



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

A Centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Monthly Informatics Report

Developments in the Central Asia Websites

February 2011

Introduction

This report provides an analysis of significant developments and trends of the Central Asian online extremist websites and communities during the month of February 2011. For the purpose of this report, extremist or jihadi websites refer to websites propagating violence, or have members affiliated to terrorist organizations.

Summary of Significant Developments

- The media production house of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), *Jundullah* studio, posted the song version of the poem “Why you do not cry?” written by the Islamist media-reporter Hayrulla Hamidov, who was imprisoned in Uzbekistan in the year 2010.
- The news portraying the success of the fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) appeared in an English video-footage “Glad Tidings in Pakistan” posted on the websites of **furqon.com** and **furqon.info**.
- IMU released a short video entitled “The topic of *Mujahid*” in Russian language which condemns governments of Russia and Central Asian States for ‘their oppression against Muslims.’

Explanation of Sources

Uzbek language Websites

The Central Asian language Islamist extremist websites selected for monitoring contain important messages targeted at the general public. Among the many websites monitored by the ICPVTR Central Asian Informatics Team, are the ones manned by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU is a transnational terrorist organization which pursues the goal to establish a Caliphate in Central Asia. Since its emergence in 1998, this organization has been cooperating with Taliban and Al-Qaeda. The scope of IMU's online propaganda is relatively wide in comparison to the Islamist extremist websites run by North Caucasian extremists and it is focused not only on the region of Central Asia but on the "global *jihād*" as propagated by Al Qaeda.

This report covers two major Islamist extremist websites – **furqon.com** and **furqon.info**. Both are run by the Jundullah studio, the media wing of IMU. The **furqon.com** was created by the IMU on 31 March 2008 with an aim to propagate the use of violence that they describe to be *jihād*, and to disseminate the group's messages to potential adherents and the general public. The website contains a myriad of materials on the Islamist extremist ideology in the forms of religious brochures, poems by the organization's self-dedicated *mujahidin*, audio-messages, lectures, videos, photos with descriptions, animations and declarations. IMU does not provide operational tactical guides - bomb making, cyber warfare or combat training manuals. It however shows real-life and training scenes in which *mujahidin* in general demonstrate their operational capabilities to organize ambush, grenade, mine and hit-and-run attacks, make explosive devices for martyrdom operations and so on. On 17 September 2010, Jundullah established its second website under another domain - **furqon.info**, claiming that some states had been attempting to block their website. This report examines the online extremist activities of Central Asian extremists. The focus here is the latest trends in *Jundullah*'s recruitment-oriented propaganda on the two major websites as well as its new tactics to distribute its video and audio messages.

**Full URL of sources gathered will not be disclosed in this report.*

User Statistics

Data on the country distribution of visitors to furqon.info and furqon.com is not available in alexa.com.¹ Nevertheless, the website indicates a 48 % increase of the individuals who searched for word *furqon.com* in this month. These two websites, which contain the same materials, have been chosen because of the bulk of articles selected from them for this month's report.

www.furqon.com and www.furqon.info

Percentage of a site's total visitor access from a given country:

Data not available on Alexa.com

Increasing appeals to the Muslims of Central Asia and Russia

In February 2011, the IMU media wing, Jundullah, posted three important products on its websites: "Why you do not cry" (audio-song in Uzbek), "Glad Tidings from Pakistan" (English version of a documentary on IMU operations from September to December 2010) and "The topic of the *Mujahid*" (video in Russian).

Firstly, the product which was posted in early February 2011 is designed to garner moral support for Hayrulla Hamidov, a well-known journalist, soccer commentator and the mediator of several religious radio programmes in Uzbekistan. His poetic appeals towards 'Uzbek Muslims'

¹ www.alexacom.com is a web information company that provides traffic data and rankings for websites

have aroused intense discussions on a myriad of foreign news websites on Central Asia, including youtube.com, since his imprisonment in May 2010 on charges with establishing an extremist organization in Uzbekistan. By highlighting the “tortures by the Central Asian governments against Muslims” the song tries to ignite anti-government hatred in its audience.

Another release from the *Jundullah* studio “The Glad Tidings from Pakistan” is the English version of a documentary in German released late January 2011. The footages are about the operations of the IMU against the Pakistani troops in FATA from August to December 2010. The video features include selective scenes of combat operations (ambushes, grenade and rocket attacks) of the IMU fighters in collaboration with Pakistani Taliban in South Waziristan. The appeal of the video is in the emotive effect it generates through the providence of a list of the *mujahidin* who were killed during this period as a result of counter-terrorism operations of ISAF forces in Afghanistan and military operations of Pakistani Army in South Waziristan.

“The topic of the *Mujahid*” posted on 27 February 2011 is the latest video released by the organization. This 13-minute Russian language video features the former leaders and current fighters of the organization who elaborate on the reasons as to why they wage *jihad* and sacrifice themselves. Several IMU fighters by turns claim that the “infidels were arresting Muslims, raping their women and killing their children” and so on. The *mujahidin* repeatedly urge the ‘Muslims to take revenge for the sake of the Islamic community through joining the ranks of IMU’.

In general, the IMU website postings throughout February 2011 were in parallel with its anti-government propaganda campaign under its new leadership who are in attempt to speculate over the arrests of religiously radical individuals and groups in Central Asia.