



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

National Security
Law and Policy Division

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20 May 2009

Mr Robert Little
Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Little

I refer to the Hearing of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security of 14 May 2009 for the re-listing of Ansar al-Islam, Asbat al-Ansar (AAA), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Islamic Army of Aden (IAA), Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code.

During the Hearing the Committee asked a number of questions of the Attorney-General's Department and provided some follow-up questions.

The Committee requested copies of the non-public Statements of Reasons prepared by ASIO. For the Committee's information, copies are **attached** to this letter. In future there will no longer be two different versions of Statements of Reasons for future listings.

The Committee also requested additional information regarding some of the particulars of the Statements of Reasons. This information appears below.

Responses to Committee Questions

- 1. Why was the Committee provided with different statements of reasons to that ASIO provided to the Attorney-General's Department?*
- 2. Why was the Attorney-General's Department unaware that the Committee had received an altered version of the statements of reasons?*

ASIO provides the Attorney-Generals' Department with both a public and non-public version of each Statement of Reasons. In the past the Attorney-General's Department has provided the Committee with a non-public version of the Statement of Reasons. On this occasion there was confusion about the procedure and the Committee was only sent the public version of the Statement of Reasons.

Why did the Attorney-General's Department have no knowledge of ASIO's holding of intelligence and information that served to corroborate the open source information provided in the statements of reasons?

The Attorney-General's Department is well aware that ASIO collects and holds intelligence and information that corroborates the open source information provided in the statements of reasons. The Attorney-General's Department is not aware of the *particular* intelligence and information that is used to corroborate open source information provided in particular statements of reasons as this is a matter for ASIO

Additional information – particulars of Statements of Reasons

In response to a request of the Committee, ASIO has provided a transcript of the interview with Khalid Abd-al-Nabi, the leader of the Islamic Army of Aden (IAA), a copy of which is **attached**. ASIO has also provided information from the US Department of State website regarding the US Terrorist Exclusion List, on which the IAA appears, and the Foreign Terrorist Organisations List, which does not mention the IAA. This information is **attached** and outlines the operation of the different lists however we are unable to comment on why a group would appear on one and not the other as this is an internal matter for US agencies.

In relation to a Committee question regarding the reasons for the decision of the Attorney-General not to re-list the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, ASIO has advised me that this question was subsequently answered by ASIO during their Hearing.

I trust this answers the Committee's queries.

Yours sincerely



Geoff McDonald
First Assistant Secretary
National Security Law and Policy Division

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Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)

(Also known as: League of Partisans; Band of Partisans, Band of Helpers, League of the Followers, Partisans' League, Usbat al-Ansar, Usbat ul-Ansar, Osbat al-Ansar, Isbat al-Ansar, Esbat al-Ansar).

The following information is based on publicly available details about Asbat al-Ansar (AAA). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of AAA and by official reporting. ASIO assesses the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

AAA is listed in the United Nation's 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of Canada, the UK, the US and Russia.

AAA adheres to an extremist jihadist ideology akin to that of al-Qa'ida (AQ). AAA's objectives are to establish a Sunni Islamic state in Lebanon by overthrowing the Lebanese government, eliminating Israel and impeding anti-Islamic and pro-Western influences in Lebanon. The group believes its struggle justifies violence against civilians and the group's strategy in seeking its objective includes the use of terrorist tactics.

AAA is a Sunni Muslim extremist group, largely based in the Ayn al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon in southern Lebanon. The group was established by Hisham al-Shraidi after Lebanon's Al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya group removed him in 1986. Shraidi was assassinated in 1991, apparently on the orders of Amin Khayid, a Fatah member also based in the Ayn al-Hilwah camp. He was succeeded by Ahmed Abd al-Karim al-Saadi, who is also known as Abu Muhjin.

Current status of AAA

In the 1990's, AAA limited its operations to Lebanon and engaged in a number of low-level attacks against 'un-Islamic' targets. These included attacks against religious institutions, bars, and theatres, as well as Lebanese forces, elements of the Lebanese government and foreign nationals. The group became more widely known following a series of attacks on nightclubs, theatres and liquor stores. AAA widened its operations to conduct attacks against foreign interests in Lebanon and assassinations of significant religious leaders. AAA's attack methods included rocket-propelled grenades, explosive charges, rockets and car bombs. Since 2004 there is no record of AAA conducting any violent operations in Lebanon. However, there is evidence of AAA members being involved in violent incidents, including fighting Coalition forces in Iraq.

AAA has recently been reluctant to involve itself in operations in Lebanon as it fears it will attract the attention of the Lebanese Armed Forces and threaten its

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Leadership and Membership

AAA was formerly led by Ahmed Abd al-Karim al-Saadi (aka Abu Muhjin). Abu Muhjin has continued his activities in secret after being sentenced to death by the Lebanese Government *in absentia* for the 1994 assassination of Sheikh Nizar al-Halabi, the leader of a rival Islamic extremist group. In his absence, Abu Muhjin's brother, Haytham 'Abd Al-Karim Al Sa'di (aka Abu Tariq), had been nominally leading the group

AAA is primarily Palestinian and its membership is estimated to be 100-300 members. AAA operatives have previously fought in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir, the Balkans and Iraq.

AAA engagement in terrorist activities

On 8 January 2008 the Lebanese military judiciary security forces charged Mu'ammam Al-Awami (aka Ibn al-Shahid), who is believed to be associated with AAA, and charged him with planning attacks against American fast food outlets in Beirut in 2002 and 2003. AAA members were involved in other violence in Lebanon in 2003, including a June 2003 rocket attack on the Hariri affiliated Future TV building in Beirut.

Around 2003, AAA gave priority to supporting the insurgency in Iraq with a corresponding reduction in its activities in Lebanon. AAA operatives have been involved in fighting Coalition Forces in Iraq since at least 2005 and several members of the group have been killed in anti-Coalition operations.

In September 2004 AAA linked operatives were believed to be involved in a plan to target foreign embassies and Lebanese Government offices for terrorist attacks. In October 2004, Mahir al-Sa'idi, a member of AAA, was sentenced *in absentia* to life imprisonment for plotting to assassinate former US Ambassador to Lebanon David Satterfield in 2000. Al-Sa'idi was working in cooperation with Abu Muhammad al-Masri, the head of al-Qa'ida at the Ayn al-Hilwah refugee camp, where fighting has occurred between Asbat al-Ansar and Fatah elements.

Members of AAA were believed responsible for a Katyusha rocket attack on the Galilee region of Israel in December 2005 and most likely sought refuge in southern Lebanon in AAA controlled neighbourhoods

In May 2007 AAA announced one of its members was "martyred" during an attack outside Ayn al-Hilwah against the Lebanese Army in support of the Fatah al-Islam conflict in Nahr al-Barid refugee camp.

Lebanese authorities detained a cell of al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) extremists in June 2007 in the Bekaa Valley that had trained with AAA and was possibly planning

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Ansar al-Islam

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

The following information is based on publicly available details about Ansar al-Islam (formerly listed as Ansar al-Sunna). These details have been corroborated by classified material. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

Ansar al-Islam is listed as Ansar al-Islam in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and by the governments of Canada and the US. Ansar al-Islam and Ansar al-Sunna, though the same entity, are listed separately by the UK government. It is also listed by the European Union (EU) for the purposes of its anti-terrorism measures.

Current status of Ansar al-Islam

Ansar al-Islam has been through several name changes since its formation in December 2001. Originally established under its present name, Ansar al-Islam emerged from a conglomeration of several smaller Kurdish-based Sunni extremist groups within the Kurdish Autonomous Zone (KAZ) in northern Iraq. At this stage, Ansar al-Islam focused on the defeat of the secular Kurdish leadership to establish an independent Islamic state in the KAZ.

In March 2003, successful joint Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and US military operations against Ansar al-Islam strongholds forced many in the group to disperse to other locations, including Iran. Ansar al-Islam members regrouped shortly thereafter and returned to Iraq, where they sought, in cooperation with other foreign and Iraqi militants, to create a more broad-based and less overtly-Kurdish organisation for the Sunni jihadist resistance to the Coalition presence in Iraq.

As a result, Ansar al-Islam evolved into Ansar al-Sunna. In late 2003, the new group formally announced its existence in an internet statement calling upon all jihadists in Iraq to unite under the name Ansar al-Sunna. Following the release of this statement, attacks conducted by Ansar al-Islam operatives were claimed under the name Ansar al-Sunna.

Because they were one and the same group, Ansar al-Sunna's leadership was similar to that of Ansar al-Islam as was its mainly Arab-Kurdish composition. Further, Ansar al-Sunna focused its attacks on the same enemies as its predecessor – in its first major strikes, Ansar al-Sunna, on 14 October 2003, bombed the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad, killing one bystander, and on 1 February 2004, it claimed responsibility for multiple simultaneous suicide car bombings on PUK offices in Arbil that killed at least 105 civilians and injured 130 others.

Like other Salafist terrorist groups, especially al-Qa'ida, Ansar al-Sunna's ultimate objective was to establish a Sunni-dominated Islamic state in Iraq. For this reason, Ansar al-Sunna, as well as conducting attacks on members of the 'apostate' Iraqi government,

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with an unspecified group – presumably the IAI – that other members, including Ansar al-Sunna's Emir, Abu Abdullah al-Hassan bin Mahmud, claimed was 'deviating from the principles of Shariah'. Two Shariah Council members in particular, Abu Sajjad and Shaykh Abu Hind, who subsequently resigned from or were asked to leave Ansar al-Sunna, then helped form the RJF.

Continuing claims by the RJF that pro-AQI Ansar al-Sunna had joined forces with a front group led by AQI's enemy were denied by the group's leaders, who criticised the Reformation and Jihad Front for perpetrating 'false allegations'. There was no split, Ansar al-Sunna announced, despite subsequent claims by the Shariah Council that 'most of the group's cadres had joined the breakaway faction' – an unlikely claim given the consistently higher profile of the original group over its erstwhile Shariah Council.

On 16 May 2007, moreover, Ansar al-Sunna's leadership issued a statement of support for 'our brothers' in the ISoI as well as a number of subsequent statements claiming joint operations with AQI. These included an attack on a US military convoy that reportedly killed six American soldiers and an operation against US forces and 'their quislings from the [Kurdish] Peshmerga' in Mosul on 28 January 2008, allegedly resulting in 'great losses' for the Coalition.

To distance itself from the high-profile defection of its Shariah Council earlier in the year, Ansar al-Sunna, on 28 November 2007, issued a formal statement to 'all Muslims' announcing that its leadership had 'mutually agreed' to revert to the group's original name of Ansar al-Islam. The statement, which implored its members to 'stand united behind our banner' and 'avoid unnecessary internal battles', stipulated that Ansar al-Islam would be the group's official name in all future communiqués and statements.

Though continuing to resist overtures to join the ISoI, Ansar al-Islam maintains a continuing close relationship with AQI. These ties are perhaps stronger now than at any other time, due mainly to the numerous 'Awakening' movements – variously comprised of Sunni tribal, religious and insurgent elements – pushing AQI into Ansar al-Islam's geographical areas of operation in northern Iraq. Ansar al-Islam has also shown a continuing loyalty to AQI by not only recognising the ISoI as the base of a legitimate Islamic caliphate but also criticising the Reformation and Jihad Front, which, in July 2008, it accused of colluding with the US to undermine the jihad in Iraq.

Ansar al-Islam, though already sharing the same fundamentalist ideology as AQI, has increasingly adopted that group's hardline attitude to fellow insurgents and Sunnis who participate in the political process. On 23 July 2008, in the first sign of its willingness to target its own constituency, Ansar al-Islam warned the 'Sunni brothers' that 'joining the dangerous infidels' was an act of 'apostasy'. Those thus seeking to extinguish 'the firebrand of jihad' would be 'killed without trial'.

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military targets using rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and anti-aircraft weapons including man portable air defence systems (MANPADS).

Australians are considered a legitimate target by Ansar al-Islam, which was responsible for a suicide car bombing in March 2003 that killed ABC journalist Paul Moran and five Kurdish soldiers. The group's founder and original leader, Mular Krekar, reiterated these sentiments recently, claiming in November 2007 that not only was Moran's death justified but also that it was legitimate for Ansar al-Islam 'to kill Australian soldiers in Iraq ..., to kill his translator, to kill the people which [sic] give him food and water'.

Ansar al-Islam is predominantly based in Iraq. However, it has also been involved in plans to conduct attacks overseas, most notably in Germany in December 2004 when three Ansar al-Islam operatives were arrested for planning to assassinate the then-Iraqi Prime Minister, Ayad Allawi, during a Deutsche Bank reception in Berlin. All three were convicted of terrorism offences by a German court in July 2008.

The group receives funding from a variety of sources, including expatriate remittances from Diaspora communities in Jordan, Turkey and Europe, donations from local Sunni sheikhs and former Baathist officials, and criminal activities. Ansar al-Islam also benefits financially from its association with al Qa'ida, which has provided money as well as training, equipment and combat support to the group.

Ansar al-Islam's engagement in terrorist attacks

Ansar al-Islam currently claims responsibility for several attacks each week in Iraq against a variety of sectarian, Iraqi government and Coalition targets. Recent significant terrorist attacks for which responsibility has been claimed by, or reliably attributed to, Ansar al-Islam include:

- 23 July 2006: Ansar al-Sunna claimed responsibility for multiple attacks, including the assassination of a Shia political figure in Diyali, shooting two US soldiers in Heet and detonating an IED in al-Miqdadiya;
- 30 October 2006: A suicide bombing killed the Director of Police in Kirkuk as well as several others, including a three year-old girl;
- 5 December 2006: The group claimed responsibility for an ambush that killed several US service personnel on foot patrol in the al-Haqlaniyah market, west of Baghdad;
- 25 January 2007: Ansar al-Sunna claimed responsibility for killing five American Blackwater members, four of whom were shot execution-style in the back of the head;
- 8 May 2007: A suicide truck bombing outside the Interior Ministry in Irbil, a mostly Kurdish city in northern Iraq, killed at least 15 people and wounded 65;
- 13 May 2007: A suicide car bomb against the headquarters of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) killed at least 30 people and injured 115 others;

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- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, creating an Islamic caliphate in Iraq;
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the governments of foreign countries, including Iraq and Coalition countries, and/or intimidate a sections of the public; and
- (iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

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Islamic Army of Aden (IAA)

(Also known as: Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA); Islamic Army of Aden Abyan; Aden Islamic Army; Muhammed's Army/Army of Mohammed; Jaish Adan al Islami)

The following information is based on publicly available details about the Islamic Army of Aden (IAA). These details have been corroborated by classified material. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The Islamic Army of Aden (IAA) is listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the European Union and the governments of the UK, New Zealand and Canada. The US has designated the IAA as a terrorist organisation on the Terrorist Exclusion List.

Current status of the IAA

The IAA is a Sunni Islamic extremist group and was formed in 1996 as a splinter group of the Yemeni Islamic Jihad. The IAA first came to public prominence in 1998 when it issued statements detailing its intention to overthrow the Yemeni government and implement Sharia law; and called for operations against Western interests in Yemen.

The IAA predominantly operates in the southern governorates of Yemen – particularly Aden and Abyan. The IAA has been involved in a number of terrorist attacks against Yemeni and Western interests. It has used bombings and hostage-taking as a means of furthering its goals. In 1998, the IAA abducted 16 Western tourists. Four of the tourists, including an Australian, were killed in a rescue attempt. The IAA also claimed responsibility for the suicide bomb attack against the USS Cole on 12 October 2000 and the MV Limburg on 7 October 2002. However, these operations are generally believed to have been al-Qa'ida operations.

The IAA is associated with al-Qa'ida and shares similar goals of driving Westerners from the region and removing the Yemeni government in order to establish an Islamic state.

Although current specific funding arrangements for the group are unknown, the IAA has traditionally conducted criminal activities as a means of raising money.

Between 2003 and 2006, counter-terrorism operations by Yemeni authorities reduced the size of the group and limited its operational effectiveness. However, the IAA has not been completely eradicated and there is no indication the intent of the IAA has changed. IAA members were last arrested in 2006, including the reported arrest of individuals suspected of involvement in terrorist activities in Iraq. In June 2008, IAA's leader, Khalid Abd al-Nabi, gave an interview which suggested he retained similar goals and ideology. He also stated the Abyan Governorate is ready for the emergence of IAA. While the interview does not explicitly call for a return to violence, it contains nothing to suggest that IAA has departed from its previous intentions to engage in terrorist acts.

Objectives

The IAA aims to remove Western interests from Yemen and wider Arabian Peninsula, overthrow the current Yemeni government and establish an Islamic state.

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On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses that the incidence of terrorist activity by the IAA has declined since 2003. However, ASIO assesses that the IAA remains active and is directly or indirectly preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to the IAA are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the replacement of the Yemeni government with an Islamic state;
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the governments of foreign countries, including Yemen, and/or intimidate sections of the public; and
- (iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

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Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ)

(Also known as: Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Jhangvie, Laskar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkare Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Jhangwi, Lashkar-i-Jhangwi, Jhangvi Army, Lashkar-e Jhangvi, Lashkar Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Jhanvi, Lashkar-i-Jangvi, Lashkar e Jhangvi, Lashkar Jangvi, Laskar e Jahangvi).

The following information is based on publicly available details about Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ). These details have been corroborated by official reporting. ASIO assesses the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The LeJ is listed in the UN 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of the UK, the US, Canada and Pakistan.

Current status of the LeJ

Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) is a Sunni Deobandi Islamic terrorist group based primarily in Pakistan's Punjab region and the city of Karachi. The group was formed in 1996 by Akram Lahori, Malik Ishaque, and Riaz Basra of the radical sectarian organisation, the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), who accused the SSP's leadership of deviating from the ideals of its co-founder, Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi.

Sectarian terrorist groups have been responsible for over 4,000 deaths in Pakistan since the late 1980s, and LeJ has established a reputation as the most violent Sunni extremist organisation in the country, killing hundreds of Shias since its formation. Among the Shias LeJ has targeted for killing have been doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians, lobbyists, and scholars. LeJ attacks have also targeted Christians, including attacks on a Christian church and a Christian school in Islamabad in 2002, and Iranian nationals in Pakistan, accusing the latter of funding groups in Pakistan perceived as trying to establish Shia dominance.

While sectarian attacks remain LeJ's primary driving force, it has broadened its focus to target the Western presence in Pakistan, such as the abduction and murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl in Karachi in 2002, the car bomb attack on French nationals in Karachi in May 2002, and car bombings outside the US Consulate in Karachi in June 2002 and March 2006.

LeJ has also been involved in attacks on Pakistani government targets, including two failed assassination attempts against President Musharaff in 2003, and the failed assassination attempt against former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 2007. LeJ chief Qari Zafar is suspected of involvement in the September 2008 truck bombing of the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad.

A large portion of LeJ's funding comes from wealthy supporters in Karachi. Additional funding is derived from sources in Saudi Arabia, as well as from criminal activities, such as protection rackets and extortion from both Shia and Sunni banks and businesses.

Pakistani government security crackdowns on sectarian groups have been only partially successful, as fear of retaliation means that some judges are reluctant to hear sectarian cases, and police officers investigating sectarian murders have been killed. The large

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- 8 September 2008: LeJ member Zeeshan was arrested again. He had previously been arrested for a 7 July 2008 bombing in Karachi, and is also suspected of involvement in the Nishtar Park bombing in Karachi on 11 April 2006.
- 27 July 2008: senior LeJ member Shafiqur Rehman was arrested in Quetta. He confessed to seven assassinations in Quetta, and is suspected of involvement in over 100 cases of sectarian terrorism.
- 20 June 2008: two LeJ members were among five men arrested in Lahore who confessed to planning suicide attacks in Lahore and other cities.
- 27 February 2008: three LeJ members were arrested for planning attacks on several important political leaders in the district of Jhang.
- 26 February 2008: four LeJ members were arrested for planning attacks on political and religious leaders and senior police officers in Lahore.
- 5 February 2008: LeJ member Fida Hussain, believed to have been involved in the suicide bombing of a Pakistan Air Force bus in October 2007, was arrested in Lahore.
- 27 January 2008: a bombing near a mosque in Peshawar that killed a police chief and 14 others was attributed to LeJ.
- 17 January 2008: a suicide attack on a Shia mosque in Peshawar that killed 10 people was attributed to the LeJ.
- 10 January 2008: 40 LeJ members were arrested in Lahore with several weapons recovered.
- 18 October 2007: attempted assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto; the Mati-ur-Rehman group, which includes LeJ members, was suspected of involvement in the attack.
- 16 June 2007: Karachi police announced the arrest of two LeJ members suspected of involvement in the Nishtar Park bombing on 11 April 2006.
- 24 February 2007: three would-be suicide bombers, travelling by bicycle, were killed when a speed bump set off the explosives they were carrying. The bombers were LeJ members attempting to attack a prayer meeting in Chechawatni, where a large number of police officers were expected to be in attendance.
- 13 February 2007: two LeJ members were arrested in connection with several attacks, including a raid on a Shia community centre in Rawalpindi in 2002 that killed 15 people.

Conclusion

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (a) the organisation 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

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Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)

(Also known as Jaish-e-Mohammed; Jaish-e-Muhammed Jaish-i-Mohammed; Jaish-i-Mohammad; Jaish-i-Muhammad; Jaish-i-Muhammed; Jeish-e-Mahammed; Jaish-e-Mohammad Mujahideen E-Tanzeem; Tehrik Ul-Furqaan; Army of Mohammed; Mohammed's Army; Army of the Prophet; National Movement for the Restoration of Pakistani Sovereignty and Army of the Prophet; Khuddam ul-Islam (KuI); Khudamul Islam; Kuddam e Islami; Jamaat ul-Furqan (JuF); Jesh-e-Mohammadi.)

The following information is based on publicly available details about Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of JeM and from official reporting. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

JeM is listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and by the governments of the US, the UK, Canada, New Zealand, the European Union, India and Pakistan.

Current status of JeM

JeM is a Sunni Islamic extremist organisation based in Pakistan which operates primarily in Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK). Recently, however, there are indications that JeM's operational focus has turned towards attacks in Pakistan proper, Afghanistan and wider India.

Established in 2000, JeM was founded by the radical Islamic scholar and jihadist leader, Maulana Masood Azhar, following his release from an Indian jail in exchange for 155 hostages hijacked aboard an Indian Airlines aircraft on New Years Eve 1999. With support from Usama bin Laden, the Taliban, and several other Sunni extremist organisations in Pakistan, Azhar did not return to his former group, the Islamic militant group Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), but formed JeM as a new group. JeM is aligned politically with prominent Islamic Pakistani party, Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam, Fazlur Rehman faction (JUI-F).

Funding for JeM is derived from both legitimate business interests, including commodity trading and property, and through Islamic charitable foundations including the al-Rashid Trust (also known as the al Amin Trust) whose accounts were ordered to be frozen by the UN Security Council for suspected links to al-Qa'ida.

JeM operates with other Islamic militant groups in IAK, such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), as well as conducting joint operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan with groups such as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HuJI), Lashkar e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). Furthermore, JeM remains closely associated with al-Qa'ida and the Taliban.

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Leadership and membership

JeM's founder, Maulana Masood Azhar, remains the group's Amir, despite maintaining a low profile following JeM's implication in the 2003 assassination attempts on President Musharraf.

JeM is organised into military and missionary bands, administered through six or seven departments. Although exact numbers cannot be accurately determined, it is estimated that JeM has several hundred active fighters and thousands of followers. The majority of JeM's membership consists of jihadists from Pakistan and Kashmir, but also includes some Arabs and Afghans.

JeM engagement in terrorist activities

Few attacks have been openly claimed by JeM since it was last re-listed for proscription. However, recent instances where JeM militants have publicly acknowledged acts, or plans to conduct acts, of terrorism are listed:

- Three separate grenade attacks on police targets in Srinagar in May 2006, injuring a total of 34 people; were claimed by JeM.
- In May 2006 another grenade attack on police vehicle escorting a Human Rights Commission vehicle through the Iqbal Park area of Srinagar killed one policeman and injured ten other people.
- Three separate firearm attacks on police targets in Srinagar, attributed to a new JeM module, killed two police and injuring one other in July 2006.
- In August 2006, three separate firearm attacks on police officials resulted in four dead and three injured.
- In October 2006 two firearm attacks on police officials were claimed by JeM militants.
- Indian police arrested two reported JeM members in Delhi in November 2006 and recovered 2 kilograms of explosives and a sum of money.
- Three JeM extremists arrested in November 2007 in Lucknow, India, with a large amount of arms, ammunition and explosives, admitted on camera that they had been planning to kidnap Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to secure the release of 42 Pakistani prisoners.
- A public beheading by JeM members of two Afghans who were accused of passing information to international forces in Afghanistan occurred late June 2008.
- According to a report on a Jihadist website in Pakistan, JeM claimed the July 2008 killing of a total of 47 Indian troops in Kashmir.
- Jailed JeM militant threatens former Pakistani president with assassination
- Pakistani interior ministry sources stated on 17 December that the jailed Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militant Ahmed Omar Sheikh had made a telephoned assassination threat to former president Pervez Musharraf in the middle of November 2008,

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Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

(Also known as: IMU, Islamic party of Turkestan, Islamic Movement of Turkestan)

The following background information is based on publicly available details about the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). These details have been corroborated by official reporting. ASIO assess the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The IMU has been listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of the UK, US, and Canada.

Current Status of the IMU

The origins of the IMU date from the early 1990s, when Juma Namangani, a former Soviet soldier who fought in Afghanistan, and Tahir Yuldosh (variant of name, spelled Yuldashev in most reporting), an unofficial mullah and head of the Adolat (Justice) Party, joined forces to implement sharia law in the city of Namangan in Uzbekistan's part of the Ferghana Valley. Alarmed by Adolat's demands to transform Uzbekistan into an Islamic state, the government banned Adolat in March 1992. A period of repression followed, forcing many Islamic militants to flee the Ferghana Valley.

Namangani fled to Tajikistan, where he participated in the Tajik Civil War and established a base for his fighters in that country. Yuldashev escaped to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, where he established links to other Islamic militants. He also made clandestine trips to Uzbekistan, maintaining contact with his supporters and setting up underground cells. By the late 1990s, the IMU was officially formed. Its stated goal, as posted on the internet in August 1999, was the "establishment of an Islamic state with the application of the Shariah" in Uzbekistan.

The IMU's reach into Central Asia peaked from 1999 to 2001, when it conducted a series of attacks in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and made incursions into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, from bases in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The IMU's goal of an Islamic state was expanded in 2001 to encompass an area stretching from the Caucasus to China's western province of Xinjiang, under the new banners of the Islamic Party of Turkestan in April 2001 and the Islamic Movement of Turkestan in May 2001. However, the group has always been and continues to be known as the IMU, and that is the name under which it is listed by the US Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism as a foreign terrorist organisation.

By the end of the 1990s, the IMU had relocated to Afghanistan, due to the lack of support for the movement in Uzbekistan and the measures taken against it by the government. The IMU suffered heavy losses in the fighting that followed the US invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, including the death of Namangani.

The remnants of the IMU fled to the tribal areas of neighbouring Pakistan, where their behaviour in some areas brought them into conflict with the local tribesmen and the Pakistani military. However, many IMU fighters have successfully integrated into the local community, where they have enjoyed the hospitality and sanctuary provided by the tribes.

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- 27 December 2002: a bombing in a market in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, that killed six people and wounded 40
- 8 May 2003: a bombing in a currency exchange office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, that killed one person
- 31 January and 13 June 2005: bombings outside the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, that killed one person and wounded at least 12
- 25 January 2006: an armed attack on a pre-trial detention centre in Kairakum, Tajikistan, that killed the centre's chief
- 12 May 2006: armed attacks on border and customs posts in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

The IMU is now fighting in support of the Taliban and other Islamic groups against the Afghan government and international military forces in Afghanistan.

- In mid-2007, seven heavily armed militants connected to the IMU were arrested while planting a mine on a road used by International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) patrols in northern Afghanistan. The group admitted to carrying out rocket attacks, suicide missions and recruitment activities.
- In May 2008, two IMU members in possession of explosives and hand grenades were arrested in Afghanistan. The two admitted to planting mines on a road and providing a base for militant activities.

IMU leader Tahir Yuldashev has also stated his support for the Pakistani Taliban in its conflict with the Pakistani security forces, and Pakistan claims to have killed at least 150 Uzbek militants in 2007.

Conclusion

ASIO assesses the IMU is continuing to prepare, plan, and foster the commission of acts involving threats to human life and serious damage to property. Although the organisation has suffered significant losses while fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it continues to attract recruits from a variety of countries within the region, and has a history of working with other international terrorist organisations from which it draws support.

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (a) the organisation 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) the organisation advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses the IMU remains active, and is directly preparing, planning, assisting in, or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to the IMU are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the objective of establishing a radical Islamist caliphate in Turkestan;

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Foreign Terrorist Organizations

BUREAU OF COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM

April 8, 2008

Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) are foreign organizations that are designated by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as amended. FTO designations play a critical role in our fight against terrorism and are an effective means of curtailing support for terrorist activities and pressuring groups to get out of the terrorism business.

Current List of Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations

1. Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)
2. Abu Sayyaf Group
3. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade
4. Al-Shabaab
5. Ansar al-Islam
6. Armed Islamic Group (GIA)
7. Asbat al-Ansar
8. Aum Shinrikyo
9. Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)
10. Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA)
11. Continuity Irish Republican Army
12. Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group)
13. HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement)
14. Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)
15. Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM)
16. Hizballah (Party of God)
17. Islamic Jihad Group
18. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)
19. Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM) (Army of Mohammed)
20. Jemaah Islamiya organization (JI)
21. al-Jihad (Egyptian Islamic Jihad)
22. Kahane Chai (Kach)
23. Kongra-Gel (KGK, formerly Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, KADEK)
24. Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LT) (Army of the Righteous)
25. Lashkar i Jhangvi
26. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
27. Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)
28. Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)
29. Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)
30. National Liberation Army (ELN)
31. Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)
32. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Legal Criteria for Designation under Section 219 of the INA as amended

1. It must be a *foreign organization*.
2. The organization must *engage in terrorist activity*, as defined in section 212 (a)(3)(B) of the INA (8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(3)(B)),* or *terrorism*, as defined in section 140(d)(2) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. § 2656f(d)(2)),** or *retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism*.
3. The organization's terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (national defense, foreign relations, or the economic interests) of the United States.

Legal Ramifications of Designation

1. It is unlawful for a person in the United States or subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to knowingly provide "material support or resources" to a designated FTO. (The term "material support or resources" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2339A(b)(1) as " any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel (1 or more individuals who maybe or include oneself), and transportation, except medicine or religious materials." 18 U.S.C. § 2339A(b)(2) provides that for these purposes "the term 'training' means instruction or teaching designed to impart a specific skill, as opposed to general knowledge." 18 U.S.C. § 2339A(b)(3) further provides that for these purposes the term 'expert advice or assistance' means advice or assistance derived from scientific, technical or other specialized knowledge."
2. Representatives and members of a designated FTO, if they are aliens, are inadmissible to and, in certain circumstances, removable from the United States (see 8 U.S.C. §§ 1182 (a)(3)(B)(i)(IV)-(V), 1227 (a)(1)(A)).
3. Any U.S. financial institution that becomes aware that it has possession of or control over funds in which a designated FTO or its agent has an interest must retain possession of or control over the funds and report the funds to the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Other Effects of Designation

1. Supports our efforts to curb terrorism financing and to encourage other nations to do the same.
2. Stigmatizes and isolates designated terrorist organizations internationally.
3. Deters donations or contributions to and economic transactions with named organizations.
4. Heightens public awareness and knowledge of terrorist organizations.
5. Signals to other governments our concern about named organizations.

Individual aliens providing support to or associated with TEL-designated organizations may be found "inadmissible" to the U.S., i.e., such aliens may be prevented from entering the U.S. or, if already in U.S. territory, may in certain circumstances be deported. Examples of activity that may render an alien inadmissible as a result of an organization's TEL designation include:

- membership in a TEL-designated organization;
- use of the alien's position of prominence within any country to persuade others to support an organization on the TEL list;
- solicitation of funds or other things of value for an organization on the TEL list;
- solicitation of any individual for membership in an organization on the TEL list; and
- commission of an act that the alien knows, or reasonably should have known, affords material support, including a safe house, transportation, communications, funds, transfer of funds or other material for financial benefit, false documentation or identification, weapons (including chemical, biological, or radiological weapons), explosives, or training to an organization on the TEL list.

(It should be noted that individual aliens may also found inadmissible on the basis of other types of terrorist activity unrelated to TEL-designated organizations; see 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(3)(B).)

Other Effects

1. Deters donation or contributions to named organizations.
2. Heightens public awareness and knowledge of terrorist organizations.
3. Alerts other governments to U.S. concerns about organizations engaged in terrorist activities.
4. Stigmatizes and isolates designated terrorist organizations.

Background

Secretary of State Colin Powell, in consultation with the Attorney General, designated the following organizations, thereby placing them on the Terrorist Exclusion List (TEL). Ten groups were added to the TEL on April 29, 2004.

Terrorist Exclusion List Designees (alphabetical listing)

- Afghan Support Committee (a.k.a. Ahya ul Turas; a.k.a. Jamiat Ayat-ur-Rhas al Islamia; a.k.a. Jamiat Ihya ul Turath al Islamia; a.k.a. Lajnat el Masa Eidatul Afghania)
- Al Taqwa Trade, Property and Industry Company Ltd. (f.k.a. Al Taqwa Trade, Property and Industry; f.k.a. Al Taqwa Trade, Property and Industry Establishment; f.k.a. Himmat Establishment; a.k.a. Waldenberg, AG)
- Al-Hamati Sweets Bakeries
- Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI)
- Al-Manar
- Al-Ma'unah
- Al-Nur Honey Center
- Al-Rashid Trust
- Al-Shifa Honey Press for Industry and Commerce

- Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (Pakistan and Afghanistan offices -- Kuwait office not designated) (a.k.a. Jamia Ihya ul Turath; a.k.a. Jamiat Ihia Al- Turath Al-Islamiya; a.k.a. Revival of Islamic Society Heritage on the African Continent)
- Revolutionary Proletarian Nucleus
- Revolutionary United Front (RUF)
- Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)
- The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)
- The Islamic International Brigade (a.k.a. International Battalion, a.k.a. Islamic Peacekeeping International Brigade, a.k.a. Peacekeeping Battalion, a.k.a. The International Brigade, a.k.a. The Islamic Peacekeeping Army, a.k.a. The Islamic Peacekeeping Brigade)
- The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)
- The Pentagon Gang
- The Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs (a.k.a. Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion, a.k.a. Riyadh-as-Saliheen, a.k.a. the Sabotage and Military Surveillance Group of the Riyadh al-Salihin Martyrs, a.k.a. Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Shahids (Martyrs))
- The Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (a.k.a. the Islamic Special Purpose Regiment, a.k.a. the al-Jihad-Fisi-Sabililah Special Islamic Regiment, a.k.a. Islamic Regiment of Special Meaning)
- Tunisian Combat Group (a.k.a. GCT, a.k.a. Groupe Combattant Tunisien, a.k.a. Jama'a Combattante Tunisien, a.k.a. JCT; a.k.a. Tunisian Combatant Group)
- Turkish Hizballah
- Ulster Defense Association (a.k.a. Ulster Freedom Fighters)
- Ummah Tameer E-Nau (UTN) (a.k.a. Foundation for Construction; a.k.a. Nation Building; a.k.a. Reconstruction Foundation; a.k.a. Reconstruction of the Islamic Community; a.k.a. Reconstruction of the Muslim Ummah; a.k.a. Ummah Tameer I-Nau; a.k.a. Ummah Tameer E-Nau; a.k.a. Ummah Tameer-I-Pau)
- Youssef M. Nada & Co. Gesellschaft M.B.H.

Yemeni Islamist militant says country "ready" for Aden-Abyan Islamic Army

Text of report by London-based independent newspaper Al-Quds al-Arabi website on 8 July

[Interview with Khalid Abd-al-Nabi, leader of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army in Yemen, by Khalid al-Hamadi; date and place not given: "Some statesmen in Yemen sympathize with the Al Huthists in Sa'dah; the country is ready for the emergence of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army; we oppose secession but we also oppose injustice"]

His star began to shine during the armed confrontations in the Hutat Mountains in the Abyan Province between the government forces and his followers in the summer of 2003. The government waged these clashes as if they were a major operation against a large terrorist organization similar to the US war against Al- Qa'idah. This person is Khalid Abd-al-Nabi, the leader of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army Islamic, or Shaykh Khalid Abdulrab al-Nabi al-Yazidi as he likes to be called.

Abd-al-Nabi said that this war amounted to a settling of scores by his socialist adversaries that used the stick of the state to suppress his group under the pretext of liquidating the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army. The United States had used that as an excuse to suppress the jihadist figures in Abyan and the surrounding regions that are known for their range of mountains and that are used as safe havens by fugitives wanted by the state. Al-Quds al-Arabi held the following interview with Shaykh Khalid Abdulrab al-Nabi on the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, his current leadership, the extent of his power and influence, and his stands on the southern issue and on the war in Sa'dah.

[Al-Hamadi] First of all, tell us who is Khalid Abd-al-Nabi whose identity has been the subject of controversy in Yemen in the past period?

[Abd-al-Nabi] My full name is Khalid Bin-Muhammad Bin-Ali Bin Abdulrab al-Nabi. My origins go back to the Al-Yazidi region in Yafi in the Lahj Governorate. In the mid-1980s, I left the former southern Yemen [former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen-PDRY] that was ruled by the communist socialist party. I entered northern Yemen illegally looking for ways to earn a living. At that time I was about 17 years old and in the final secondary class. From there, I went to Al-Hijaz, which is now called Saudi Arabia, and stayed there for about 15 years.

There, we became acquainted with religious scholars and students seeking knowledge where we used to attend classes and sessions of learning. In 1992, the climate was open to the issue of the Afghan jihad. The pulpits shook with speeches, lectures, and symposiums in support of jihad in Afghanistan by the governments that supported the United States, headed by Saudi Arabia. At that time, Saudi Arabia used to reductions reaching about 75 per cent on airline tickets to Pakistan to support those wishing to wage jihad in Afghanistan. This was in the interest of the Americans and at the behest of the United States that used to encourage the governments loyal to it to activate the role of religious scholars and propagators in reviving the issue of jihad and issues related to Shari'ah. Jihad is indeed a Shari'ah duty but in this case it had ulterior motives since it

The problem of the Hutat war is that I talked about the case of the killing of Jarallah Umar and that the issue should be governed by Shari'ah. This aroused the indignation of the socialists that are in power. They wrote bad reports against me by way of putting pressure on the state. Some brothers told me that an arrest campaign was under way. I did not wish to clash with the state or to give our enemies an excuse that they would exploit in order to liquidate us. So I sought refuge in the mountainous regions in the Hutat Mountains in Abyan. We fortified ourselves in small groups in the mountains until things calmed down. They fabricated that war against us although we were less than 20 individuals. But the media inflated the issue because, as you know, more media coverage means more US support and aid in the name of fighting terrorism. It was necessary to inflate the issue in the media in order to raise the financial aid. This is an old game.

[Al-Hamadi] Did the confrontation between you and the authorities end as soon as the Hutat war ended that the authorities portrayed at the time as a war against another state?

[Abd-al-Nabi] This is not the problem. The problem is whether these people in power fabricated this war. Do they realize what is going on around them? Until this very moment they do not understand what is going on and they do not know what is being concocted against them behind their back.

[Al-Hamadi] The situation has calmed down since the war of the Hutat Mountains between you and the authorities has ended. The voice of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army - that the media portrayed as an army equal to the army of the state - has abated. What are the facts behind that?

[Abd-al-Nabi] We were not behind the naming of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army. We did not use that name and we do not have official leaflets in which we gave ourselves this name. This name perhaps came from what the people talk about the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army. Perhaps they said this army will do this or that. As soon as we emerged, they said that this is the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army and they gave us that name on that basis.

[Al-Hamadi] But some people say that after the execution of Abu-al-Hasan al Mihdar, the founder of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, you were his successor, particularly since you were one of his close associates. How true is this?

[Abd-al-Nabi] After Abu-Hasan, may God have mercy on his soul, and some brothers moved to other regions in 1998, I do not have detailed information on what he used to do and I do not details on what happened there. I believe, however, that he was killed unjustly because, at the end of the day, even the killing of thousands over thousands of Christian unbelievers is not equal to one drop of blood of a believer.

[Al-Hamadi] But the four tourists that were killed by the Aden-Abyan Army led by Al-Mihdar in 1998 were granted safe haven as soon as they obtained a visa to enter Yemen and their protection and safety became a duty.

is not an ideology; it is religion and faith because it was inspired by God Almighty and inspiration is not ideology. People may have different thinking and ideologies but inspiration is unchangeable and firm and its point of reference is God's words.

[Al-Hamidi] Did the voice of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army abate just as soon as its founder Abu-al-Hasan al-Mihdar was executed?

[Abd-al-Nabi] The Aden-Abyan Army is not dependent on an individual but is linked to a religion and a faith. The aims of this army are known and they are founded on Shari'ah as when it appears and what its banners are. The issue is not related to Abu-al-Hasan or anybody else.

[Al-Hamidi] Does this mean that the Aden-Abyan Army is still operating and effective in the Yemeni arena?

[Abd-al-Nabi] I cannot say definitively whether it actually exists and is effective or anything else. The issue is related to when God Almighty allows it to emerge and it may emerge overnight. God prepares this army's followers and they follow God's will.

[Al-Hamidi] Is the Abyan Governorate currently ready for the emergence of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army?

[Abd-al-Nabi] Yes, it is ready and its appearance depends on God's will.

[Al-Hamidi] Since the armed clashes in Hutat in 2003, the Yemeni arena has been witnessing broad calm between you and the state. Does this mean that you have concluded a truce or a ceasefire with the authorities that is paid for by both sides?

[Abd-al-Nabi] This issue is related to rumours and deception. Sometimes, when a certain party wishes to slander a certain call, they cannot slander the call itself but they cast doubts on and malign the proponent of the call. Thus, some tendentious people are trying to burn those that support the Aden-Abyan Army or those that call for jihad. They try to burn such a person through spreading rumours via the security dens.

[Al-Hamidi] It has recently been reported that the Yemeni government used the jihadists or jihadist zealots in Abyan and the southern governorates in general in its war against the Al-Huthiist al-Zaydiyah insurrection in Sa'dah in northern Yemen. How true are these reports?

[Abd-al-Nabi] I personally do not know anyone that went to fight in Sa'dah. Moreover, the Al-Huthi group was made by the state. It was the state that gave them money and arms. Their prisoners are treated well in the jails contrary to how the Sunni prisoners are treated.

[Al-Hamidi] Does this mean that some leaders in the state sympathize with Al-Huthi's followers?