/14/us-iraq-security-yemen-idUSKBN0GE2DC20140814> [307].

²⁸² “Yemen’s AQAP calls on Islamists to Target America After Iraq Air Strikes,” Reuters, August 14, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/14/us-iraq-security-yemen-idUSKBN0GE2DC20140814> [307].

²⁸³ Gregory D. Johnsen, “Al-Qaeda and ISIS are on Their Heels in Yemen, But Will Return Unless We Help Build a Lasting Peace,” Just Security, August 7, 2018, <https://www.justsecurity.org/60099/al-qaeda-isis-heels-yemen-return-lasting-peace/> [308].

²⁸⁴ Mike Bruner, “War of Words Between al-Qaeda and ISIS Continues with Scholar’s Smackdown,” NBC News, November 21, 2014, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/war-words-between-al-qaeda-isis-continues-scholars-smackdown-n253676> [309].

²⁸⁵ Zachary Roth and Jane C. Timm, “Admin: Strikes on Khorasan Group Aimed to Avert Imminent Threat,” MSNBC, September 23, 2014, <http://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/us-arab-partners-airstrikes-syria-isis> [310].

²⁸⁶ Zachary Roth and Jane C. Timm, “Admin: Strikes on Khorasan Group Aimed to Avert Imminent Threat,” MSNBC, September 23, 2014, <http://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/us-arab-partners-airstrikes-syria-isis> [310].

²⁸⁷ Mark Mazzetti, Michael S. Schmidt and Ben Hubbard, “U.S. Suspects More Direct Threats Beyond ISIS,” *New York Times*, September 20, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/21/world/middleeast/us-sees-other-more-direct-threats-beyond-isis.html> [311].

²⁸⁸ Mike Levine, James Gordon Meek, Pierre Thomas and Lee Ferran, “What is the Khorasan Group, Targeted in US by Syria?” ABC News, September 23, 2014, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/khorasan-group-targeted-us-syria/story?id=25700467> [312].

²⁸⁹ Ken Dilanian and Eileen Sullivan, “AP Enterprise: al-Qaida’s Syrian Cell Alarms US,” Associated Press, September 13, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/ap-enterprise-al-qaidas-syrian-cell-alarms-us> [313].

²⁹⁰ Paul Cruickshank, “Killing Khorasan Bomb-Maker a Big Win—But at What Cost?” CNN, November 6, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/06/world/meast/syria-strike-bomb-maker/> [314].

²⁹¹ Ty McCormick, “U.S. Attacks Reveal Al-Shabab’s Strength, Not Weakness,” *Foreign Policy*, March 9, 2016,

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<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/09/u-s-attacks-reveal-al-shababs-strength-not-weakness-somalia/> [315].

²⁹² Ty McCormick, "U.S. Attacks Reveal Al-Shabab's Strength, Not Weakness," *Foreign Policy*, March 9, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/09/u-s-attacks-reveal-al-shababs-strength-not-weakness-somalia/> [315].

²⁹³ Brian Bennett, "Al Qaeda's Yemen branch has aided Somalia militants, U.S. says," *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/18/world/la-fg-bin-laden-somalia-20110718> [316].

²⁹⁴ Richard Barrett, Sajjan Gohel, Ronald E. Neumann, and Nigel Inkster, "The al-Qaeda-Taliban Nexus," Council on Foreign Relations, November 25, 2009, <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/al-qaeda-taliban-nexus/p20838> [317].

²⁹⁵ Thomas Joscelyn and Bill Roggio, "Taliban rejects peace talks, emphasizes alliance with al Qaeda in new video," Long War Journal, December 9, 2016, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/12/taliban-rejects-peace-talks-emphasizes-alliance-with-al-qaeda-in-new-video.php> [318].

²⁹⁶ Brian Ross and David Scott, "Qatari Royal Family Linked to Al Qaeda," ABC News, February 7, 2007, <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=129838> [319].

²⁹⁷ David K Kirkpatrick, "Qatar's Support of Islamists Alienates Allies Near and Far," *New York Times*, September 7, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/08/world/middleeast/qatars-support-of-extremists-alienates-allies-near-and-far.html> [320].

AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

Media Coverage:

On Deaths of AQAP Leaders

In covering the death of AQAP's leaders, Al Jazeera tends to direct attention at authorities responsible for the strike.

In its initial reporting of the strike that killed Anwar al-Awlaki and Samir Khan in 2011, Al Jazeera directed its attention at Yemen's Ministry of Defense, which reported on the death "without specifying the date, or the location of [al-Awlaki's] death, or the manner in which he was killed." Simultaneously, the network noted a Reuters report that al-Awlaki was killed in an airstrike that struck two cars in Mareb province in eastern Yemen. The network focused on the perceived incompetency of Yemeni authorities, mentioning that they had announced al-Awlaki's demise in December 2010, only to clarify later that he had not been killed.²⁹⁸

In the aftermath of Said al-Shihri's death in 2013, Al Jazeera's Yemen director, Saeed Thabet, described al-Shihri as a "charismatic personality, [who had] gained great fame, and played an important role in assembling al-Qaeda members."²⁹⁹ Thabet also noted that al-Shihri was number 36 on the Saudi's 85 most wanted list, and that he had been declared [dead] more than once.³⁰⁰

Initial Coverage on AQAP-Driven Attacks on U.S. Soil

After Nidal Hasan's shooting rampage at the Fort Hood U.S. army base on November 6, 2009, Al Jazeera carried a report focusing on "US Islamic groups [that] were bracing themselves for a public backlash against the faith."³⁰¹ The article quoted Salam al-Marayati, executive director of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, who said, "We are concerned about backlash against Muslim Americans, because the culprit happens to be of Arab and apparently Muslim background. As a result, there is probably going to be some scapegoating because of his background against the Muslim American community."³⁰²

Several days later, the network finally reported that U.S. intelligence agencies "first started investigating [Nidal] Hasan in December" 2008 because of his email contact with Anwar al-Awlaki. The article noted that al-Awlaki was the imam at the Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls church, Virginia, "where Hasan worshipped until 2002," and where "two 9/11 hijackers worshipped" as well.³⁰³

Two days after the Christmas Day Bomber incident, Al Jazeera English offered little detail about Abdulmutallab's background, noting only that he was "reported to have claimed he was trained by al-Qaeda in Yemen," and that Abdulmutallab "says that he got the equipment that he allegedly used as the flight was approaching Detroit from contacts in Yemen."³⁰⁴ The next day, the network noted that while investigators were "probing any suspected links" to al-Qaeda, there was "no evidence to suggest any links to a wider plot." The report cited U.S. then-Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, who said, "Right now, we have no indication that [the plot] is part of anything larger."³⁰⁵

In covering the cargo plane bomb plot, Al Jazeera reported that Yemen had arrested a female engineering student suspected of mailing explosives from Sanaa to synagogues in Chicago, but the article did not explicitly connect her to al-Qaeda. The article did note that Yemeni authorities were "engaged in a hunt for al-Qaeda fighters in Yemen, where Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S.-born Muslim religious leader, is named as being linked to the plot."³⁰⁶

Qatar's Al Jazeera

In its initial coverage of AQAP-affiliated attacks on U.S. soil, Al Jazeera downplayed any links to al-Qaeda. When covering the death of AQAP leaders, the network directed attention at authorities responsible for the strike.

AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

Arab Media Examines Legacy, Expresses Sympathy for Said al-Shihri

When AQAP announced the death of its deputy leader, Said al-Shihri, on July 17, 2013, the Saudi outlet *al-Eqtisadiah* uncharacteristically referred to al-Shihri as a “terrorist.” The outlet printed the eulogy given by Ibrahim al-Rubaish, a senior AQAP cleric, which confirmed that al-Shihri was killed by an American drone strike. Like other media reports, *al-Eqtisadiah* noted that Yemeni authorities had declared al-Shihri dead on January 24, saying that he died from injuries sustained in a counter-terrorism operation in November 2012. However, al-Qaeda had not officially confirmed the news.³⁰⁷

In *Al-Hayat*, Walid al-Ahmad wondered about the fate of al-Shihri’s widow in Yemen. Al-Ahmad wrote that while news of al-Shihri’s absence was exciting for people who follow the war on terror, the most interesting question, “especially in Saudi Arabia...[is about] which fate awaits al-Shihri’s Saudi widow, Wafa al-Shihri, who fled to Yemen with her children in 2009, will she remain where she is, or will you see her returning to her homeland?”³⁰⁸ Al-Ahmad wrote that when Abdullah Asiri called to arrange a meeting with Mohamed bin Nayef—the meeting where Asiri tried to assassinate bin Nayef by detonating a bomb in his underwear—Asiri appealed to bin Nayef by relaying a supposed message of despair from Wafa al-Shihri about the living conditions that she and her children faced in Yemen and their yearning to go home.³⁰⁹

Arab Media Focus on Target Specificity in Al-Awlaki Strike

An article in Saudi Arabia’s *al Riyadh* quoted a Yemeni tribal leader in Jouf who said 6 people were killed in the drone strike, including Anwar al-Awlaki, Salim Saleh Oreifej, Mohamed Muhsin al-Na’aj, and Samir Khan. The same tribal leader said the strike occurred around 10:30 a.m. as the men were about to eat a meal “in the desert about 600 meters from house where they were living.”³¹⁰

Al Arabiya’s version of events differed slightly from the tribal leader’s alleged eyewitness account. The network reported that al-Awlaki left his house in a pickup truck, accompanied by two other cars. At “exactly 9:55 [a.m.] Yemen Time” the drone allegedly fired three missiles - aimed only at the car carrying al-Awlaki - exploding it upon impact.³¹¹

Arab Media Report AQAP Connection in Cargo Plane Bomb Plot

Several days after authorities in the UK and Dubai stopped an alleged plot to ship bombs via FedEx from Yemen to locations in the United States, Arab media outlets by and large reported that the plot was likely the work of AQAP.

Saudi Arabia’s *al-Eqtisadiah* compiled reports from Western media outlets. The paper cited a Reuters report that pointed the blame on Saudi citizen and chief AQAP bomb maker Ibrahim al-Asiri. In the same compilation, *al-Eqtisadiah* pulled reports from the French press that al-Asiri was the same bomb maker who manufactured the explosive device used by Christmas Day bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.³¹²

Arab Media Lacks Original Reporting on Times Square Bomber Plot, Intercepted Al-Qaeda Communication

Arab media conducted little original reporting of the attempted Times Square bombing, which was carried out by Faisal Shahzad in May 2010. Many reports attributed their information to U.S. media outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, occasionally reprinting entire articles.³¹³ The initial focus was also on Shahzad’s connections to the Pakistani Taliban, which first claimed responsibility for the attack and then retracted its claim. Articles from the Arab press only began mentioning Shahzad’s connection to Anwar al-Awlaki after several days of reporting.

The day after *Asharq al-Awsat* reported on the bomber’s link to Awlaki, Yemen’s *Mareb Press* carried reporting entirely from *The New York Times* that also discussed how Awlaki may have impacted Shahzad. The article noted that it was “unknown whether Shahzad had met al-Awlaki in Yemen, or was one of [Awlaki’s] followers who communicate with him” through his website. The article then cited that the U.S. military believed it was “not surprising” that Shahzad was influenced by Awlaki because of the cleric’s ability to communicate to jihadists in English.³¹⁴

AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

Mainstream Arab media outlets also provided far less detail than their Western counterparts concerning the intercepted communications between Ayman al-Zawahri, Nasir al-Wuhayshi, and other al-Qaeda leaders. The incident, which led the U.S. to temporarily close 19 embassies and consulates in August 2013, was heavily reported by U.S. outlets. However, most reports in the Arab media were taken straight from Agence France-Presse (AFP) or Reuters.

For example, one of the first stories that *Al Arabiya* ran with any substance on the subject was copied from AFP, briefly mentioning that “intercepts involved some kind of group communication between al-Qaeda supremo Ayman al-Zawahri, and AQAP leader Nasir al-Wahayshi.” The rest of the article focused on claims that al-Qaeda’s “center of gravity is shifting away from its historic base in Pakistan.” The article quoted Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, who highlighted al-Wahishi’s promotion to al-Qaeda’s second in command as an indication that the organization’s “core is expanding.” According to Gartenstein-Ross, “When we talk about al-Qaeda core there’s no reason it can only exist in Afghanistan-Pakistan—[al-Wahishi] being made the general manager, that very clearly makes him part of the core.”³¹⁵

When details about the nature of the intercepted communications actually emerged in late August, Al Jazeera sourced its story from Reuters, AFP, and the Associated Press. That story claimed Yemen’s President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi “revealed” that the U.S. embassies closed because of a conversation in which al-Wahishi told al-Zawahri, “[Y]ou will hear something [that will] change the face of history,” an apparent reference to forthcoming attacks. According to Al Jazeera, al-Wahishi made those comments while holding a meeting with 20 al-Qaeda leaders in Mareb province on July 29.³¹⁶

United Arab Emirates Paper De-Emphasizes Times Square Bomber Link to Al-Qaeda

Writing in the UAE-based paper *The National*, H.A. Hellyer argued that “misjudgments and bad commentary” about the Shahzad case were amplified by mainstream U.S. media. In his article, titled “Shahzad’s Story Doesn’t Fit the Tired Narrative,” Hellyer pointed to how Shahzad came from a “well-to-do family in Pakistan, lived a relatively non-religious life until quite recently and was extremely happy to be in the US” as evidence suggesting that Shahzad was not the stereotypical Muslim “sleeper” waiting patiently “for an opportune time to carry out an attack.” Hellyer expressed skepticism about Shahzad’s purported changes in recent years, saying, “It has been suggested that he was influenced by Awlaki...but that suggestion may be making its rounds on account of the fact that the Obama administration has reportedly authorized al-Awlaki’s assassination.”³¹⁷

Saudi Outlet Asharq al-Awsat Quick to Note AQAP Connection in Western Attacks

On November 11, 2009, *Asharq al-Awsat* highlighted a story from the Associated Press noting Anwar al-Awlaki’s communications with Major Nidal Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter. *Asharq al-Awsat* claimed “Yemeni authorities are now hunting for Anwar al-Awlaki to determine whether he has al-Qaeda ties.” The article mentioned that Hasan had communicated with Awlaki “10 to 20 times over several months” in 2008, pointing out that Awlaki had urged “Muslims around the world to kill U.S. troops,” and that he had been in contact with 9/11 hijackers Khalid al-Midhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi while preaching at a mosque in San Diego.³¹⁸

Asharq al-Awsat was also quick to report the Al-Qaeda link to the Christmas Day Bomber plot. At the same time that Al Jazeera published its first article on the subject, and the day before it published “Jet Bomb ‘Not Part of Larger Plot,’”³¹⁹ *Asharq al-Awsat* featured the headline “Christmas Bomber ‘Trained’ by Al-Qaeda in Yemen,” noting that the “allegations highlight Yemen’s growing centrality” to global terrorism.³²⁰ Citing ABC News and NBC News, the outlet’s reporting on Abdulmutallab was much more explicit about his time in Yemen, citing Abdulmutallab’s allegations that he had contacted a “radical Yemeni cleric [Anwar al-Awlaki] through the internet,” and that he spent “a month at an Al-Qaeda compound north of [Sanaa] and said he was denied permission to leave the site until he completed his training alongside a Saudi Al-Qaeda bombmaker.”³²¹

Although Arab media produced little original reporting on the Times Square Bomber plot, *Asharq al-Awsat* was one of the first Arab publications to run a story on the link between the attempted bomber Faisal Shahzad and American AQAP recruiter Anwar al-Awlaki.

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On May 8, 2010, *Asharq al-Awsat* ran a story noting that Shahzad was impressed by al-Awlaki, though like Nidal Hasan, who carried out the deadly Fort Hood shooting attacks, Shahzad was not in direct contact with al-Qaeda or its leaders. The article claimed that “anger by itself was not enough,” citing al-Awlaki’s calls to target the U.S. as an influence that fixated Shahzad’s thinking.³²² The article pointed out that Awlaki had been in direct contact with both Nidal Hasan and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab before they carried out their respective attacks.³²³

Arab Media:

In covering the 2009 announcement of AQAP’s foundation by its leaders (two of whom were former Guantanamo detainees), Arab media tended not to reference the Guantanamo connection, focusing instead on AQAP’s goals and the environment within which it hoped to achieve success.

The Saudi-owned outlet *Asharq al-Awsat* remarked that Saudi Arabia and Yemen are two countries in the region which have been targeted most by al-Qaeda attacks, despite being among the few countries to have achieved any positive results from non-military means such as their rehabilitation programs. The writer asked what “political or geographic or social environment” al-Qaeda would find in Yemen, and whether Yemen would be a safe haven for the group to launch attacks against neighboring countries.

For perspective on why al-Qaeda chose Yemen and why rehabilitation efforts failed, the outlet interviewed Sheikh Rashad Mohamed Saeed, a former leader of al-Qaeda in Yemen and Afghanistan. Saeed said that recent events “in Gaza and elsewhere, have created a fertile environment” for the group to survive and find new recruits, and they likely relocated to Yemen because the neighboring Gulf countries had better internal security capabilities. As for recidivism from Saudi Arabia’s Counseling program and Yemen’s Intellectual Dialogue, Saeed said that both programs have positive aspects, but “when dialogue comes from an authoritarian, it is not acceptable at all...”³²⁴

New York Daily News and Guardian Quick to Address Al-Qaeda Link to Christmas Day Bomber

The New York Daily News reported with more certainty than *The New York Times* about Abdulmutallab’s affiliations. The *Daily News* described him as an “Al Qaeda-linked terrorist,” and also quoted Representative King as saying, “He’s part of a terrorist nexus.”³²⁵ The article went on to describe Abdulmutallab as a “blood-thirsty extremist,” and described the passenger who subdued him as “heroic.”³²⁶

Just one day later, *The Guardian* began reporting more extensively on Abdulmutallab’s radicalization and potential links to al-Qaeda. The outlet noted that his father may have become concerned about Abdulmutallab and reported him to authorities in the U.S. and Nigeria, while family friends alleged that he became radicalized while studying at the British International School in Lome, Togo.³²⁷ *The Guardian* also highlighted that the U.S. was investigating Abdulmutallab’s ties to Anwar al-Awlaki, the AQAP cleric who “had contacts with Major Nidal Hasan [the Fort Hood shooter]” and also served as the “spiritual adviser to two of the 9/11 hijackers, Khalid al Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, while he was an imam at a mosque in northern Virginia.”³²⁸

The New York Times Wavers on Al-Qaeda Link in Christmas Day Bomber Coverage

In its initial reporting of the attempted bombing of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 over the Atlantic Ocean on Christmas Day 2009, *The New York Times* said that the United States believed it was “an attempted act of terrorism,” but that government “did not yet know whether the man [Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab] had had the capacity to take down the plane.” The paper noted that Abdulmutallab was “apparently in a government law enforcement-intelligence database,” but despite his claims to have been directed by al-Qaeda, the *Times* said it was “not clear what extremist group or individuals he might be linked to.”³²⁹ The paper quoted U.S. Representative Peter King, then-ranking minority member of the House Homeland Security Committee, as saying that, “For a while now we have had real concerns about Al Qaeda or terrorist connections in Nigeria.”³³⁰

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Western Media Addresses Guantanamo Connection in AQAP Founding

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula emerged in late January 2009, as newly elected U.S. President Barack Obama made the planned closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility one of his first executive orders. The timing of the two events was not lost on the Western press, especially after news broke that two of AQAP's founders—Said al-Shihri and Mohamed al-Awfi—were former Guantanamo detainees.

Breaking the news on the same day that Obama signed his executive order, the *New York Times* wrote that al-Shihri's emergence as AQAP's deputy leader "underscored the potential complications in carrying out the executive order" to close Guantanamo within one year. The article hedged its criticism of President Obama's decision by noting that the Pentagon's claim that dozens of former detainees had "returned to the fight" was "difficult to document, and [had] been met with skepticism." Moreover, the paper dismissed concerns that former detainees could assume leadership positions, claiming that "few of the former detainees, if any, [were] thought to have become leaders of a major terrorist organization like Al Qaeda in Yemen..."³³¹

The *Long War Journal* reported the news several days later but focused less attention on the Guantanamo angle of the story. The outlet highlighted recent propaganda from al-Qaeda that focused on Gaza, pointing out that Yemen had already "opened its first camp to receive foreigners to train for jihad in Gaza." Those foreigners would allegedly be "received at al Iman University, headed by Sheik Abdulmajid al Zindani who is designated as a terrorist financier...[and is] a strong ally [of] President Saleh."³³² The report noted bluntly that "Yemen has a troubling history of placating al Qaeda operatives, a history that includes early releases of convicted terrorists, multiple escapes... and outright lying to the US on the status of al Qaeda operatives."³³³

Meanwhile, the *Economist* was more playful in its coverage. The magazine published an article titled "A Nice Safe Haven for Jihadists," writing that with Yemen's government expecting about 100 Yemeni prisoners to return from Guantanamo, "other friends may soon be joining the fighters..."³³⁴ The magazine claimed that Saudi Arabia was AQAP's main target, but that its efforts to regroup outside of the kingdom "may be a sign of weakness rather than strength," and that "even if the danger of a few hundred armed jihadists is real, [Yemeni] locals may well care more about other national plagues..."³³⁵

²⁹⁸ "Al-Yemen Ya'lan Muqatal Al-Awlaki," Al Jazeera, September 30, 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/3528ae8d-5dd8-4684-8f92-7d089d01f732> [321].

²⁹⁹ "Al-Qaeda bi Al-Yemen Ta'alan Muqatal Al-Shihri," Al Jazeera, July 17, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/ee5ebda4-e2a9-41f7-81c7-23916da3ddb8> [322].

³⁰⁰ "Al-Qaeda bi Al-Yemen Ta'alan Muqatal Al-Shihri," Al Jazeera, July 17, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/ee5ebda4-e2a9-41f7-81c7-23916da3ddb8> [322].

³⁰¹ "Muslim Groups Fear Backlash," Al Jazeera English, November 6, 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2009/11/2009116102644523243.html> [323].

³⁰² "Muslim Groups Fear Backlash," Al Jazeera English, November 6, 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2009/11/2009116102644523243.html> [323].

³⁰³ "Military to Try Fort Hood Suspect," Al Jazeera English, November 10, 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2009/11/2009111034348196436.html> [324].

³⁰⁴ "US charges Plane Bombing Suspect," Al Jazeera English, December 27, 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2009/12/20091226204548241893.html> [325].

³⁰⁵ "Jet Bomb 'Not Part of Larger Plot,'" Al Jazeera English, December 28, 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2009/12/200912283820592544.html> [326].

³⁰⁶ "Yemen Makes Bomb-Plot Arrest," Al Jazeera English, October 31, 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/10/2010103017926499781.html> [327].

³⁰⁷ "Al-Qaeda Tu'akid Halak Al-Irhabi Said Al-Shihri fi Al-Yemen," *Al-Eqtisadiyah*, July 17, 2013, http://www.aleqt.com/2013/07/17/article_771082.html [328].

³⁰⁸ Walid Al-Ahmad, "Nihaya Al-Shihri Tu'ajij Al-Tasa'ulat hawla Mustaqbal Armlatihi fi Al-Yemen," *Al-Hayat*, July 19, 2013, <http://www.alhayat.com/OpinionsDetails/534383> [329].

³⁰⁹ Walid Al-Ahmad, "Nihaya Al-Shihri Tu'ajij Al-Tasa'ulat hawla Mustaqbal Armlatihi fi Al-Yemen," *Al-Hayat*, July 19, 2013, <http://www.alhayat.com/OpinionsDetails/534383> [329].

³¹⁰ "Sana'a wa Washinton Tu'akidan Muqatal Anwar Al-Awlaki fi Gara Jawiya," *Al Riyadh*, October 1, 2011, <http://www.alriyadh.com/671505> [330].

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- ³¹¹ “‘Al-Arabiya’ Tukashif Tafasil Al-Daqa’iq Al-Akhira fi Hayat Anwar Al-Awlaki,” Al Arabiya, October 2, 2011, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/10/02/169845.html> [331].
- ³¹² “Asabi’a Al-Itiham Tatajih ‘ila Al-Saudi Ibrahim Hassan Asiri fi Qadiya Al-Turud Al-Mufakhkha Al-Murasila ‘ila Amrika,” *Al-Eqtisadiyah*, October 31, 2010, http://www.aleqt.com/2010/10/31/article_463369.html [332].
- ³¹³ James Baron and Sabrina Tavernise, “Faisal Shahzad Taghayara khilal a’ m. wa Sara Akthar Intiwa’ wa Ashad Tadinan,” *New York Times*, May 7, 2010, <http://classic.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=568520&issueno=11483#.U6oFOLFCyqk> [333].
- ³¹⁴ “Al-Mushtabih fi Qadiya Maidan Times Shahzad Istalhama Afkara mi Al-Awlaki,” *Mareb Press*, May 9, 2010, http://marebpress.net/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=24701 [334].
- ³¹⁵ “Al-Qaeda’s Center of Gravity ‘Shifting’ from Pakistan to Yemen,” Agence France-Presse, August 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2013/08/14/Al-Qaeda-s-center-of-gravity-shifting-from-Pakistan-to-Yemen.html> [335].
- ³¹⁶ “Hadi: Al-Qaeda Kanat Tukhatit ‘li Taghyir Wajh Al-Tarikh,” Al Jazeera, August 24, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/b68dfd0f-609d-4fba-b8b1-ffe9ae0ca752> [336].
- ³¹⁷ Dr. HA Hellyer, “Shahzad’s Story Doesn’t fit the Tired Narrative,” Al Arabiya, May 13, 2010, <http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2010/05/13/108464.html> [337].
- ³¹⁸ “US Imam Wanted in Yemen over Al-Qaeda Suspicions,” *Asharq al-Awsat*, November 11, 2009, <http://www.aawsat.net/2009/11/article55252912> [338].
- ³¹⁹ “Jet bomb ‘not part of larger plot,’” Al Jazeera English, December 28, 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2009/12/200912283820592544.html> [326].
- ³²⁰ “Christmas Bomber ‘Trained’ by al-Qaeda in Yemen,” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, December 27, 2009, <http://www.aawsat.net/2009/12/article55252396> [339].
- ³²¹ “Christmas Bomber ‘Trained’ by Al-Qaeda in Yemen,” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, December 27, 2009, <http://www.aawsat.net/2009/12/article55252396> [339].
- ³²² Mina la-Aribi, “Faisal Shahzad Tatarafuhu Tadrijiyan.. wa ‘Ajaba bi Al-Awlaki,” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, May 8, 2010, <http://classic.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=568623&issueno=11484#.U6ns5LFCxoI> [340].
- ³²³ Mina la-Aribi, “Faisal Shahzad Tatarafuhu Tadrijiyan.. wa ‘Ajaba bi Al-Awlaki,” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, May 8, 2010, <http://classic.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=568623&issueno=11484#.U6ns5LFCxoI> [340].
- ³²⁴ Arafat Mudabish, “Hal Yatahawal Al-Yemen ‘ila Ard ‘Al-Madad’ li ‘Al-Qaeda?’” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, January 30, 2009, <http://classic.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=45&article=504936&issueno=11021#.U6mV9rFCxAg> [341].
- ³²⁵ James Gordon Meek and Rich Schapiro, “Alleged Nigeria Terrorist Umar Farouk Abdulmutall Tries to Explode Northwest Airlines 253 to Detroit,” *New York Daily News*, December 25, 2009, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/alleged-nigeria-terrorist-umar-farouk-abdulmutall-explode-northwest-airlines-253-detroit-article-1.434304> [342].
- ³²⁶ James Gordon Meek and Rich Schapiro, “Alleged Nigeria Terrorist Umar Farouk Abdulmutall Tries to Explode Northwest Airlines 253 to Detroit,” *New York Daily News*, December 25, 2009, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/alleged-nigeria-terrorist-umar-farouk-abdulmutall-explode-northwest-airlines-253-detroit-article-1.434304> [342].
- ³²⁷ Jamie Doward, “Passengers Relive Terror of Flight 253 as New Threat Emerges from Al-Qaida,” *Guardian*, December 26, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/27/abdul-muttalab-flight-253-terrorist-al-qaida> [343].
- ³²⁸ Jamie Doward, “Passengers Relive Terror of Flight 253 as New Threat Emerges from Al-Qaida,” *Guardian*, December 26, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/27/abdul-muttalab-flight-253-terrorist-al-qaida> [343].
- ³²⁹ Anahad O’Connor and Eric Schmitt, “Terror Attempt Seen as Man Tries to Ignite Device on Jet,” *New York Times*, December 25, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/26/us/26plane.html> [344].
- ³³⁰ Anahad O’Connor and Eric Schmitt, “Terror Attempt Seen as Man Tries to Ignite Device on Jet,” *New York Times*, December 25, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/26/us/26plane.html> [344].
- ³³¹ Robert F. Worth, “Freed by the U.S., Saudi becomes a Qaeda Chief,” *New York Times*, January 22, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/23/world/middleeast/23yemen.html> [345].
- ³³² Jane Novak, “Arabian Peninsula Al Qaeda Groups Merge,” *Long War Journal*, January 26, 2009, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/01/arabian_peninsula_al.php [346].
- ³³³ Jane Novak, “Arabian Peninsula Al Qaeda Groups Merge,” *Long War Journal*, January 26, 2009, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/01/arabian_peninsula_al.php [346].
- ³³⁴ “A Nice Safe Haven for Jihadists,” *Economist*, January 29, 2009, <http://www.economist.com/node/13041120> [347].
- ³³⁵ “A Nice Safe Haven for Jihadists,” *Economist*, January 29, 2009, <http://www.economist.com/node/13041120> [347].

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Rhetoric:



[348]

[Qasim al-Raymi, May 7, 2017 \[348\]](#)

Addressing lone jihadists in Western countries: “We don’t view you as an individual – even though it is referred to as Individual Jihad. We rather view you as a group, a brigade, or even an army in itself. A single operation that you execute, we wish we had an army that would carry it out. However, you are that army ...”³³⁶



[349]

[Khalid Batarfi, January 2018 \[349\]](#)

“Groups of Afghan Mujahideen have emerged from the land of Afghans that will destroy the biggest idol and head of kufr of our time, America.”³³⁷



[350]

[Hamza bin Laden, January 2018 \[350\]](#)

Renews his call for Saudi Arabia’s monarchy to be overthrown: “So look—may Allah have mercy on you—how Ibn Saud made himself an obedient representative to the British occupant power, and an agent to it, where he surrendered everything that he can surrender in return for receiving money and weapons from it to fight the allies of the Ottomans. So would it be right after all this for him to become an idol for the Islamic Ummah? [...] Do you know what the Uqair agreements are? They are agreements to rally behind the disbelievers, and to denounce the believers, and to hand over the lands to the Crusaders so that they would occupy it officially yet indirectly. [...] Through this, Ibn Saud terminated his loyalty to the Islamic Ummah outside his borders, and made himself a delegate for the Crusaders and a representative for them.”³³⁸



[351]

[Khalid Batarfi, January 2018 \[351\]](#)

Video entitled “Our Duty Towards Our Jerusalem” in response to U.S. President Donald Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital:

“The Muslims inside the occupied land must kill every Jew, by running him over, or stabbing him, or by using against him any weapon, or by burning their homes.”³³⁹



[352]

[Khalid Batarfi, January 2018 \[352\]](#)

Video entitled “Our Duty Towards Our Jerusalem” in response to U.S. President Donald Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital:

“Let them [Muslims] rise and attack the Jews and the Americans everywhere ... No Muslim has the right to cede Jerusalem no matter what happens ... Only a traitor would give it up or hand it over.”³⁴⁰



[353]

[AQAP’s Inspire Magazine, May 14, 2016 \[353\]](#)

“We will never put down our weapons until we fulfill what Allah wants from us. We are determined to keep fighting and striking Americans with operations by organized jihadi groups by Lone Jihad, and pursuing America in its homeland – by the will of Allah.”³⁴¹

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[354]

[*AQAP statement threatens Saudi Arabia, December 1, 2015*](#) [354]

“We swear to God, our blood will be shed before the blood of our captives, and their pure blood will not dry before we shed the blood of the soldiers of Al Saud [Saudi Arabia]. We will not enjoy life unless we get the necks of the Al Saud rulers.”³⁴²



[355]

[*Ibrahim al-Asiri calls for lone-wolf style attacks in the West, August 5, 2015*](#) [355]

“We urge you to strike America in its own home and beyond. American is first.”³⁴³



[356]

[*Qasim al-Raymi calls for attacks on U.S., July 10, 2015*](#) [356]

“All of you must direct and gather your arrows and swords against [the U.S.]”³⁴⁴



[357]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, AQAP Official, January 2015*](#) [357]

“If he is capable to wage individual jihad in the Western countries that fight Islam... then that is better and more harmful... We have made efforts in external work, and the enemy knows the danger of that... We are preparing and lurking for the enemies of Allah. We incite the believers to do that.”³⁴⁵



[358]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, AQAP Official, January 2015*](#) [358]

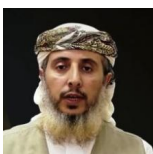
“We have made efforts in external work, and the enemy knows the danger of that... We are preparing and lurking for the enemies of Allah. We incite the believers to do that.”³⁴⁶



[359]

[*AQAP's Inspire Magazine, December 24, 2014*](#) [359]

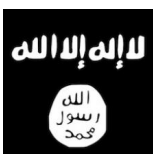
“The first priority and the main focus should be on America, then the United Kingdom, then France... The Lions of Allah who are all over the globe—some call them lone wolves—should know that they are the West's worst nightmare.”³⁴⁷



[360]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, AQAP official, December 2014*](#) [360]

Regarding the American hostage Luke Somers: “We give the American government a timeframe of three days from the issuance of this statement to meet our demands about which they are aware; otherwise, the American hostage held by us will meet his inevitable fate.”³⁴⁸



[361]

[*AQAP statement on ISIS, October 17, 2014*](#) [361]

“We are behind our brothers [ISIS] against this international crusade and we join them in their enmity against this campaign. We confirm the call to whoever is able to hurt the Americans to make an effort to hurt them militarily, economically and through the media. They are the leaders of this war and the base of this campaign.”³⁴⁹

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[362]

[*AQAP statement calling for attacks on Houthi rebels, October 2, 2014*](#) [362]

“Do not leave a checkpoint for them that you do not strike, nor a headquarters that you do not bomb. Lie in wait for them, cause harm to them on the roads, tighten the ambushes for them, and do not let them feel safe.”³⁵⁰



[363]

[*AQAP statement on execution of three suspected U.S. spies, September 1, 2014*](#) [363]

“The greatest help they give to the crusaders against the holy warriors is the placing of trackers for American spy planes.”³⁵¹



[364]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, January 2015*](#) [364]

“Congratulations to you, the Nation of Islam, for this revenge that has soothed our pain. Congratulations to you for these brave men have blown off the dust of disgrace and lit the torch of glory in the darkness of defeat and agony.”³⁵²



[365]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, January 2015*](#) [365]

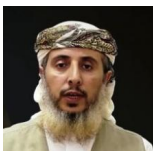
“As for the blessed Battle of Paris, we...claim responsibility for this operation as vengeance for the Messenger of God.”³⁵³



[366]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, January 2015*](#) [366]

“We have warned you before about the consequences of these deeds that your government collude with under the pretext of freedom of press' or 'freedom of ideas'. Sheikh Usama bin Laden warned you before: 'If there is no check on the freedom of your words, then let your heart be open to the freedom of our actions. Stop your insults on our Prophet and sanctities. Stop spilling our blood. Leave our lands. Quit plundering our resources.’”³⁵⁴



[367]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, January 2015*](#) [367]

“There is no doubt that immigration is better than living under the rule of the disbelievers, but one should take into consideration the matter of affliction. Meaning, is it more afflicting for an individual to wage individual jihad in a Western country in which he resides than immigrating for jihad to fight on one of the front lines?”³⁵⁵



[368]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, January 2015*](#) [368]

“If he is capable to wage individual jihad in the Western countries that fight Islam, such as America, Britain, France, Canada and others of the countries that represent the head of disbelief in waging war against Islam, and participate in this Crusader campaign - if he is capable of that then that is better and more harmful.”³⁵⁶

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, December 2014*](#) [369]

Regarding the American hostage Luke Somers: “We give the American government a timeframe of three days from the issuance of this statement to meet our demands about

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[369]

which they are aware; otherwise, the American hostage held by us will meet his inevitable fate.”³⁵⁷



[370]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, November 21, 2014*](#) [370]

Addressing the Houthis: “You have to know that the mosques of Muslims that you blew up along with their homes and schools will not just pass unnoticed and you will pay the price dearly. The account is long and it has not yet been opened. So be prepared to pay for it with your souls and selves. Do you think that your crimes will pass by without judgment or punishment?”³⁵⁸



[371]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, November 2014*](#) [371]

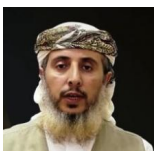
The Houthi rebels are “the coming rifle of America.” Al-Raymi threatens the Houthis with “horrors that will make the hair of young children turn grey.”³⁵⁹



[372]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, November 2014*](#) [372]

“The Houthi rebel takeover of Yemeni provinces is “the delivery from one hand to another, from one agent to another, by the command of the master ... America, under the supervision of their messenger, Ibn Omar [Jamal Benomar, the UN Special Adviser on Yemen.]”³⁶⁰



[373]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, Official AQAP video, September 30, 2014*](#) [373]

“What the Islamic ummah [worldwide community of Muslims] is witnessing today by way of developments in Iraq and Sham is the enabling of Iranian agents running parallel to a fierce war waged on the mujahideen as well as aerial, land, and sea bombardment on our brothers, the mujahideen in the Islamic State and [the Al Nusrah Front] and the other jihadi factions.” (Official AQAP video)³⁶¹



[374]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, Official AQAP video, September 30, 2014*](#) [374]

This is the same plan that is being executed in Yemen by enabling Iranian agents and handing over the capital Sana’a to them without any resistance mentioned from the military.” (Official AQAP video)³⁶²



[375]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, Official AQAP video, September 30, 2014*](#) [375]

“As for the Crusader coalition that has shown its teeth in Iraq and Sham, in the face of this plan and plot the Muslims must forget their differences, unite their efforts, and join their ranks against their Crusader enemy.” (Official AQAP video)³⁶³

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, Official AQAP video, September 30, 2014*](#) [376]

“For we have come to know the main enemy, and America has for decades supported the occupying Jews in Palestine. And American drones bomb Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia,

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[376]

Pakistan, and Yemen. And they have killed mujahideen and their leaders as well as many among the Muslim public, and destroyed houses and terrorized children and women.”

(Official AQAP video)³⁶⁴



[377]

[*Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, Official AQAP video, September 30, 2014*](#) [377]

It must be known that America is the head of the snake,” al Ansi says. “She is the one who mobilizes against the mujahideen and their Islamic project ... and if the head falls, its tails fall as well.” (Official AQAP video)³⁶⁵



[378]

[*Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior AQAP Cleric, Spring 2014*](#) [378]

“And if he does not find any, he will wage Jihad alone wherever he is. Thereupon, America will not only fear the Afghani soldiers, but she will also be haunted by fear wherever her interests are. She will also fear the homegrown Muslims, and even American reverts. Everyone of those will be considered a time bomb which may blow up anytime, during a soccer game, a car race, or in a club.”³⁶⁶



[379]

[*Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior AQAP Cleric, Spring 2014*](#) [379]

“The unmanned drones propel the Jihad against the crusaders. They make the issue clearer to Muslims. They drive them to take on the path of Jihad. While Obama thinks he is killing Al-Qaeda, he is actually building an army which he will fight against eventually.”³⁶⁷



[380]

[*Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior AQAP Cleric, Spring 2014*](#) [380]

“With time Al-Qaeda may disappear. Not that Jihad has ceased, but the whole Ummah will be waging Jihad. Every Muslim will see that it is his obligation to fight with all his power against America. Just like when he hears the adhan [Islamic call to prayer] he makes wudhu (preparation for formal prayers) and goes to the nearest Jama’ah [group of worshippers], if he does not find Jama’ah he prays alone wherever he is. The same way when he hears the call of Jihad against America, he will strive to answer it by joining the nearest Jihadi group.”³⁶⁸



[381]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, March 2014*](#) [381]

“O brothers, the Crusader enemy is still shuffling his papers, so we must remember that we are always fighting the biggest enemy, the leaders of disbelief, and we have to overthrow those leaders, we have to remove the Cross, and the carrier of the Cross is America...”³⁶⁹



[382]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, December 21, 2013*](#) [382]

“[Yemeni ministries] cooperate with the American drones by spying, planting chips, providing information or offering intelligence advice... all these are considered legitimate targets for us. We have a long list of these places, in case they will continue we will continue. We will reach them. Because we defend ourselves... And by the will of the exalted we will reach them before they reach us.”³⁷⁰

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[383]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, December 21, 2013 \[383\]*](#)

“We attacked the ministry, the Minister of Defense Command Centre to be precise. This building is from whence the Unmanned Drone Control Chambers are administered [sic]. The ministry has changed from a ministry claiming to protect the country and citizens to a ministry of distributing tracking chips for the American drones...”³⁷¹



[384]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, December 21, 2013 \[384\]*](#)

“Whatever our sharia commands us we will do. Because we are preachers of sharia and not frauds.”³⁷²



[385]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, June 2, 2013 \[385\]*](#)

“Finally, to the oppressed and subdued in America among the brothers of religion and creed. We encourage you to carry on with this way, be steadfast on this deen. Carry out your obligations, defend your religion and follow in the footsteps of those who supported their religion and ummah whilst they are in their enemy's den.”³⁷³



[386]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, June 2, 2013 \[386\]*](#)

“O American nation, did the war end with the killing of Sheikh Osama bin Laden (may Allah accept him) like you leaders lied unto you? Did the call to fight you end with the killing of Sheikh Anwar al-Awlaki like they exploited your inattention? Did your aggression on Afghanistan, Palestine and other Muslim countries end? Did you annihilate the Jihadi groups that, by the Grace of Allah, have spread everywhere after they have only been in Afghanistan? Today, they are near your homes if not in them.”³⁷⁴



[387]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, June 2, 2013 \[387\]*](#)

“Instead, everyday you will be hit by the unexpected and your leaders can repel nothing! Do not deny when evil befalls you, when you taste a bit of destruction that you inflict on others. Hence, blame none but yourselves. Gulp the bitterness of war, death, destruction and insecurity as other oppressed humans do. The two decade war has not laid down its burden, rather it is at its peak. The war between you and us has not ceased...”³⁷⁵



[388]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, June 2, 2013 \[388\]*](#)

“Is your support for the Jews in Palestine excusable? Is the killing of our children and women in Kabul, Baghdad, Mogadishu and Sanaa excusable? Is meddling in our affairs and installing whomever tyrant agents and lackeys you want who kill and oppress our nation forgivable. And a lot of others including plundering, looting, countless forms of oppression and aggression, do you dare think that after all this you will be salvaged and feel secure? Nay! Wallah! [I swear!]”³⁷⁶



[389]

[*Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, June 2, 2013 \[389\]*](#)

“Your leaders are assaultive, oppressive and tyrannical, and you stand behind them cheering, supporting and voting for them. Do you think anyone will excuse you while your leaders induce you to err, kill Muslims and support whoever kills them just for being a suspect? Then you come about claiming you have the right to defend yourselves! How

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about the aggression which is clear to your fools, and is not denied by your young, will you be excused of?"³⁷⁷



[390]

[Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, June 2, 2013 \[390\]](#)

"O American nation, indeed, your security is not achieved by despoiling other nations' security or by attacking and oppressing them. Your security is achieved by stopping the foolish, who rule you, from oppression and aggression. Know that oppression and aggression rebound on the throats of the perpetrators."³⁷⁸



[391]

[Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior Cleric, Spring 2013 \[391\]](#)

"[I]t is an obligation upon every Muslim to fight in the Way of Allah as per his capability. Whoever is able to join the mujahideen he should join their ranks, if not, he should look around for a head of *kufir* (disbeliever) by which targeting it will restrain the evil might of those who disbelieve."³⁷⁹



[392]

[Qasim al-Raymi, Emir \(leader\) of AQAP, Spring 2013 \[392\]](#)

"The two-decade war has not laid down its burden, rather it is at its peak. The war between you [America] and us has not ceased, we suffer hardships and you suffer too, we are killed as you are killed but we have a hope from Allah (for the reward, i.e. Paradise) that for which you hope not..."³⁸⁰



[393]

[Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior Cleric, Winter 2012 \[393\]](#)

America wanted to deceive its nation by portraying its war as a war against particular individuals so with death of individuals war will ended [sic]. In that way America's administration feel[s] some sort of victory by killing certain individuals. Just like what happened when they killed Shaykh Usama Bin Laden... Those miserable people haven't yet realized that their war is waged against a nation that has principles and fundamentals. These principles gain life in the Muslims' heart when their supporters are martyred for their sake. The clearest of evidence is the long list of the martyred mujahideen that hasn't weaken [sic] jihad. Instead, jihad operations often increase. Shaykh Osama Bin Laden was killed, but did the war against America cease?³⁸¹



[394]

[Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior Cleric, Winter 2012 \[394\]](#)

"America wanted to deceive its nation by portraying its war as a war against particular individuals so with death of individuals war will ended [sic]. In that way America's administration feel[s] some sort of victory by killing certain individuals. Just like what happened when they killed Shaykh Usama Bin Laden... Those miserable people haven't yet realized that their war is waged against a nation that has principles and fundamentals."³⁸²



[395]

[Qaymi al-Raymi, Military Commander, Winter 2012 \[395\]](#)

"O [Kuffar] Americans, we view our battle with you with this divine view: 'Say, do you await for us except one of the two best things [i.e., martyrdom or victory] while we await for you that Allah will afflict you with punishment from Himself or at our hands? So wait; indeed we, along with you, are waiting.' [9:52] Hence, we are a nation that does not surrender. It either dies or prevails. So contemplate and stand with yourselves an honest

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stand, perhaps you are guided to Islam, recognizing it as sovereign over you and give the *jizyah* [tax paid by non-Muslims under sharia law] willingly while you are humbled.”³⁸³



[Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior Cleric, Winter 2012 \[396\]](#)

“[B]y the will of Allah - more of Nidal Hassan and Umar al-Faruq al-Nigiri.”³⁸⁴

[396]



[Said al-Shihri, Former Deputy AQAP Leader, July 2012 \[397\]](#)

“To our brothers in religion, men of Islam, companions on the road in jihad against international Zionist Crusades and their agents on the land of Somalia. Peace and prayers be upon you.”³⁸⁵

[397]



[Said al-Shihri, Former Deputy AQAP Leader, July 2012 \[398\]](#)

“America and its allies [have little left but] to run away from the Muslim lands, leaving with their tails tucked and their traitor agents to taste revenge from Muslims whose dignity has [sic] been abused; and by the hands of Mujahideen by will of Allah.”³⁸⁶

[398]



[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Fall 2011 \[399\]](#)

“There is no difference in ruling between *bayat* (allegiance) and detonating a bomb in a populated center in a nation that is at war with the Muslims. Just as the swords of the companions and those who followed them could not distinguish between man, woman and child and yet were allowed to engage in *bayat*, why should we ban bombings of populated areas in disbelieving countries?”³⁸⁷

[399]



[Samir Khan, Former Senior Media Official, Summer 2011 \[400\]](#)

“Democracy to the Muslims is *shirk* (sin of idolatry in Islam) because, quite frankly, how can anyone vote on whether or not to establish the law of Allah? Allah’s shari’ah is the sole valid law as He says: ‘The rule is for Allah alone’ [12: 67]. The principles of democracy are laid upon what the majority desire. What if the majority are sinful and vote against the shari’ah? Does that mean we abandon shari’ah for man-made laws?... Muslims are required to reject the modern day idol of democracy just as Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, rejected the idols of his time.”³⁸⁸

[400]



[Samir Khan, Former Senior Media Official, Spring 2011 \[401\]](#)

“Today [the Egyptian] people have found themselves in a new dilemma. Sure, the enemy may have left the seat of authority, but you now are faced with a complex interconnection between what is democratically acceptable and what is Islamically acceptable... It is the shari’ah way that will always lead to success in this life and the next no matter the trials.”³⁸⁹

[401]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, February 14, 2011 \[402\]](#)

[On the other hand,] no freedom of expression is afforded those who condemn the crimes

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of the U.S. and its agents, who rule [the world] by disseminating a great illusion called liberty, democracy, and human rights – phrases that are nothing but a cover for taking over the world's resources and treasures, oppressing the people, and depriving them of their rights.”³⁹⁰

[402]



[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, February 14, 2011](#)

[403]

“The U.S. is an empire of vain desires, one which under the guise of liberty permits and spreads every crime, sin, and deviation from proper human nature. The U.S. and the West permit freedom of expression about all forms of apostasy and corruption; they permit everything, except telling a truth that brings shame upon them. The U.S.'s open corruption takes place at the highest level – that is, [at the level of] the president of the U.S. himself, who has approved a law permitting homosexuals to join the military, a matter that demonstrates the level of degeneration to which this people has sunk...”³⁹¹

[403]

[404]

[Adil al-Abab, Former Chief Religious Cleric, Winter 2010](#) [404]

“This is why we target the [Yemeni] soldiers of evil... We target them because their eyes are awake guarding the rule that is the reason behind the violation of the rights of Allah and the rights of the creation. They are the eyes that guard the laws that compete with the laws of Allah and go against the rule of Qur'an. They are the ones guarding the places of disbelief such as the parliament... [The rulers of the Arabian Peninsula] are ruling with laws other than shari'ah and accepting the laws of the disbelievers and changing the laws of Allah and therefore they should be fought against along with their soldiers who are defending them and fighting for them.”³⁹²

[405]

[Adil al-Abab, Former Chief Religious Cleric, Winter 2010](#) [405]

“It is the mujahidin who are fighting America which is supporting Israel and are fighting their way to get through to Israel, and the ones that are standing in the way of the mujahidin and fighting Israel is the Arab states. Allah has blessed the mujahidin from *ahl as-sunnah* to strike rockets at variant times at Israel under the instruction of Shaykh Usama.”³⁹³

[406]

[Adil al-Abab, Former Chief Religious Cleric, Winter 2010](#) [406]

“We target the [Yemeni] soldiers because they are the ones who are protecting the deviant sect of Ismaili's who worship a god other than Allah and participate in rituals of disbelief.”³⁹⁴

[407]

[Adil al-Abab, Former Chief Religious Cleric, Winter 2010](#) [407]

The Jews and the Christians have attacked the Muslim nation in order to suppress their identity, uproot them, violate their honor and steal their wealth.”³⁹⁵

[408]

[Adil al-Abab, Former Chief Religious Cleric, Winter 2010](#) [408]

“We target [the Yemeni soldiers] because they are the ones standing against the establishment of *khilafah* [the Caliphate].”³⁹⁶

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[409]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Winter 2010*](#) [409]

"In the case of the United States, both the government and private citizens should be targeted. America and Americans are the Imam's of *kufr* (disbelievers) in this day and age. The American people who vote for war mongering governments are intent on no good. Anyone who inflicts harm on them in any form is doing a favor to the ummah."³⁹⁷



[410]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Winter 2010*](#) [410]

"The West has been plundering our wealth for centuries. Now is the time for payback. In *Sha'Allah* (God willing), the chickens will come home to roost."³⁹⁸



[411]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Winter 2010*](#) [411]

"In the case of the United States, both the government and private citizens should be targeted. America and Americans are the Imam's of *kufr* in this day and age. The American people who vote for war mongering governments are intent on no good. Anyone who inflicts harm on them in any form is doing a favor to the ummah."³⁹⁹

[412]

[*Adil al-Abab, Former Chief Religious Cleric, Winter 2010*](#) [412]

"The Jews and the Christians have attacked the Muslim nation in order to suppress their identity, uproot them, violate their honor and steal their wealth. When the Muslims stood up to defend themselves, to protect their holy places, and to establish the rule of Allah on land, the armies of tyrants fought against them in the name of the war on terror which is in reality a war on Islam. So can one say that these armies cannot be targeted?"⁴⁰⁰



[413]

[*Ibrahim al-Banna, Former Head of Media, November 2010*](#) [413]

"[T]here is a small band of mujahidin who are putting the nose of America in the dirt even though they do not possess the means that are available to the traitor governments. Dear Muslim hasten to join the ranks of the mujahidin or to form cells to perform operations against the disbelievers in their own land. We are paying back America for only a small portion of what they do to our nation (sic)."⁴⁰¹



[414]

[*Ibrahim al-Banna, Former Head of Media, November 2010*](#) [414]

"The operation of the explosive packages which was performed by the mujahidin of the Arabian Peninsula against the companies of air freight belonging to the disbelieving nations is our right... It is a response to the continuous support to the usurping Jews who are invading Jerusalem and are blockading Gaza."⁴⁰²



[415]

[*Samir Khan, Former Senior Media Official, Fall 2010*](#) [415]

"We pledge to wage jihad for the rest of our lives until either we implant Islam all over the world or meet our Lord as bearers of Islam."⁴⁰³

[*Ibrahim al-Banna, Former Head of Media, Fall 2010*](#) [416]

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[416]

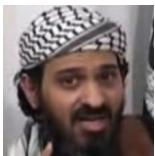
"Jihad is the peak of Islam and the operation that the mujahidin performed on the 11th of September represents a virtuous act. The mujahidin performed their duty against American oppression."⁴⁰⁴



[417]

[*Samir Khan, Former Senior Media Official, Fall 2010*](#) [417]

"After my faith took a 180-degree turn, I knew I could no longer reside in America as a compliant citizen. My beliefs had turned me into a rebel of Washington's imperialism. My faith and convictions gave me strength to lambast the greatest tyrant of our time. It angered and frustrated them, while it left me in a state of peace and joy... Islam requires its domination and after eighty plus years of living in a post-Caliphate world, I would think that it's about time Muslims came together to tear down the obstacles. The most important of these obstacles today is obviously America."⁴⁰⁵



[418]

[*Said al-Shihri, Former Deputy AQAP Leader, August 2010*](#) [418]

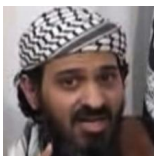
"The Jews and apostates from the rulers of the Peninsula are in an alliance that was set up by America. Iran and their Arab Shi'i supporters in the region are another alliance..."⁴⁰⁶



[419]

[*Said al-Shihri, Former Deputy AQAP Leader, August 2010*](#) [419]

"Know...that the upcoming war is a war against Islam and the Sunni Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula and the Sham [Levant]. Treaties and alliances have been formed for that. The Jews want to build the Temple of Solomon and the state of Israel...The Jews and apostates from the rulers of the Peninsula are in an alliance that was set up by America. Iran and their Arab Shi'i supporters in the region are another alliance... It is expected that the Jews will begin the war against Iran, in which the battlefield will be the Peninsula and its citizens. The Jews are in the Sham and Iran in the Peninsula... [Saudi soldiers] Disavow your support for the tyrant, the agent of the Crusader campaign in the region, which places you in the realm of non-belief..."⁴⁰⁷



[420]

[*Said al-Shihri, Former Deputy AQAP Leader, August 2010*](#) [420]

"Do not turn your guns against Muslims who have rebelled against the tyrant with their tongues, hands, protests and other acts. Aid them, and use your arms against Israel, which is only kilometers away from you, the lights of which can be seen from the al-Haqd region in the north of the Peninsula. Let those of you who are pilots seek martyrdom in the skies of Palestine. Let those of you in the navy aim your weapons at the Jews there, and attain the honor of martyrdom in the cause of God."⁴⁰⁸



[421]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010*](#) [421]

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Allah has blessed us with effective operations against the transgressing Americans and we ask Allah to grant us more... All of the branches of al-Qa'idah have succeeded in powerful operations against the Americans and the latest is the car bomb in New York. The different branches have good competition in fighting the Americans and their allies. All of them want to win the race of destroying the idol (i.e., America) and to have the greatest share in that effort."⁴⁰⁹

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[422]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[422\]*](#)

“All praise is due to Allah, the targeting of Muhammad bin Nayif was part of our effort to purify the Arabian Peninsula from the traitors. He and his ilk are the ones who allowed the Americans to set base in the Peninsula of Islam, playing the role of Abu Ruqal in its worst forms. He is an American in the clothes of an Arab. If it wasn’t for these traitors, the American airplanes wouldn’t have bombed Iraq and Afghanistan from the airports of Kharj and Riyadh and others, and if wasn’t for them, the Jews wouldn’t have remained in Palestine for more than sixty years.”⁴¹⁰



[423]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[423\]*](#)

“All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Allah has blessed us with effective operations against the transgressing Americans and we ask Allah to grant us more... All of the branches of al-Qa’idah have succeeded in powerful operations against the Americans and the latest is the car bomb in New York. The different branches have good competition in fighting the Americans and their allies. All of them want to win the race of destroying the idol (i.e., America) and to have the greatest share in that effort.”⁴¹¹



[424]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[424\]*](#)

“All praise is due to Allah, the targeting of Muhammad bin Nayif was part of our effort to purify the Arabian Peninsula from the traitors. He and his ilk are the ones who allowed the Americans to set base in the Peninsula of Islam, playing the role of Abu Ruqal in its worst forms. He is an American in the clothes of an Arab. If it wasn’t for these traitors, the American airplanes wouldn’t have bombed Iraq and Afghanistan from the airports of Kharj and Riyadh and others, and if wasn’t for them, the Jews wouldn’t have remained in Palestine for more than sixty years.”⁴¹²



[425]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[425\]*](#)

“All praise due to Allah. America is the one forcing us to target it. These heinous crimes which the human soul rejects such as the cartoons of the Messenger and holding celebrations and awarding those who curse the Prophet require us to target the Americans. In fact they require us to wipe them out of the map completely. America is a cancer that needs to be removed along with the West that is supporting this criminal behavior and are banning the niqab of the chaste and pure Muslim women.”⁴¹³



[426]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[426\]*](#)

“Allah will give us victory against [the Americans] and what America awaits in the coming days is greater and worse than what has passed by the will of Allah.”⁴¹⁴



[427]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[427\]*](#)

“The entire Western system is staunchly protecting and promoting the defamation of Muhammad and therefore, it is the entire Western system that is at war with Islam. Assassinations, bombings, and acts of arson are all legitimate forms of revenge against a system that relishes the sacrilege of Islam in the name of freedom.”⁴¹⁵

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[428]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[428\]](#)

“The West has started this war and it will turn colossal. The West is awakening a sleeping giant...”⁴¹⁶



[429]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[429\]](#)

“We, by the will of Allah will not back down from the defense of our beloved. We will fight for him, we will instigate, we will bomb and we will assassinate, and may our mothers be bereaved of us if we do not rise in his defense. It is the honor of the best of creation that is at stake and it is not much to set the world on fire for his sake.”⁴¹⁷



[430]

[Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[430\]](#)

“All praise due to Allah. America is the one forcing us to target it. These heinous crimes which the human soul rejects such as the cartoons of the Messenger and holding celebrations and awarding those who curse the Prophet require us to target the Americans. In fact they require us to wipe them out of the map completely. America is a cancer that needs to be removed along with the West that is supporting this criminal behavior and are banning the *niqab* of the chaste and pure Muslim women.”⁴¹⁸



[431]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[431\]](#)

“Assassinations, bombings, and acts of arson are all legitimate forms of revenge against a system that relishes the sacrilege of Islam in the name of freedom.”⁴¹⁹



[432]

[Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[432\]](#)

“Allah will give us victory against [the Americans] and what America awaits in the coming days is greater and worse than what has passed by the will of Allah: Allah says: (Say: “Do you await for us except one of the two best things [i.e., martyrdom or victory] while we await for you that Allah will afflict you with punishment from Himself or at our hands? So wait; indeed we, along with you, are waiting) [at-Taubah: 52]”⁴²⁰



[433]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[433\]](#)

“The medicine prescribed by the Messenger of Allah is the execution of those involved. A soul that is so debased, as to enjoy the ridicule of the Messenger of Allah, the mercy to mankind; a soul that is so ungrateful towards its Lord that it defames the Prophet of the religion Allah has chosen for his creation does not deserve life, does not deserve to breathe the air created by Allah and enjoy a life provided by Allah. Their proper abode is Hellfire.”⁴²¹



[434]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[434\]](#)

“[T]here were some completely misguided efforts [in response to cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad] such as those of some of the callers to Islam who paid a visit to Denmark along with young Muslim boys and girls to start a dialogue in order to build bridges of understanding between the Muslims and the people of Denmark! It is not enough to have the intention of doing good. One must do good in the proper way. So what

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is the proper solution to this growing campaign of defamation?"⁴²²



[435]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[435\]](#)

"Whenever the [Muhammad cartoon] affair calms down, someone somewhere in the Western world is sure to flare it up again. From 2005 onwards the cycle of offense is unabated. What the West is failing to realize is that these attacks are also serving as a mobilizing factor for the Muslims and are bringing more and more Muslims to the realization that jihad against the West is the only realistic solution for this problem along with a host of other problems that cannot be cured without fighting in the path of Allah."⁴²³



[436]

[Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, Summer 2010 \[436\]](#)

"The U.S.'s open corruption takes place at the highest level—that is, [at the level of] the president of the U.S. himself, who has approved a law permitting homosexuals to join the military, a matter that demonstrates the level of degeneration to which this people has sunk."⁴²⁴



[437]

[Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[437\]](#)

"My advice to my Muslim brothers in the West is to acquire weapons and learn methods of war. They are living in a place where they can cause great harm to the enemy and where they can support the Messenger of Allah. The successful means are through explosive devices and sacrificing souls. That is a more pronounced and successful way of defending him and this is a practice started by the Taliban of Pakistan, Nidal Hassan, and 'Umar al-Faruq, may Allah release them and on this path are men who are coming to you by the will of Allah.

"O Muslims rise up in defense of your Messenger: a man with his knife, a man with his gun, a man with his rifle, a man with his bomb, by learning how to design explosive devices, by burning down forests and buildings, or by running over them with your cars and trucks. The means of harming them are many so seek assistance from Allah and do not be weak and you will find a way. The rights of the Messenger of Allah upon us are great and it is nothing for all of us to die for his sake; may our mothers be bereaved of us if we do not defend him.

"O Muslims you have no excuse in front of Allah except if you fight in defense of his Messenger. If you cannot fight, then you should emigrate from the land where he is being cursed because such a land is awaiting the wrath of Allah. Especially that the Messenger of Allah discouraged living amongst the disbelievers so how about living at ease amongst them when the Messenger of Allah is being attacked and you do nothing to defend him or leave the land where he is being cursed? What will you answer your Lord on the Day of Judgment?"⁴²⁵



[438]

[Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, Summer 2010 \[438\]](#)

"To answer your question on how serious the danger of AQAP is, I say that wherever there are *mujahidin*, there is danger awaiting the disbelievers. The *mujahidin* are one body and if one of them is somewhere you would find fear and terror spreading in that place... My advice to my Muslim brothers in the West is to acquire weapons and learn methods of war. They are living in a place where they can cause great harm to the enemy and where they can support the Messenger of Allah."⁴²⁶

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[439]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, March 2010 \[439\]*](#)

“We seek to apply the rule of Qur’an and make the word of Allah supreme over all other, and God willing, we will strive to achieve these goals with all what we possess, and we will fight to the last man against whoever stands in our way.”⁴²⁷



[440]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, November 9, 2009 \[440\]*](#)

“The U.S. is leading the war against terrorism, which in reality is a war against Islam. Its army is directly invading two Muslim countries and indirectly occupying the rest through its stooges. The heroic act of brother Nidal also shows the dilemma of the Muslim-American community. Increasingly, they are being cornered into taking stances that would either make them betray Islam or betray their nation.”⁴²⁸



[441]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, November 9, 2009 \[441\]*](#)

“Nidal Hasan is a hero. He is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people. Any decent Muslim cannot live, understanding properly his duties towards his Creator and his fellow Muslims, and yet serve as a U.S. soldier.”⁴²⁹



[442]

[*Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior Cleric, October 2009 \[442\]*](#)

“If the Houthis were to win the war against the government, they would then have to deal with the Sunnis on numerous occasions that history will recall. We ask God to allow the defeat of the [Shi’a] rejectionists by the army and vice versa so that the Sunnis prevail.”⁴³⁰



[443]

[*Anwar al-Awlaki, Former Senior AQAP Media Official, February 2009 \[443\]*](#)

“I pray that Allah destroys America and all its allies.”⁴³¹



[444]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, January 2009 \[444\]*](#)

“We must cut the supply routes of the Zionist-Christian Crusaders, and we must kill every Crusader we find in our lands.”⁴³²



[445]

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, January 2009 \[445\]*](#)

“O Muslim nation! You must take a truthful stance in regards to the rulers in the Islamic world. These rulers must either send their armies to Gaza and Baghdad, or they must let the masses march, armed or unarmed, to face the Jews.”⁴³³

[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, January 2009 \[446\]*](#)

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[446]



[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, January 2009*](#) [447]

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[447]



[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, January 2009*](#) [448]

"There is no meaning to life while you see the Jews commit all sorts of atrocities against your brothers, children and women, and then in reaction only fast for day or two or scream our lungs out in protest."⁴³⁶

[448]



[*Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader, January 2009*](#) [449]

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[449]



[*Ibrahim al-Rubaish, Senior Cleric, Date Undetermined*](#) [450]

"Like I said before, if a jihad, for God is willing, is considered to be a threat to the United States, then all Muslims are a threat to the United States. The jihad for one million four hundred years is considered to be a message from Islam to all the Muslims. It is a duty to all Muslims."⁴³⁸

[450]

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