



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

June 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 June 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 Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) posted 100 photographs from training scenes of its members in unidentified location in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas of Pakistan.
- Several poems and videos related to Islamist militancy were observed in the IMU manned online sites in the month of June 2011.

Explanation of Sources

Central Asian languages Websites

Central Asian language websites used in this report refer to Islamist extremist websites utilizing the Uzbek and Russian languages. The Central Asian languages 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) and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). Both are transnational terrorist organizations which pursue the goal of establishing a Caliphate in Central Asia. Since its emergence in 1998, IMU 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. In turn, IJU operates in line with Al-Qaeda's aspirations and its propaganda is oriented towards the West – Turkey and European countries.

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 web-site. This report examines the online extremist activities of Central Asian extremists.

**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 These two websites 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

Demonstrating Military Potential With the Use of Photographs

In early June 2011, The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) posted 100 photographs of its members training in an unidentified location in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas of Pakistan. The trainees consist of ten adults and four young boys. All of them are dressed in similar military uniforms and head-masks. The training process comprises of making grenades, bombs, and tossing them towards supposed targets, conducting group attacks on supposedly Pakistani and US outposts, improving skills at organizing ambush attacks and shooting rocket propelled grenades (RPG), mortars, firearms (mostly Kalashnikovs). The training also included other lessons on weaponry handling. The organization also claimed that it had produced its own weaponry manuals in the Uzbek language and are effectively using GPS navigators..

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

Videos and Poetry

Several poems and videos related to Islamist militancy were observed in the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) manned online sites in the month of June 2011. The IMU continued its online literary tradition of appealing to its audience by posting three Uzbek-language poems composed by Yusuf, a militant from Osh, southern Kyrgyzstan, namely “Do not surrender”, “I tried to find ...”, and “I desire martyrdom”. Through his Uzbek poems the poet explicitly calls on the “Muslims to activate their jihadist potential and set off for martyrdom”.

In a new video released by Jundullah, the media wing of IMU, a German wing of the movement also appealed to their fellow citizens to follow the martyrdom path of German Abdulla H. In the video, Yassin Chouka, well-known for his production of videos, appeals to German nationals on issues of martyrdom and speculated over the death of Abdulla H.. Abdulla became the first jihadist born into a family of Afghan immigrants in Germany.

For the first time, Jundullah also produced a Russian-language video on women. It features two wives/daughters of the Tatar members of IMU who encouraged their “Muslim sisters to strive for martyrdom by all means at their disposal”. The ladies sought to convince the audience about “the righteousness of the Muslims” and “brutality of the infidels”. At the end of the video, these two heavily-veiled young ladies show their capability of shooting guns and pistols.

Another video produced by Jundullah , Part VI of “In Tribal Areas” includes a journey by several IMU personnel into the central market of Miranshah city, North Waziristan of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It shows their interest in purchasing some necessary items – books, medicine, and food at the shops. The militants clearly demonstrate how they can walk overtly in the market while carrying guns. The highlight of the market tour is a visit to the weapons store which is highly recommended by the militants for its accessibility, cheap prices and availability of weapons, military uniforms and clothes. The video is corresponded by old audio recordings of Takhir Yuldash, former IMU Emir, regarding “the necessity of being armed for the Muslims who set off for *jihad*”.

IMU also posted the third part of “Mujahid’s topic”, a Russian-language video-series. In the video, two IMU fighters – Abdulhakim and Bilal, came up with conspicuous insinuations about “the scourges of God against the infidels and undefeatable potency of the Muslims”. Mostly basing their religious interpretations on ancient Jewish-Arabic epic stories, the two took turns making examples about the punishments from God against all non-Muslims at the present time – floods, earthquakes, diseases, and other non-traditional threats to humanity.

IMU's increasing online-propaganda focus on a potential Russian-speaking audience highlights the continuing interest of IMU in expanding its geographical ambitions towards vulnerable regions of the Russian Federation from which the movement has recruited dozens of individuals over recent years.