



Appendix B – Statement of Reasons – Ansar al-Islam

(Also known as: **Ansar al-Islam Army, Ansar al-Sunna, Army of Ansar al-Islam, Devotees of Islam, Followers of Islam in Kurdistan, Jaish Ansar al-Islam, Jaish Ansar al-Sunna, Jund al-Islam, Kurdish Taliban, Kurdistan Supporters of Islam, Partisans of Islam, Protectors of Islam, Protectors of the Sunni Faith, Soldiers of Islam, Soldiers of God, Supporters of Islam in Kurdistan**)

The following information is based on publicly available details about Ansar al-Islam (AAI). To the Australian Government's knowledge, these details are accurate and reliable and have been corroborated by classified information.

Basis for listing a terrorist organisation

Division 102 of the *Criminal Code* provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied on reasonable grounds that the organisation:

- (a) is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (b) advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

Details of the organisation

AAI is a Sunni Islamist militant group that operates mainly in the Kurdish areas in the north-west region of Iraq. It originally emerged from several smaller Kurdish Sunni extremist groups active within the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. AAI was first proscribed on 27 March 2003, and was last re-listed as a proscribed group on 17 March 2009.

AAI was formed in 2001 when Abdallah al Shafi'I, leader of the Jund al Islam (Soldiers of Islam) group, merged his force with Mullah Krekar's splinter faction of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan. Mullah Krekar emerged as the spiritual leader of AAI while Abdallah al Shafi'I was appointed the military commander. Al Shafi'I was captured by Iraqi and United States (US) forces on 3 May 2010.

AAI is aligned ideologically with al-Qa'ida and aims to expel foreign forces from Iraq, minimise the influence of Iraq's Shia and Kurdish populations and establish an Islamic caliphate administered under Sharia Law. Al Shafi'I trained at an al-Qa'ida training camp in Afghanistan and was said to have close ties to Usama bin Laden and al-Qa'ida. When captured by Iraqi and US forces on 3 May 2010, al Shafi'I also admitted to carrying out joint operations with al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI). AAI does not have the capability to overthrow the Iraqi Government. However, it continues to pose a significant threat to security, particularly in the north of the country.

Counter-terrorism operations against AAI and AQI eventually may force the groups to cooperate on a more regular basis in preparing for and conducting attacks to maintain their respective capabilities.

It is unknown who will take, or has taken, the place of al Shafi'I as military leader of AAI following his capture. For his part, as at August 2011 Mullah Krekar remains in Norway after having been deported there by the Netherlands in 2003. Krekar is not in custody in Norway and under Norwegian law he cannot be deported to Iraq as he would face prosecution, with the possibility of receiving the death penalty. Despite his remote location, Krekar remains a spiritual leader for AAI.

AAI's area of operation and influence is predominately in the north-west of Iraq, including in Baghdad, and the provinces of al-Anbar, Salah ad-Din and Diyala.

AAI also maintains a presence in Mosul and Kirkuk and these cities are used as staging grounds for attacks against Kurdish interests in Arbil and Sulaymaniyah. Arrests and weapons seizures made throughout 2009 and 2010 against AAI have eroded its overall capability to conduct attacks in Iraq. Nevertheless, it is still capable of conducting attacks against foreign forces, Iraqi security forces and Kurdish targets.

AAI is predominately comprised of Iraqis, some of whom are former intelligence and security personnel. However, AAI’s ranks also include a number of Sunni Arab foreign fighters – predominately Yemenis and Saudis.

Locally, AAI receives funds from donations from local sheikhs and former Ba’athist officials and conducts criminal acts to raise funds. AAI also receives donations from the Iraqi diaspora around the world, particularly in Jordan, Turkey and Europe and from AAI associates in Syria. It also is possible that AAI receives monetary support from al-Qa’ida and al-Qa’ida in Iraq (AQI) given the links between its leadership and these groups. Some reporting also indicates that AAI receives support from Iran via the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

Terrorist activity of the organisation

AAI plans and conducts attacks against foreign forces, Shia, Kurdish and Iraqi government interests. AAI’s attacks most commonly target US and Iraqi security forces using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Indirect Fire (IDF) attacks.

Directly or indirectly engaged in the doing of terrorist acts

Below is a list of attacks for which AAI has indicated responsibility by posting a video or media statement since AAI’s last re-listing in 2009. Except where noted, the dates of these attacks and the veracity of AAI’s claims are unknown. However, AAI is believed to be behind attacks that occur against US and Iraqi troops in the group’s area of operation:

- 12 July 2011: AAI claimed responsibility for a car bombing that killed two Iraqi government officials in Baghdad on 17 June 2011;

- 14 May 2011: AAI's media unit released a video showcasing a number of the group's recent attacks against Iraqi security forces, referring to them as "agents of the United States in its 'proxy war' on Iraq";
- 11 April 2011: AAI claimed responsibility for the 22 March 2011 assassination of an Iraqi Army officer in a car bomb attack in Baghdad;
- 28 March 2011: AAI released a video of two fighters recounting events from a clash with American soldiers in Kirkuk province;
- 8 December 2010: AAI released a video showing the group's fighters launching an ambush on Iraqi forces in Samarra;
- 30 November 2010: AAI released a video showing the group's fighters firing a mortar shell at a US military base in Samarra;
- 23 November 2010: AAI released a video showing an IED attack against a US vehicle;
- 10 November 2010: AAI released a video showing an IED attack against a US vehicle in Mosul;
- 20 October 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack against an Iraqi Army vehicle in Mosul;
- 14 October 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military patrol;
- 30 July 2010: AAI released a video of a mortar strike on al-Bakr Airbase;
- 26 July 2010: AAI released a video claiming damage to an Iraqi troop carrier in Mosul;
- 12 June 2010: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US base in Kirkuk;
- 3 June 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack against an Iraqi military vehicle in Mosul. AAI claimed this attack killed Iraqi military personnel;
- 18 May 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US vehicle in Mosul;
- 9 May 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack against an Iraqi police vehicle in Mosul;
- 28 April 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Kirkuk;
- 4 April 2010: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US military base in Kirkuk;
- 18 March 2010: AAI released a video of an attack against an Iraqi troop transport vehicle in Mosul. AAI claimed this attack caused deaths and injuries of Iraqi soldiers;
- 12 March 2010: AAI released a video of a rocket attack against a US military vehicle in Diyala province;
- 3 March 2010: AAI released a video of an attack against a US military vehicle in Tikrit which AAI claims killed US soldiers;
- 14 February 2010: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US military base in Balad;
- 11 February 2010: AAI released a video showing a raid on Iraqi soldiers in Kirkuk. An unknown number of Iraqi soldiers were killed and injured in this attack;
- 5 February 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Mosul;

- 25 January 2010: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against an Iraqi military facility in Samarra;
- 11 January 2010: AAI released a video of an IED attack on an Iraqi police vehicle in Anbar province;
- 3 September 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US base in Baghdad;
- 28 August 2009: AAI released a video of a thermal grenade attack against a US military vehicle in Mosul;
- 7 August 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US military base in Baghdad;
- 1 August 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US base in Yusifiyah;
- 25 July 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Tikrit;
- 20 July 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against US military barracks in Kirkuk;
- 12 July 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Tikrit. AAI claimed that all of the occupants of the vehicle were killed or injured;
- 6 July 2009: AAI released a video of a bombing against a US patrol in Kirkuk province which possibly took place on 21 May 2009. AAI reported two US soldiers were killed and one injured in this attack;
- 27 June 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Huweija;
- 29 June 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Tikrit;
- 20 June 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Diyala province. AAI reported all military personnel in the vehicle were killed in this attack;
- 14 June 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US military base in Mosul;
- 9 June 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Salah ad-Din province;
- 3 June 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against US military vehicles in an area south of Baghdad;
- 27 May 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Huweija;
- 20 May 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against an Iraqi National Guard vehicle in Diyala;
- 17 May 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Mosul;
- 5 May 2009: AAI released a video of a guided rocket attack against a US military vehicle in Huweija. AAI claimed the US military personnel onboard were killed and injured in this attack;
- 23-26 April 2009: AAI released four videos claiming attacks against a US airbase with rockets and against US military patrols using ambush, IEDs and a

minesweeper in the Mosul area between 4 and 18 April 2009. AAI indicated a number of US military personnel were killed in the attacks;

- 18 April 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Baghdad;
- 12 April 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Fallujah;
- 8 April 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US military base west of Baghdad;
- 3 March 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Huweija. AAI said this attack took place in a large market;
- 24 February 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against an Iraqi security force vehicle in Diyala;
- 23 February 2009: AAI claimed responsibility for an attack on a US aircraft in Ninawa province;
- 17 February 2009: AAI claimed responsibility for an attack on a security officer working for the Kurdish Intelligence Agency, Asayesh, with a sticking bomb placed on the officer's vehicle;
- 11 February 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against a US military base in Yusufiyah;
- 7 February 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against an Iraqi National Guard vehicle in Kirkuk. AAI indicated in the video that this attack caused an unknown number of deaths and casualties;
- 22 January 2009: AAI released a video of an IED attack against a US military vehicle in Salah ad-Din province;
- 3 January 2009: AAI released a video of an IDF attack against 'enemy barracks' in Kirkuk. AAI indicated that the 'enemy' suffered casualties in this attack.

Advocating the doing of terrorist acts

AAI has released a number of statements that advocate violent jihad and encourage Muslims to participate.

- 2 August 2011: AAI released a statement for the holy month of Ramadan rallying its fighters for jihad, saying Sunnis must show 'one's faith and get closer to Allah with the sword and the blood'.
- 11 April 2011: AAI released a statement congratulating the al-Qa'ida-affiliated Sunni umbrella group, Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), for the 29 March 2011 raid on the Tikrit provincial council building. The statement praises the ISI attackers, asserting 'legitimate vengeance is one of the greatest ways to get closer to Allah' and predicting that 'this style of fighting will have great achievement in the near future'.
- 7 January 2011: AAI released a statement threatening the Arab Summit that was scheduled to be held in Baghdad in March 2011. The AAI leadership called upon all jihadist factions in Iraq to strike those who give legitimacy to the Iraqi government, and declared, 'every Arab political or commercial title in Iraq is considered to be a military target for the mujahideen'.

- 14 November 2010: AAI released a statement rallying fighters, scholars and Muslims in general for jihad. AAI urged every Muslim to ‘embrace the call to fight’ and instructed its fighters to wage a ‘war of attrition’ by implementing ‘constant distracting and focused attacks’ against the enemy.
- 20 October 2010: AAI released a 16-page document assuring fighters of inevitable victory in Afghanistan, Iraq and other battlefields.
- 19 August 2010: The Military Council of AAI released a statement for the holy month of Ramadan rallying its fighters for jihad. The group instructed its fighters to escalate their calls for jihad, to intensify guerrilla warfare and ‘exhaust’ remaining military and paramilitary forces allied with the US.
- 22 June 2010: AAI released a media statement that denounced recent arrests of Muslims in Kurdistan and threatened violence against ‘the Kurdish secularists’ should all those detained not be released and ‘unjust campaigns and media slander against Muslims’ and preachers not be stopped.
- 21 March 2010: AAI released a video on the seventh anniversary of the war in Iraq, claiming that Britain masterminded the war to provide for Israel’s security in the region and that Britain implicated the US in the war. Anti-British and US rhetoric is a feature of this video and AAI reaffirmed its desire to establish an Islamic state, through violence if necessary.
- 3 January 2010: AAI released a statement that urged the Sunni population of Samarra not to sell their land, particularly to non-Sunnis, and expressed AAI’s belief that Samarra land may be ‘swallowed by its Shia neighbours if it does not resist its advances’. AAI indicated in this statement that all ‘individuals who are loyalists to the subordinated and act as facilitators for them and their actions, and who penetrated the city of Samarra’ are easy targets for AAI.
- 30 November 2009: AAI released a statement that encouraged Muslims to commit to violent jihad as a religious duty.
- 27 November 2009: Al-Shafi’I released a media statement addressed to scholars and the general Sunni Muslim population of Samarra that said the US policy on the Middle East ‘will not bring any agent of change that is authentic and effective, one that can be counted on even by governments that have been set up on Muslims in the region’. Al-Shafi’I renewed AAI’s commitments and urged other groups and scholars to commit to jihad and the pursuit of Islamic dominance.
- 21 November 2009: AAI released a media statement that urged the mujahideen to aim their attacks against ‘the enemy’ and not fight one another.
- 14 November 2009: AAI released a 16-page document critical of the democratic processes in Iraq and discouraged Iraqis against promoting and working in electoral campaigns and participating in the elections, arguing that such is a form of ‘supporting the enemy’.
- 27 October 2009: AAI released a eulogy for Baitullah Mehsud, former leader of Tehrik-i-Talibani Pakistan. In this eulogy, AAI encouraged the Mujahedeen to continue their fight despite the death of their leader.
- 20 September 2009: AAI released a media statement that urged extremists to ‘hold steadfast to their principles and to jihad and to demonstrate that their generation is not stagnant, but moving in accordance with Sharia’.
- 21 August 2009: AAI released a video of an operation against US forces in Diyala, calling it a ‘Ramadan gift’.

Conclusion

ASIO assesses AAI continues to directly and indirectly engage in preparing, planning, assisting in, advocating and fostering the doing of acts involving threats to human life and serious damage to property. This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources, as well as by terrorist acts conducted by AAI.

In the course of pursuing its objectives in Iraq, AAI is known to have committed or threatened action:

- with the intention of advancing AAI's political, religious or ideological causes;
- that causes, or could cause, serious damage to property, the death of persons or endanger a person's life; and
- with the intention of creating a serious risk to the safety of sections of the public globally.

Other relevant information

Since January 2009 AAI has exhibited links to, expressed support for, or received verbal support from al-Qa'ida Senior Leadership (AQSL), AQI, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Tehrik-e-Taliban.

- AAI is reported to have cooperated with AQI, and AAI's leadership has links to AQSL. On 27 October 2009, AQSL figure Abu Yahya al-Libi appeared in an al-Qa'ida media statement and recommended that the Islamic State of Iraq and AAI unite and make concessions to each other for that purpose. Following the deaths of Abu-Umar al-Baghdadi and Abu-Hamzah al-Muhajir, the respective Leader and Deputy Leader of the ISI, AAI released a statement of condolences for their deaths, ideologically supported the ISI, and encouraged AAI to follow their lead. Libi again called for unity between AQI and AAI in a video statement released on 15 June 2010. On 28 April 2009 AQIM expressed condolences for the deaths of ISI leaders and urged AAI to unite with the ISI as 'the best move with which you can infuriate the enemies of the faith'. On 16 June 2010, AAI released a statement that offered condolences for the death of al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan general head Mustafa Abu Al-Yazid and reaffirmed its commitment to violent jihad.

AAI is listed on the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of the US, UK, New Zealand and Canada.

