

5 Delivering the Message

The insurgent web is dynamic. Many websites associated with the insurgency exist for a period of time and then vanish, either because hosts remove them, governments block them, or their creators decide to change addresses.

Sunni insurgent groups are in armed conflict with Iraq's central authorities, a large U.S. military force, Shi'ite militias, and, at times, each other. This creates serious obstacles to the maintenance of the brick-and-mortar infrastructure needed to operate traditional print and broadcast outlets. As a result, insurgent groups prefer to use the Internet to deliver their message.

The Internet is more versatile than traditional delivery platforms because it can serve as a vehicle for those platforms in addition to Internet-specific information platforms like websites. A website can be used to deliver a newspaper to Internet users just as easily as it can be used to deliver a radio station or television station. Recognizing the Internet's dual-use potential as a vehicle for both Internet-specific and traditional delivery platforms, this section of the report looks first at Internet-specific insurgent media delivery platforms, and then at more traditional print and broadcast platforms. The division is largely theoretical. In practice, insurgents tend to use the Internet to deliver all of the media products they create, from text to moving images.

5.1 The Internet

Because websites are multilayered, they do not lend themselves naturally to categorization. For example, an organization's official website may contain statements from the organization's leadership, a blog by a member of the organization, and a forum for users to discuss the organization's activities. Nevertheless, we have divided the websites that comprise online Iraqi insurgent media into four broad categories: dedicated websites, sympathetic websites, forums, and blogs. While the divisions are not mutually exclusive, they provide a thumbnail guide to the insurgent media presence on the Internet. Unless otherwise noted, all content on the websites surveyed here is in Arabic.

The insurgent web is not static. Like insurgent groups themselves, which merge, emerge, and

sometimes vanish or break up, websites are dynamic. Many websites associated with the insurgency exist for a period of time and then vanish, either because hosts remove them, governments block them, or their creators decide to change addresses. What is important to note is that no single website ever acts as the sole distribution channel for insurgent materials. All of the media products insurgents and their supporters create appear on numerous websites, and if any single website is blocked or closed, dozens, and sometimes hundreds, of others are available to carry the same materials. The existence of multiple websites to disseminate insurgent media products constitutes a built-in failsafe mechanism, and ensures that while the insurgents' message may not always reach the world through the same distribution channels, some channels always exist to carry it.

This report provides a necessarily static snapshot of the insurgent web. During the writing and publication of the report, changes have taken place in the dynamic world of insurgent and insurgent-affiliated websites. Where possible, we have noted some of these changes. Others will have taken place by the time you are reading this report. Nevertheless, this synchronic overview of websites here, which captures a situation that existed in April/May 2007, is a structurally accurate representation of the diachronic reality of the insurgent web, in which sites shift over time, but a mutable array of dedicated websites, sympathetic websites, forums, and blogs remains to make insurgent materials available to web users.

5.1.1 Insurgent Group Websites

Dedicated insurgent websites openly proclaim their affiliation with a specific insurgent group. By definition, Iraqi insurgent groups do not have an "official" presence in the form of a geographically fixed headquarters. They do, however, have a more or less official identity in the form of a name, logo, leader, and ideological platform (see Section 4.1, Iraqi Insurgent Groups). The dedicated websites they maintain reflect this, even when the sites themselves

disclaim “official” affiliation with a group, as is the case with the website of **ISI/Al-Qaeda**.

Readers should bear in mind that insurgent groups are not static. Existing groups merge and sometimes disappear; new groups appear, as do larger formations consisting of several insurgent groups, such as the **Mujahidin Shura Council** and the newly announced **Front for Jihad and Reform**.¹ The insurgency's Internet presence has reflected these shifts, and will surely continue to do so in the future.

Finally, it is important to remember that a web presence is not the same as a presence on the ground. While some of the most important insurgent groups (see Section 4.1, Iraqi Insurgent Groups) also maintain relatively popular websites—**ISI/Al-Qaeda** and the **IAI**, for example—other groups that appear to be active on the ground do not have dedicated websites (such as **Ansar al-Sunnah**). By the same token, some of the websites detailed below belong to groups that may be largely media creations, with little or no real presence on the ground.

The following websites openly affiliate themselves with known Iraqi insurgent groups and serve as delivery platforms for the media products they create:²

5.1.1.1 Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI)

The website of the **IAI** (www.iaisite.info) contains the following sections³ (see Figure 61):

- A home page with press releases detailing the group's most recent military operations, statements by its leaders and spokesmen, and other media products. Banner logos provide links to two recent films and the

¹ The **IAI**, the Legal Commission of **Ansar Al-Sunnah**, and the **Mujahidin Army** announced the formation of a new front comprising the three groups in early May 2007. Within 24 hours of the announcement, the front had a dedicated website, banner, and logo. As of May 18, the website had only carried three statements by the front, though the three groups continued to release their usual volume of statements and videos on other websites and forums.

² Unless otherwise noted, information on content and functionality was current as of May 14, 2007.

³ Section titles in blue are English translations of the original Arabic section titles on the website.



Figure 61. The website of the Islamic Army in Iraq

latest issue of the group's magazine, *Al-Fursan* (see Section 3.1.2, Periodicals).

- **Official Statements**—contains statements released the previous day.
- **Our Program**—the group's ideological platform.
- **Video Releases**—brings users to the sections of the Al-Boraq forum (www.al-boraq.com) with statements by the **IAI**.
- **Contact Us**—opens a form for submitting e-mail queries and comments.

The website does not have a search function. The link for [Archive of Statements](#) is inactive.

Registration data for the domain [iaisite.info](http://www.iaisite.info) as listed by whois.net:⁴

Domain ID:D13662056-LRMS
Domain Name: IAISITE.INFO
Created On: 03-Jun-2006 21:07:10 UTC
Last Updated On: 12-May-2007 07:06:30 UTC

⁴ Registration data for other sites mentioned in this report can be obtained by entering the domain name into the form available at www.whois.net.

Expiration Date: 03-Jun-2009 21:07:10 UTC
Sponsoring Registrar: Intercosmos Media Group, Inc. (R152-LRMS)
Status: CLIENT DELETE PROHIBITED
Status: CLIENT TRANSFER PROHIBITED
Status: CLIENT UPDATE PROHIBITED
Status: TRANSFER PROHIBITED
Registrant ID: IMG-709656
Registrant Name: ali sultan
Registrant Organization: kabous
Registrant Street1: oman muscat
Registrant Street2:
Registrant Street3:
Registrant City: muscat
Registrant State/Province: quram
Registrant Postal Code: 118
Registrant Country: OM

5.1.1.2 Mujahidin Army in Iraq

The website of the **Mujahidin Army in Iraq** (www.nasrunminallah.net) contains the following sections (see Figure 62):

- A home page with the latest news from Iraq, videotaped military operations, and group statements. The home page also contains a search function, interactive polls, a registration function, and a subscription function to receive e-mailed updates.



Figure 62. The website of the Mujahidin Army

- **Meet Us**—description of the group and its ideological platform.
- **Statements**
- **Video**—downloadable videos of military operations. It contains 11 videos, all dating from 2005.
- **Koran**—downloadable audio recordings of Koranic recitation.
- **Hadith**—utterances by the Prophet Muhammad.
- **Sermons**—downloadable audio recordings of sermons. These focus on jihad, with a number of sermons by Abdallah Azzam, a Palestinian who played a key role in organizing Arab volunteers who fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s.
- **Flashes**—19 downloadable Flash films. The focus is on propaganda materials illustrating the evils of the “occupation” and the sufferings of the Iraqi people. A representative title is *The Cry Of An Iraqi Child*.
- **Images**—actual images are not available.
- **Songs**—downloadable songs glorifying jihad.
- **Contact Us**—an online form for sending messages to the group.
- **Your Comments**—comments from users.

The links to **Printed Materials**, **Articles**, and **Literature** do not work.

5.1.1.3 Islamic Front of Iraqi Resistance: Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi Brigades (JAMI)

The website of the **Islamic Front of Iraqi Resistance: Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi Brigades** (arabic.jaamiiraq.com) contains the following sections (see Figure 63):

- A home page with local and world news, recent statements, articles, videos and images of recent military operations, and downloadable posters.
- **Political Statements**—28 statements dating back to 2004.⁵
- **Military Statements**—87 statements dating back to 2004

⁵ Statistics for this site reflect information current as of late March 2007.



Figure 63. The website of JAMI

- **Videotaped Operations**—201 downloadable videos of military operations.
- **Articles**—28 articles. The most recent is *Poverty And Addiction Threaten Iran*.
- **On the Islamic Legal Grounding of the Resistance**—13 articles. The most recent is *Caution And Preparedness In Jihadist Activity*.
- **Songs of the Brigades**—six downloadable songs, nationalist in form and content.
- **Slogan of the Brigades**—an explanation of the symbolism in the group's logo.
- **Images of Operations**—170 images from the group's military operations.
- **Posters**—40 posters glorifying the group and, more generally, jihad in Iraq.
- **Signatures**—signatures for use by participants in online forums.
- **Send Your Post**—a form for submitting comments to the site.
- **Who We Are**—a short description of the group and its platform, dated December 22, 2006.
- **Contact Us**—online form for sending messages to the group.

All links are functional.

5.1.1.4 Jaysh Abi Bakr al-Siddiq al-Salafi

The website of **Jaysh Abi Bakr al-Siddiq al-Salafi** [Abu Bakr Al-Saddiq Salafist Army] (www.jaishabibaker.net) contains the following sections (see Figure 64):



Figure 64. The website of Jaysh Abi Bakr al-Siddiq al-Salafi

- A home page with lists of the group's **Most Beautiful Videotaped Operations** (18 operations) and **Latest Military Operations** (over 50).
- **Videotaped Operations**—a large archive of downloadable videos, all dating from 2005 and 2006.
- **Military Harvest**—links to **Videotaped Operations**.
- **Military Publications**—video compilations of the group's military operations.
- **Statements**—two statements.
- **Fatwas**—responses to questions. Although the section's title implies that the responses come from a jurist with Islamic legal qualifications, he is not identified.
- **Koran**—selected recitations from the Koran
- **Songs**—11 songs glorifying jihad.
- **Magazine**—three issues of a magazine titled *Echo Of The Mujahidin*.
- **Meet Us**—a brief description of the group and its aims.
- **Contact Us**—online form for sending messages to the group.

As of May 14, 2007, the site was not functional. The web address carried a notice reading "This account has been suspended."

5.1.1.5 Jihadist Brigades of Iraq

The website of the **Jihadist Brigades** (www.iraqiasaeb.org/asaeb2007/) contains the following sections (see Figure 65):

- A home page listing the group's most recent statements on its military operations.
- **Who We Are**—brief description of the group's beliefs and aims.
- **Our Creed**—long article on the group's ideology.
- **Military Statements**—statements issued over the previous four-five days.
- **Videotaped Operations**—17 downloadable videos of military operations.
- **Video Productions**—non-working link to a film titled *Tall Lances*.
- **Political Statements**—two statements, both dating to 2006.
- **The Monthly Harvest**—downloadable reports on previous months' military operations, covers four months of AH 1427 (2006).
- **The Annual Harvest**—a list of military operations carried out in 2005.
- **Articles**—three articles, one on Shi'a and two on the Islamic resistance in Iraq.
- **Audiovisual**—12 jihadist songs.
- **Poetry and Poems**—three poems.
- **Links**—a list of jihadist web resources.
- **Photo Album**

- **Islamic Law of Jihad**—an anonymous article on jihad from the perspective of Islamic law.
- **Fatwas**—three legal rulings, one of them titled *What Is A Spy And What Is The Ruling On Him In Islam*.

The site has a non-working link to an English version. All of the main links are functional.

5.1.1.6 Islamic State of Iraq (ISI/Al-Qaeda)

The website of **ISI/Al-Qaeda** (islamiciraq.modawanat.com) describes itself as a blog and states, "This site is a personal effort and is not the official site of the Islamic State of Iraq." Nevertheless, the "blog" functions for all practical purposes as the official site of **ISI/Al-Qaeda**. It contains the following sections (see Figure 66):

- A home page with recent statements and video productions. As of May 14, 2007, the most recent statement was dated April 20, 2007. Atop the home page are two banner advertisements for films.
- **Archive**—empty, statements on the home page go back only to March 10, 2007.
- **Photo Album**—five images, including the logo of **ISI/Al-Qaeda**.

The website of ISI/Al-Qaeda describes itself as a blog and states, "This site is a personal effort and is not the official site of the Islamic State of Iraq."



Figure 65. The website of the Jihadist Brigades of Iraq



Figure 66. The website of ISI/Al-Qaeda

- **Other Articles**—recent statements by the group.
- Pictures of Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi.

Most links are functional, although the link to additional statements at the bottom of the home page does not work.

The **ISI/Al-Qaeda** site does not have its own domain. It is hosted by modawanati.com, an Arabic-language blog site.

5.1.1.7 Army of the Men of the Naqshibandi Order

The website of the **Army of the Men of the Naqshibandi Order** (www.alnakshabania-army.com) contains the following sections (see Figure 67):

A home page with two videos, an interview with the group's official spokesman, Dr. Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, from *Al-Zawra TV* (see Section 5.2.3, Television), and the group's eighth video release.

- **Our Creed**—article on the group's ideology.
- **Our Jihadist Path**—article on the group's understanding of jihad.
- **Our Army**—description of the group's armed units.
- **Our Jihadist Operations (Videotaped)**—links to 12 videotaped operations.
- **Our Jihadist Operations (Unrecorded)**—blank
- **Statements**—four statements.
- **Photo Library**—86 images from the group's videos.



Figure 67. The website of the Army of the Men of the Naqshibandi Order

- **Audio Materials**—24 files, primarily poetry.
- **Reading Material**—four statements (same as Statements above).
- **Contact Us**—form for submitting queries and comments.

All of the main links are functional except for Snapshots for Cell Phones.

5.1.1.8 Jaysh al-Rashidin

The website of **Jaysh al-Rashidin** [Al-Rashidin Army] (www.theislamsun.com) contains the following sections (see Figure 68):

A home page with a short general article and a link to a film titled *Our Jihad Rebuffs The Ruse Of The Occupiers*.

- **Videos**—links to a large number of videotaped operations.
- **Statements**—operational statements.
- **Jihad**—fatwas on the conduct of jihad.
- **Articles**—three short articles.
- **Spreading the Word and Guidance**—three short articles.
- **Know Your Enemy**—three articles, including a short piece on fabrications by mainstream media.
- **Fatwas and Legal Issues**
- **Contact Us**—a form for submitting queries and comments.

All of the links are functional except for a section called **Between the Lines**.



Figure 68. The website of Jaysh al-Rashidin

5.1.2 Sympathetic Websites

The following websites do not affiliate themselves with specific Sunni insurgent groups but are sympathetic to their cause and sometimes post insurgent media materials as well as original materials based on or inspired by insurgent sources.

5.1.2.1 Albasrah.net (www.albasrah.net)

The section on [Resistance and Liberation](#) reproduces some statements from insurgent groups and links to downloadable videos of their operations against coalition forces. The section is available in Arabic and English, but the Arabic is far more detailed and contains more materials specifically sourced to insurgent groups (see Figure 69).

5.1.2.2 Iraqpatrol.com (www.iraqpatrol.com)

The section [Field of Heroism](#) details insurgent attacks against coalition forces and reproduces statements by insurgent groups claiming responsibility for military operations (see Figure 70).



Figure 69. The website of Albasrah.net

5.1.2.3 Islammemo (www.islammemo.cc)

Although with rare exceptions **Islammemo** pointedly refrains from citing insurgent sources, or even referring to specific insurgent groups, it provides comprehensive coverage of attacks on coalition and Iraqi government forces. The site's hard-line anti-Shi'ite stance fits in with the general ideological profile of most Sunni insurgent groups, and its reports are often posted to forums and message boards that distribute the media products of Iraqi insurgent groups. In mid-April, the site was briefly unavailable; it reappeared in May (see Figure 71).



Figure 70. The website of Iraq Patrol



Figure 71. The website of Islammemo

5.1.3 Forums and Message Boards

Forums are by far the most popular and widespread means of delivering insurgent media products. Forums allow participants to post messages to which other participants can add their responses, making them a lively platform for disseminating insurgent media products and discussing insurgent activity. It should be noted that while discussions sometimes touch on strategy and tactics, participants are aware that forums are a subject of interest for intelligence agencies and researchers, and they generally avoid mentioning operational specifics. Most of the forums listed below are jihadist and pro-Al-Qaeda in their general outlook, although each one has its own focus and flavor. The list is representative but far from exhaustive. All of the forums are in Arabic unless otherwise noted.

5.1.3.1 Al-Tajdeed (www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums)

Al-Tajdeed is primarily a Saudi dissident forum with a jihadist tone (see Figure 72). The focus



Figure 72. The Al-Tajdeed forum

is global, but participants frequently post statements and videos from Iraqi insurgent groups in the forum's section on [Issues of the Muslim Community and Events of the Moment](#). This section contained 36,131 threads and 127,089 posts on May 30, 2007.

5.1.3.2 The Islamic Flaga (Al-Fallujah) Forums (www.al-falaja.com/vb/)

Named after the Iraqi city where U.S. forces battled insurgents, Al-Fallujah's section on [Issues of the Islamic Community](#) features regularly posted materials from insurgent groups (see Figure 73). This section contained 4,037 threads and 14,243 posts on May 30, 2007.

5.1.3.3 Mohajroon (www.mohajroon.com/vb/)

Mohajroon is a password-protected jihadist forum, but the [Statements](#) section is open to all and offers a wealth of insurgent materials updated every few minutes (see Figure 74).



Figure 73. The Al-Fallujah forum



Figure 74. The Statements section of the Mohajroon forum (now defunct)

Internet forums are by far the most popular and widespread means of delivering insurgent media products. They are a lively platform for disseminating products and discussing insurgent activity.

Insurgent statements and other media products are marked with the logos of the groups that produced them. The focus is broader than Iraq, with statements from organizations and groups spanning the globe, but Iraqi insurgent media products are the most numerous. The archive of [Statements from the Mujahidin of Iraq](#) included 11,560 threads and 42,452 posts on April 14, 2007, when the forum announced that it was ceasing operations. It has not been accessible since that date.

5.1.3.4 Al-Firdaws (www.alfirdaws.org/vb/)

The [Statements and Reports](#) section of **Al-Firdaws** provides a stream of constantly updated jihadist media materials, including offerings from Iraqi insurgent groups (see Figure 75). This section contained 6,767 threads and 28,014 posts on May 30, 2007. Like **Mohajroon**, **Al-Firdaws** marks threads relating to a specific group with the group's logo. The forum contains a special archive of materials from the **Al-Sahab** video-production unit (51 threads), as well as a more general archive of media products from jihadist groups (106 threads).

5.1.3.5 Al-Boraq (www.al-boraq.com)

Al-Boraq is yet another extensive, frequently updated clearing house for insurgent materials (see Figure 76). The forum has special sections for posted materials from the **Al-Sahab** and **Al-Furqan** video-production units, as well as the video-production units of **Ansar al-Sunnah**



Figure 75. The Statements and Reports section of the Al-Firdaws forum



Figure 76. The Al-Boraq forum

and the **Mujahidin Shura Council**. The archive of statements contained 6,385 threads and 31,057 posts in mid-May 2007. On May 30, 2007, **Al-Boraq's** original URL became inactive and the site's administrators announced that it would be operating at 12.47.45.102/index.php and al-boraq.org.

5.1.3.6 World News Network (www.w-n-n.com)

World News Network is a message board—viewers cannot post comments. The [Statements, Reports, and Releases](#) section is a comprehensive and constantly updated overview of insurgent products, as well as jihadist media materials from elsewhere in the world (see Figure 77). This section contained 208 pages of statements, with approximately 60 statements per page,



Figure 77. The insurgent statements section of World News Network

on May 30, 2007. **World News Network** has an English section that is updated daily and consists primarily of statements from **ISI/Al-Qaeda**.

5.1.3.7 Al-Nusraah (www.alnusra.net/vb/)

Al-Nusraah has a special section for statements by **ISI/Al-Qaeda** and a general section for **Statements and Releases of the Mujahidin** (see Figure 78). On May 30, 2007, the former had 2,649 threads and 10,068 posts, and the latter 7,783 threads and 24,401 posts.

5.1.3.8 Ana al-Muslim (www.muslim.net/vb/)

Ana al-Muslim's **General** section offers frequent discussions of issues relating to the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, although actual insurgent statements are only posted intermittently to this section (see Figure 79). The forum's overall tone is jihadist and pro-**Al-Qaeda**. On May 30, 2007, the **General** section contained 91,887 threads and 714,961 posts.



Figure 78. Statements from ISI/Al-Qaeda on the Al-Nusraah forum



Figure 79. The general section of the Ana al-Muslim forum

5.1.4 Blogs

5.1.4.1 Albayanat (albayanat.blogspot.com)

The **News of the Mujahidin** blog posts insurgent statements on a daily basis, often with links to downloadable video clips of attacks (see Figure 80).



Figure 80. The News of the Mujahidin blog

Insurgent groups spread their message on the ground in Iraq through leaflets plastered on walls, signposts and in mosques. These leaflets often feature threats or warnings to local residents.

5.2 Print and Broadcast

5.2.1 Print

While the bulk of insurgent text materials are distributed solely on the Internet, some materials are also made available in print form. We present below an overview of insurgent print production.

5.2.1.1 Newspapers

There are no newspapers specifically affiliated with insurgent groups.

5.2.1.2 Leaflets, Pamphlets, and Periodicals

Insurgent groups spread their message on the ground through statements in the form of leaflets plastered on walls, signposts, and in mosques.

Leaflets address a variety of topics and can include threats, warnings, or instructions to

the local population on issues of comportment and the like. For example, the **Ansar Al-Sunnah Army** distributed leaflets in Baghdad's Al-Jadiriya district in fall 2006 warning Sunni Arab university students and Shi'ite students not loyal to the militias to stay away from university campuses, as the army was about to undertake a mission to cleanse campuses of Shi'ite militias (see Figure 81).

Materials obtained by RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq correspondents in Baghdad and Al-Mosul illustrate an important

difference between the statements made available on the Internet and the printed leaflets distributed within Iraq. The former are intended for an international audience and focus on the attacks carried out by insurgent groups and broader ideological issues. The latter are local in focus, as the following four leaflets from Mosul demonstrate:

- An April 5, 2007, leaflet signed by the Islamic Law Ministry of **ISI/Al-Qaeda** informs the residents of three villages outside Mosul that the group has decided to lift a blockade it recently imposed on the area (see Figure 82). The leaflet stresses that the blockade will remain in force on a number of other villages near Mosul.
- A February 31, 2007, leaflet signed by **Ansar al-Sunnah** in Mosul informs residents of Mosul that the group is not responsible for threats issued in its name by telephone and letters (see Figure 83). The group notes that it does not use these means to issue threats and asks residents to inform it, through an e-mail address provided in the leaflet, of those responsible so that it can punish them.



Figure 81. A leaflet distributed by Ansar al-Sunnah in Baghdad in fall 2006



Figure 82. A leaflet distributed by ISI/Al-Qaeda in Mosul in April 2007



Figure 83. A leaflet distributed by Ansar al-Sunnah in Mosul in February 2007

- A December 11, 2006, leaflet from the **Jihadist Truth Brigades** is titled *A Final Warning To Sheep Smugglers* (see Figure 84). The leaflet states that the smuggling of sheep to northern Iraq “and even beyond Iraq” is illegal and drives up prices, disturbing an already unsettled economy.
- An undated leaflet signed by the **Al-Faruq Umar bin al-Khattab Brigades** gives a final warning to the cellular-phone company Asia Cell for “cutting off and weakening the network in certain hotspots where truth strikes falsehood.” The leaflet warns that if Asia Cell fails to improve service in these areas, the brigades will “spill the blood” of Asia Cell employees and blow up its transmission towers (see Figure 85).

The four leaflets are noteworthy for more than their focus on purely local issues. They also illustrate the varied approaches of insurgent groups toward the local population. **Ansar al-Sunnah** leaflet reassures the local population that the group is not the source of unspecified



Figure 84. A leaflet distributed by the Jihadist Truth Brigades in Mosul in December 2006

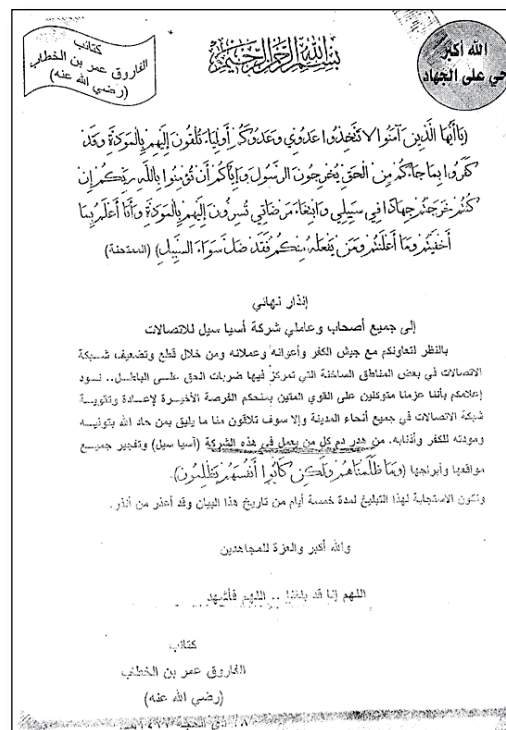


Figure 85. A leaflet distributed by the Al-Faruq Umar bin al-Khattab Brigades

threats, the **Jihadist Truth Brigades** leaflet warns smugglers that they are making life more difficult for other residents by driving up prices, and the **Al-Faruq Brigades** leaflet directs a specific threat to the employees of Asia Cell. The tone adopted by **ISI/Al-Qaeda** is strikingly different. While the leaflet informs residents of three villages that the group is lifting a blockade in order to ease their lives, the statement is imperious. After enumerating the villages that remain under blockade, the text states, “May the world know that we, sons of the Islamic State of Iraq, impose and lift blockades on any region we wish and at any time we wish.”

5.2.2 Radio

There are no known radio stations expressly affiliated with insurgent groups.

5.2.3 Television

5.2.3.1 Al-Zawra (Baghdad)

Al-Zawra is owned by Mish'an al-Juburi, a pro-Ba'athist agitator who once had close ties to Saddam Hussein's son, Uday. Al-Juburi reportedly stole millions from Uday Hussein in the 1990s and joined the opposition, returning to Iraq after the fall of the Hussein regime.

Elected to parliament first in the January 2005 transitional election and later in the December 2005 election for a permanent government, al-Juburi was stripped of his immunity from prosecution in October 2006 amid accusations that he and his son had embezzled millions intended to pay for paramilitary forces to guard pipelines that run from Bayji through the Salah Al-Din Governorate to Baghdad.⁶

It was at this point that Baghdad-based *Al-Zawra* television (see Figure 86), which was launched in November 2005, changed its format from an entertainment channel to a pro-insurgency channel, broadcasting attack videos for the **IAI**, the **Mujahidin Army in Iraq**, **Jaysh**

⁶ For more information, see the *RFE/RL Iraq Report*, February 6, 2006 (<http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2006/02/6-100206.asp>).

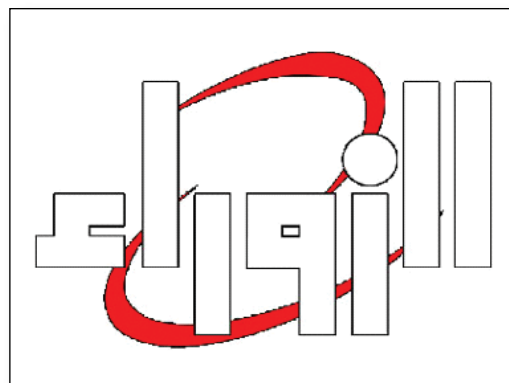


Figure 86. The logo of the Al-Zawra satellite television channel

Al-Rashidin, **Jaysh Al-Fatihin**, the **1920 Revolution Brigades**, the **Naqshibandi Order Army**, and **JAMI**.

Its rhetoric is strongly opposed to the United States, Iran, and pro-Iranian Iraqi Shi'a. The channel also reflects al-Juburi's dislike of **Al-Qaeda in Iraq** and refuses to promote that group's operations or agenda.

Al-Zawra's Baghdad headquarters was closed in November 2006 for inciting violence following the Iraqi Tribunal's handing down of a death sentence against Saddam Hussein. The channel was back on the air in a matter of days via the satellite transmitter Nilesat. Al-Juburi has claimed in interviews that *Al-Zawra* still broadcasts from Iraq using a mobile satellite truck.

Rumors as to *Al-Zawra's* location have abounded (Cairo, Irbil, Damascus, Paris, and even the Sunni imam Harith al-Dari's house) but none have been proven.

According to the U.S. State Department's *2006 Country Report On Human Rights Practices For Iraq*, the Iraqi government in November recommended the continued closure of *Al-Zawra* “as well as a lawsuit against the owners and managers for airing training videos on how to build explosive devices, promoting calls to join terrorists and insurgent groups, and promoting killings and genocide against a large segment of the populace.”

Egyptian authorities briefly stopped Nilesat from broadcasting *Al-Zawra* in late 2006 and closed down broadcasts altogether in February 2007; the channel continues to be broadcast via Arabsat.

5.2.3.2 *Al-Rafidayn*

The *Al-Rafidayn*⁷ satellite channel is based in Cairo and broadcasts via Nilesat transmitters. Billed as an “independent” channel, *Al-Rafidayn* supports the Sunni Arab “resistance” and acts as the mouthpiece for the Muslim Scholars Association and its head, Harith al-Dari. The channel is critical of the United States and the Iraqi government, as well as Iranian interference in Iraq.

The channel reflects in its interviews and reporting the relationship between the Muslim Scholars Association and certain Shi’a critical of the U.S. and Iraqi governments including Ayatollah Jawad al-Khalisi.

Although the channel’s staff has not been accused by the Iraqi government of inciting Iraqis to violence, they report on incendiary issues in a highly provocative fashion. For example, in January 2007, the channel ran a statement by the Muslim Scholars Association calling on former Iraqi Army commanders to prepare to liberate Iraq from the “occupation.”

A frequent participant in *Al-Rafidayn*’s political talk shows is Iraqi pro-insurgent “political analyst” and former Ba’athist Nizar al-Samarra’i, who regularly touts the achievements of the “resistance” and the defeat of the U.S. project in Iraq.

Al-Rafidayn also reports frequently on the operations of the insurgent group **IAI**.

5.2.3.3 *Al-Jazeera*

The Doha-based, pan-Arab satellite channel has been an avid supporter of insurgents in Iraq since 2003. *Al-Jazeera* devotes part of its daily

news coverage to Iraqi and **Al-Qaeda** insurgents through its broadcast of statements and videos by armed groups, as well as interviews with Sunni Arab insurgent leaders in Iraq. On April 11, 2007, *Al-Jazeera* conducted an hour-long interview with the spokesman for the **IAI**. In May 13, 2007, news broadcasts, *Al-Jazeera* covered an **ISI/Al-Qaeda** claim that it had captured three U.S. soldiers, played a tape by the **Mujahidin Army** showing the destruction of a U.S. Army Humvee, and detailed a statement by three insurgent groups blaming **Al-Qaeda** for the deaths of 12 of their field commanders.

5.2.3.4 *Al-Firdaws (Caliphate Voice Channel)*

Announced with considerable fanfare in a January 20, 2007, press release, the *Caliphate Voice Channel* (Sawt al-Khilafa in Arabic; the station’s logo identifies it as CVC) was conceived as an online television station to broadcast jihadist propaganda materials. According to the schedule included with the initial press release (see Figure 87), CVC broadcast a variety of jihadist materials, including “Selections



الأحد والاثنين (9-10 محرم)			
1- إعادة (خطاب) لغير الأول	1- إعادة جهاد أكاديمي (الجهاد)	1- إعادة (غامدون) لبيك	1- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)
2- مختارات عمليات جهادية (العراق)	2- مختارات عمليات جهادية (العراق)		2- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)
الثلاثاء والأربعاء (11-12 محرم)			
1- مختارات عمليات جهادية (أفغانستان)	1- مختارات عمليات جهادية (أفغانستان)	1- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	1- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)
2- عودة التاريخ (جانب)	2- عودة التاريخ (جانب)	2- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	2- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)
الخميس والخمسة (13-14 محرم)			
1- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	1- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	1- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	1- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)
2- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	2- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	2- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)	2- تأسيس لله (عدد الفراري)

Figure 87. The broadcast schedule of the online Caliphate Voice Channel

7 A reference to Iraq’s two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates.

of Jihadist Operations (Iraq)” and films by insurgent groups such as the **Mujahidin Army**, **Ansar al-Sunnah**, and the **IAI**. At present, CVC is no longer operating at the web address listed in the January 20, 2007, press release.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 Reach and Impact

The reach of Iraqi insurgent media is global and seeks to promulgate a message that the resistance is conquering occupation forces in Iraq. **ISI/Al-Qaeda** has by far the largest reach and impact on would-be foreign fighters and its supporters, in part because of its ideology, which espouses a localized version of global jihad. The impact of its message across the Arab world can be seen in the numbers of Saudis, Egyptians, and Palestinians viewing their materials online (see Figure 88). It is also evidenced in the nationalities of foreign fighters detained in Iraq, with Palestinians being the exception, as they cannot easily travel and have not been found in large numbers in detention. It should also be noted that Syrian access to the Internet is heavily controlled by the state, and the number of Syrians viewing insurgent web pages is difficult to measure.

While it is impossible to gauge the full reach of the websites that distribute insurgent materials without access to internal administrative

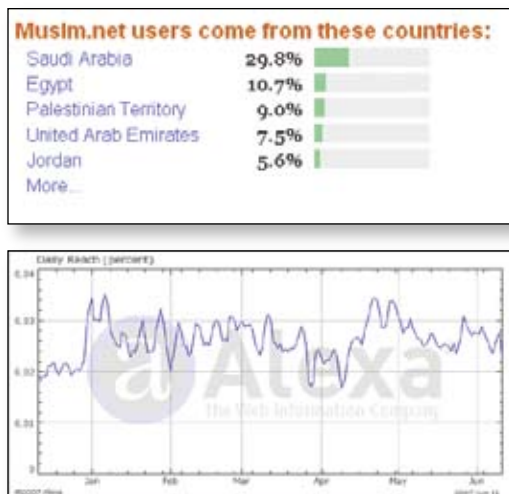


Figure 88. Materials from alexa.com showing the reach of the Ana al-Muslim forum (expressed as the percentage of all Internet users who visit the site) and a geographical breakdown of visitors



Figure 89. A graph from alexa.com comparing the reach of the Ana al-Muslim forum and the website of the leading Arabic-language daily Al-Hayat

information, rough data obtained from alexa.com provide a general guide. As the accompanying graphs show, the most popular websites carrying insurgent and pro-insurgent materials are equal, and in some cases superior, in reach to many mainstream Arab media sites (see Figure 89).

ISI/Al-Qaeda operates a sophisticated media machine that is more polished than those of homegrown insurgent groups. This could be due to a variety of factors, including its ability to make use of foreign financial support and professional graphic designers. They are able to outsource more easily than home-grown insurgent groups, who are more likely to rely on support staff located inside Iraq. Nevertheless, all insurgent groups have their own media units responsible for promoting the groups' activities.

Home-grown insurgents are concerned primarily with the struggle for power within Iraq and do not see themselves as part of a larger, let alone global, movement (see Section 6.3, Message and Ideology). Nevertheless, their Internet-based media products reach a global audience and shape perceptions in the Arab world. While home-grown groups do not have a policy of recruiting foreign fighters, they may receive financial support from abroad—from the Iraqi diaspora or from sympathizers in other Arab countries—and their media efforts would only benefit such activities.

The reach of the Iraqi insurgent media is global and seeks to promulgate a message that the resistance is conquering occupation forces in Iraq.

5.3.2 The Amplification Effect

There are a variety of means for amplifying the insurgent message. Materials posted to insurgent group homepages are regularly picked up and posted to broader forums. A message or video posted to one forum is then reposted to other forums, thereby amplifying the message to potentially thousands of Internet users (see Figure 90). From there, mainstream Arab media access the materials and use them in their print and broadcast reports. For example, *Al-Jazeera* often runs video clips from insurgent attacks in its newscasts.

In an April 11, 2007, interview with the spokesman for the **IAI**, *Al-Jazeera* showcased the infamous *Sniper Of Baghdad* video both in the lead-in to the interview and preceding and following commercial breaks (see Figure 91). On May 13, 2007, a typical broadcast day, *Al-Jazeera* news coverage included an **ISI/Al-Qaeda** claim that it had captured three U.S. soldiers, a tape by the **Mujahidin Army** showing the destruction of a U.S. Army Humvee, and a statement by three insurgent groups blaming

Al-Qaeda for the deaths of 12 of their field commanders.

Mainstream Arab dailies also serve to amplify the message of the Sunni insurgency by using insurgent press releases and statements as the basis for their coverage of events in Iraq. The release of a particularly graphic video, such as **ISI/Al-Qaeda's** recorded execution of 20 employees of the Interior and Defense ministries, is often treated as an event in and of itself. Among leading Arabic-language newspapers, *Al-Quds al-Arabi* stands out for its sympathetic coverage of the insurgency and corresponding use of insurgent materials. The Saudi-owned dailies *Al-Hayat* and *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* also refer to insurgent sources and materials but make a greater effort to distance themselves from the subject matter.

Additionally, individual supporters offer compilation videos pieced together from material widely available on the Internet, showcasing images such as attacks on U.S. and Iraqi forces, training camps, classes for insurgents, and armed insurgent presences on the street. Such images seek to convey a message that the insurgency is robust, active, and on the move in Iraq.

Insurgent media hope to create an “amplification effect” by targeting professionals in the mainstream Arabic-language media, the people who follow and report on the activities of insurgents in Iraq.



Figure 90. Following the trail, from the ISI/Al-Qaeda website to a forum to a newspaper website to *Al-Jazeera*



Figure 91. *Al-Jazeera* interviews IAI spokesman Ibrahim al-Shammari; note the obscured face and IAI website address