



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

May 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 May 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

- Following the death of Osama Bin Laden in early May 2011, the media production house of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jundullah studio, released two statements on the death of Osama Bin Laden, Al-Qaeda leader. In the first statement Abdul Fattakh Ahmadiy, the IMU spokesperson, speculated that Osama Bin Laden had not been killed by the United States. In the other longer statement, Asadullo Urganchiy, one of IMU's leading militants, also elaborated on the impossibility of the killing of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistani city of Abbottabad while illustrating him as the leading jihadist of the world as well as the previous friend of Tahir Yuldash, ex-IMU Emir. Jundullah also posted a special biographical video-film and photo slides dedicated to Osama Bin Laden.
- At the end of May 2011, Jundullah released the second part of "Mujahid's topic", a Russian-language propagandistic video series. In this video, Abdulhakim, the IMU's leading Tatar fighter, and Abdulshakur, another militant from Uzbekistan, sought to explain the reasons justifying the *jihad* of the organization against "infidel countries" in the West and East. The speakers touched upon the topics such as the use of official Islam versus *Shariah* and highlighted "the threat from nuclear powers against the Muslims".

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, 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

Osama Bin Laden for IMU: Loss of ex-Emir's friend

Following the first news on the death of Osama Bin Laden on 2 May 2011, Jundullah studio released a statement on behalf of Abdul Fattakh Ahmadiy, the IMU spokesperson, who put forward three hypotheses: the Al-Qaeda leader was most probably killed in another place and another time rather than the US government announced it; Al-Qaeda leader could not be killed without the awareness of Pakistani government; and this news once again assured that the IMU had chosen right track by conducting a parallel *jihad* against the United States, NATO, Afghan government, as well as against the Pakistani authorities.

After Al-Qaeda leadership confirmed the death of its leader on 6 May 2011, the IMU released a special biographical video documentary throughout which Osama Bin Laden was given a creed of the leading *muhajir* in the world. At the same time, Jundullah issued photo slides on Osama Bin Laden and a text of the statement by "Qaidat al-Jihad" (Al-Qaeda in Iraq) about the death of Al-Qaeda leader translated into Uzbek. Following it, Jundullah released another text-statement by Asadullo Urganchiy, one of IMU's leading figures. In this

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

lengthy appeal to the co-religionists entitled “Let’s not lose our esteem”, the militant also approached the death of Osama Bin Laden on similar points as Abdul Fattah Ahmadiy did, particularly the “impossibility of obtaining the evidence of his corpse”. Giving the emphasis on the previous close fraternity between Osama Bin Laden and Tahir Yuldash, the IMU ex-leader, he sought to justify the one-year silence of the organization’s militants following the killing of their founding Emir in September 2009. At the same time, Asadullo Urganchiy urged the *ummah* to keep conducting *jihad* for the sake of its own esteem and respect of all the Muslims.

IMU concerned about “Anti-Muslim nuclear threat and pro-government Islam”

In late May 2011, Jundullah released the second part of its Russian-language video series entitled “Mujahid’s topic”. In the video, Abdulhakim, the IMU’s leading Tatar fighter, continues to act as the main commentator. This time he sought to speculate on “the discord the infidel countries sow amongst the Muslims once upon a time united under one Caliphate”. Underpinning his suppositions by short arguments of Tahir Yuldash, its killed leader, Abdulhakim tries to convince the audience that “the Western infidel countries are still manifesting their anti-Muslim destructiveness”. In line with above propaganda, Abdulshakur, IMU’s another militant from Uzbekistan, further goes explaining that the infidel countries are supporting pro-Western and pro-governmental Islam and clerics to subdue Islamic nations. The video later illustrates some nuclear countries, particularly the US and Russia, as “the countries who are using their weaponry as a part of their terror against the Umma”.

In general, the IMU efforts in May 2011 were directed on using the unexpected death of Osama Bin Laden to the advantage of its propagandistic campaign by exhibiting several lengthy statements and video-audio and photo materials. Through those assertive appeals the IMU militants once again sought to channel their voice towards its audience amongst the population of Central Asian and other Turkic and Slavic speaking states of former Soviet Union. These postings by Jundullah studio also confirms the strong indications of counterinsurgency observers that the IMU had been disconnected with the core leadership of Al-Qaeda Central since 2002. Through these online publications the IMU has also apparently signaled Islamist financial donors and potential supporters in Central Asia and beyond it about its continuing commitment to *jihad* business.