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Protectors of Sharia Al-Qaeda enters Egypt with a new face

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Protectors of Sharia: Al-Qaeda enters Egypt with a new face

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The “Protectors of Sharia – Misr Al-Kinana” Telegram Channel attracted people’s attention after releasing a statement by “Ansar al-Islam” organization, claiming responsibility for Al-Wahat attack on police forces (October, 10, 2017). This attack left casualties among the ranks of the Interior Ministry’s National Security Service and the Egyptian Special Forces for the first time in their history. However, perpetrators remained anonymous until the statement was released - though there were signs that the attack was carried out by al-Qaeda organization.

This study will address the nature, content and implications of the discourse presented by this Telegram channel, since it was launched (on October 19, 2017) until the morning November 5, 2017 – the time of the study. Also, the study provides important findings that explain the new methodology used by al-Qaeda to enter the Egyptian arena.

The paper addresses this issue within five important axes:

First: The time when the Telegram channel was launched and the implications of this, and how far the channel is linked with the actual perpetrators of the Al-Wahat attack.

Second: Development of the discourse of al-Qaeda.

Third: Aspects of Al-Qaeda's discourse in the Egyptian environment, and what could be revealed about its working team through publications.

Fourth: The most important components of the Al-Qaeda discourse. Anyway, the following key issues were monitored:

- 1- Urging young people to join the “Jihad” action.
- 2- Standing against extremism and “Khawarij” thought (referring to: Daesh)



- 3- Focusing on issues subject to consensus among Egyptians - such as detainees - with special emphasis on women prisoners.
- 4- Extending the area of Sharia references, celebrated by the channel, and applying the intellectual and ideological reviews of Al-Qaeda.
- 5- Following up jihadist arenas other than the Egyptian arena.
6. Urging young people to interact and engage in media activities in favor of “jihad”.

Fifth: Conclusion:

After reviewing the Al-Qaeda discourse, the study states some important findings, including:

- 1- Al-Qaeda undoubtedly intends to enter Egypt and open a new arena of action. Therefore, whether the channel is linked to the group of gunmen who carried out the Al-Wahat attack or not, this is an activity that was pre-meditated a while ago, and is now aimed at forming cells, and communicating with young people.
- 2- The channel's discourse apparently shows a practical application of the al-Qaeda reviews, issued by a number of its thinkers during the pre-Arab revolutions era. Also, it shows ideas and proposals that are open to the nation – greatly developed during the era of Arab revolutions and beyond.
3. The new discourse of Al-Qaeda is keen to focus on general issues concerning the Egyptian people, with a greater focus on the issue of prisoners, especially women prisoners.
4. Al-Qaeda's discourse pays great attention to the Kharijites' thought, represented by Daesh, and believes that the decline of Daesh's influence represents an opportunity that Al-Qaeda should benefit from.
5. Al-Qaeda's discourse expands its scientific reference, quoting from scholars affiliated with what is known as the “Scientific Salafism”, although it has not yet go

beyond the “Salafism” framework: the channel never quoted from the Muslim Brotherhood, or Hizb ut-Tahrir, or others.

6. This discourse of al-Qaeda has not yet been tested in the Egyptian environment; and its results cannot be predicted before the existence of a strong media outlet to promote it. It is noteworthy that the channel, which had only had 1,100 subscribers, was later closed.

7. Had it not been for the Ansar al-Islam statement after the Al-Wahat attack, the channel would not have been promoted. However, the operation gave the channel broad media momentum.

While this study was being prepared, the channel was closed. Therefore, a supplement with a brief summary of the channel's publications was provided at the end of the study - sometimes accompanied by brief comments. We hope this study will provide significant material – that is no longer available after the closure of the channel – for those who may be concerned.

(N.B.: The study is available in full on the [Egyptian Institute for Studies](http://www.egyptianinstitute.org) website in Arabic.)