

# «داعش» بيننا

ملف الجهاديين في البحرين 2

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# ISIS Are Among Us

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## introduction

Why among us? It is for the reason that this issue is no secret. We have seen with our own eyes all of its aspects, in the virtual spehere as well as in reality. We have witnessed the creation of a «beast» among us. Not a single word was held back, not even a whisper. The extremist ideology grew before our eyes. All the features of the «Jihadi Age» were demonstrated to us in such an easy language. Indeed, ISIS are among us because they were left to grow among us. Their language, brutality, atrocities, symbols, and its primitive interpretation of all things and the world were all manifested before us very clearly. We are the ones who stood baffled because the Bahraini government, with its mighty forces, was not shaken by any of that! It is not a coincidence. ISIS, who concerns us deeply, were by all means created intentionally and purposely. That's why they are among us now. This is what we aim to prove in this file.

The heroes of the «Jihadi circle» were never unwise. They have presented most of their work on the timeline, with their well-known names, their movement, their embellished nicknames and even personalities. They themselves did not leave any gap unfilled and did not leave any place for predictions. They were completely frank and explicit, and they were absolutely «progressive» in matters concerning internet usage, to the extent that one of the prominent «Jihadists» was «fed up» and left. It was Abu Mohammed Al-Maqdesi, who was Turki's Binali's mentor and teacher. He said that «Looseness among the ranks of Jihadists has led them to use all sorts of media outlets while their brothers before them avoided their usage.»

We have seen during the past three years the «Equipping Invaders» campaign ads spread across cyber space with stamped signatures. We have seen individuals sneaking into Syria, and their pictures taken with missiles and machineguns. We have witnessed the so-called Sheikhs spending lavishly on Jihadi movements. We have witnessed Al-Qaeda flags being waved just meters away from the «Embassy». We have heard the one who said: «Take advantage of the summer vacation by heading for Jihad in Syria» (Al-Hamad), and who said: «The essence of the cause of Islam is in the Levant» (Al-Moawada). We also heard one say: «Whoever is able to join the military should do so,» (Al-Husseini) and another say: «Raise your hands to pledge allegiance to Al-Baghdadi» (Al-Binali).

We have watched montaged videos from the blessed land, entitled «Thanks to our Bahraini funders». We also watched montaged videos from the other blessed land, entitled «A message to the Sunnis». We have also watched Bahrain's Al-Binali preaching the poor worshipers of Raqqa to «obey the caliph no matter what». Everything was open and extremely explicit!

When we began writing these reports, everything we based our main assumptions on was within everyone's reach. We had a huge amount of data spread before us online. We had to collect «dozens, hundreds and thousands» of facts and categorize them and then place them into context; in a story that made us somewhat understand why the Bahraini authorities used a widespread propaganda, until late this year, to deny one thing. That is «ISIS followers do not exist among us». That's what the deputy prime minister stated confidently. Our mission here is to say «ISIS are indeed among us». They are among us today to this extent because this kind of pedant statements continues to emerge resembling a «crazy comedy»; as authorities continue to take up no responsibility, saying: «They are not among us!».

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## ISIS Are Among Us: Peculiar Transition in Al-Asala Society Tactics (1)

Equipping Invaders" Funds Shift Towards "School Bags",  
"Meetings with Jihadists masked by "Pity-Seeking Expressions

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**Until August 2013, advertising could still be seen for the "Equipping Invaders" campaign that the Salafi group "Al-Asala" ran. The group, who has close ties with the Bahraini Royal Family, created the campaign with the sole task of equipping militants to join the fighting in Syria, through posters and monthly notifications sent to accounts of "Al-Asala" group leaders. However, starting from the month following September until the end of 2013, it was evident that the campaign managers had changed their tactics.**

Since the onset of 2014, ads for "Equipping Invaders" were withdrawn from circulation. The "One Body Campaign" account was deleted from social media networks, which was a framework on which "Al-Asala" society sought to list all fundraising operations for "Jihad in Syria", through its religious wing i.e. Al-Tarbiya Al-Islamiya (Islamic Education Charity Society). It created a new account and made certain not to include anything related to aid and funding of militant actions.

The first "Equipping Invaders" campaign was launched in July 2012 and based in six Bahraini mosques<sup>1</sup>. Within a year, campaign managers were able to organize four tours through which they raised 4 million US dollars, by providing shares, each of which represented a take-up of 1,000 Bahraini Dinars (approximately



Son of the Royal Court Minister Nasser Bin Khalid Al Khalifa supervising fundraiser-December 2013

2,600 USD)<sup>2</sup>.

Al-Asala society member Sheikh Faisal Al-Gharir stated that the “number of fighters it sponsored over four months had reached 1,530”. He also bragged in another statement at the end of August 2012, saying that “this money achieved great victories in Syria, downed jets and accomplished other things we cannot disclose.” Meanwhile, Al-Asala group’s secretary-general, Abed Al-Halim Morad, posted a tweet on June 14th 2013, saying:

“Glad tidings! Military equipment and peculiar weapons have entered Syria, and Jihadists are using them in their battles against the Nasiris (Shia) and the devil’s party (i.e. Hezbollah).”

It is shown that the latest ad for the “Equipping Invaders” campaign was posted on the 21st of August 2013 on the Twitter account of “Al-Asala” society secretary-general, Abed Al-Halim Morad, which represented the largest platform for the promotion of the campaign on Bahraini social media networks since 2012 and over a period of months. He had written in this respect: “Equipping 1,000 invaders project aimed at protecting Al-Ghouta children from chemical weapons. Each share equal to 100 Dinars (approximately 265 USD) is offered daily after sunset at Abu Hanifa and Sheikhan Farsi Mosques”.

**عاجل وبحاجة ماسة جداً**

**قال رسول الله ﷺ**  
**(من جهز غازياً فقد غزا)**

لتجهيز 5000 مقاتل من الجيش الحر لمواجهة أكثر  
من 20 ألف مقاتل من حزب الشيطان دخلوا الى حمص  
لقتل أهل السنة

**فهبوا لحماية أعراس أخواتكم يامسلمون**

**1000 دينار بحريني لتجهيز غازي**

للتبرع

الشيخ د. فيصل الفريز 009733222006  
الشيخ عبدالحليم مراد 009739409726  
الأخ خالد البلوشي 009736706000

انشر جزاك الله خيراً

Former ad for “Equipping Invaders” campaign before withdrawing it from circulation

This was the last signal he left in his account in connection to the “Equipping Invaders” campaign. Thereafter, a phase of complete inactivity took over, as everything indicating any relation to the campaign, along with expressions written on the subject disappeared. This included posters that read, “He who equips an invader is like the one who invades” and others that also specified the value of each share for whoever wanted to make a donation and the number of “invaders” needed to be equipped. This coincided with a stop in the flow of militant brigades’ videos that existed throughout the period between mid2012- and mid-2013<sup>3</sup>, expressing their thanks to Bahraini supporters by name. It was evident that something had changed.

### “Flaunting” that drew attention and new tactics

The strategy of flaunting that Al-Asala leaders used in their public call for equipping militants, infiltrating Syria’s territory, meeting Jihadists from the extremist group Suqour Al-Sham (Falcons of Syria) and Abu Dawoud Brigades, let alone the many news reports on the deaths of Bahrainis in Syria, intensified criticism of the Bahraini authorities. Al-Asala leaders’ tweets on social media networks, openly encouraged volunteering for Jihad and preparing Jihadists to head to conflict-ridden areas, provided full data used by journalists in their analytical pieces.

Therefore, a public opinion emerged on the “dangerous entity” being created from a distance in Syria in the shadow of a witnessed conspiracy on the part of security authorities, who did not address any case to date or question those involved in funding “Jihad”, even it was done publicly and against Bahraini laws.

Amid all of this, ISIS began to gain prominence from its battles in Syria, turning all eyes towards them. The



Fundraiser in Salaheddine mosque in Al-Riffa, Sheikh Faisal Al-Gharif seen at the back

militant group's brutality spread terror in the world, and even in the hearts of a group that shares the same extremist ideology, Nusra Front, with which the first Bahrainis who left to fight in Syria, about six fighters, were killed. In light of these developments, Al-Asala adopted another less striking tactic. What is the new "tactic"? It is the same support masked by humanitarian causes.

The fact is that in the last months of 2013, the indicator of Bahrain's interference in the Syrian crisis made a peculiar shift which can be described as an "evasive transition", the end of a busy phase of announced logistic military support and the beginning of a new phase under the disguise of humanitarian aid.



الشيخ عبدالحليم مراد برفقة متبرع سعودي قدم بـ 185 ألف ريال

All slogans used in the "Equipping Invaders" campaign were now used in "Food baskets" and "Schoolbag" campaigns. The same people who managed "Equipping Invaders" took up the new task, including Sheikh Abed Al-Halim Morad, Sheikh Faisal Al-Gharir, Khaled Mousa Al-Beloushi and Abed Al-Karim Al-Ammadi, while the number of mosques where fundraisers were being held decreased from six to only two, Sheikhan Al-Riffa and Abu Hanifa Al-Bisitn mosques.



Adel Al Mawda leading a jihadists meeting in Syria

The "One Body campaign" resumed its activity on social media networks; however, with new accounts launched on May 15th 2014, fueled by purports inspired by the new policy: distancing itself completely from any explicit sign of Jihad-related support and charging all fundraising





Judge Yasser Al-Mahmeed visiting the "One Body" campaign tent-December 2013

operations with "pity-seeking expressions".

## The New Disguise of Funding "Terrorism"

As the "Equipping Invaders" campaign faded away, the "One Body Campaign"

launched about 12 fundraising projects almost on a monthly basis, adopting the same former policy of offering previously-priced take-up shares: "Caravan 1,750 Bahraini Dinars (approximately 4,600 USD), flour 200 Bahraini Dinars (approximately 530 USD), general relief 50 Bahraini Dinars (approximately 132 USD), blankets 10 Bahraini Dinars (approximately 26 USD)"<sup>4</sup>.

The new projects were entitled as follows: Winter Bag project (November 2013), Relief Distressed Ghouta campaign (November 2013), Ummahat Al-Momineen-Mothers of the Believers- Camp for widows and orphans (November 2013), Dress Children of Syria Campaign (December 2013), Syria Children's Smile for Treatment and Nourishment project (March 2014), Mohammed Yousef, Pioneer of Humanitarian Aid, Caravan For the Relief of Syrian People (April 2014), Foster Care of Syrian Orphans campaign (May 2014), Bahraini Child, Noura Al-Souwaidi, Caravan for the Relief of Syrian Children (May 2014), I Am Khawla Campaign For the Foster Care of Syria Children (May 2014), Fast-Breaking Project (July 2014), Fitr Charity (Zakat) Project in Eastern Ghouta (July 2014).

Despite a statement issued by the

"One Body" campaign ad showing its bank account, registered in Bahrain Islamic Bank



Foreign Ministry on August 7th 2012, warning against “visiting or entering conflict-stricken areas and militant-combat zones”, after members of Al-Asala snuck into Syrian territory controlled by the opposition, Al-Asala leaders continued to infiltrate the Turkey-Syria border almost frequently until late 2014 under the pretext of sending aid.

A recent photo posted by Al-Asala secretary-general Abed Al-Halim Morad shows he was in Syria along with Faisal Al-Gharir on April 19th 2014 during the opening of “Ummahat Al-Momineen Camp 2”. Another photo



Interior Ministry anti-narcotics directorate head Major Mubarak Bin Huwail visiting “One Body” campaign tent to offer a donation-July 2014

taken on January 10th 2014 shows “One Body Campaign” on Syrian territory delivering what they called “winter aid”.

On December 29th 2013, one of Khalid Mousa Al-Beloushi Campaign leaders made a statement, saying: “Glad tidings to the people of Bahrain and the gulf. You have provided a warm environment for more than 3,000 Syrian families through your donations. We will deliver the aid ourselves in the coming days”. These campaigns, held every Saturday (from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.), were backed by state authorities, whilst receiving special comprehensive coverage by the Royal Court owned Al-Watan newspaper

Official statements posted by campaign managers show field visits paid by officials to their headquarters in a show of support and praise of their efforts. “One Body Campaign” notably celebrated a visit by the son of the Minister of the Royal Court, Bahraini military officer and Al-Riffa Sports Club President Nasser Bin Khalid



Interior Ministry anti-narcotics directorate head Major Mubarak Bin Huwail visiting “One Body” campaign tent to offer a donation-July 2014

Al Khalifa to their tent which was particularly set up for fundraising (December 2013), as well as Interior Ministry anti-narcotics directorate head Major Mubarak Bin Huwail (July 2014), Judge Yasser Al-Mahmeed (December 2013), and Judge Abed Al-Ilah Al-Marzouqi (December 28).



Al-Asala secretary-general Abed Al-Halim Morad sneaks into Syria accompanied by Sheikh Faisal Al-Gharir on April 19th 2014

As campaign managers did not reveal the amount of donations received from these officials, campaign posters showed that transfer and deposit operations were made through an official account in Faisal Abdallah Mohammed Al-Gharir's name, registered in Bahrain Islamic Bank, chiefly-owned by the government and the military retirement fund, and operated under supervision of the Central Bank of Bahrain under international account number of (BH30BIBB00100000170128). It is the same account found on posters and leaflets used to receive donations in "Equipping Invaders" campaign.

## Gulf Funders and Preachers

What is noteworthy in this respect is the amount of support that "One Body Campaign" received from gulf funders. It was encouraged by gulf preachers, invited to campaign headquarters, such as Salafist Saudi preacher Othman Khamees (May 3rd 2014) and hardliner Mohammed Al-Oraifi (July 9th 2014) who was recently arrested by Saudi authorities on charges of "funding terrorism", and Saudi-based Syrian preacher Sheikh Adnan Al-Aroor (May 29th 2013), whose bank accounts were frozen by authorities in Riyadh.



Al-Asala leaders at inauguration of "Mothers of the Believers 2" camp in Syria-April 2014

Regardless of the criticism and agitation that emerged ahead of Sheikh Al-Oraifi's visit, state authorities continued to allow him to enter Bahrain and deliver a speech at Sheikhan Al-Farasi mosque in Al-Riffa, entitled "One Body".



Saudi Preacher Mohammed Al-Oraifi delivering lecture in the Sheikhan Al-Farasi Mosque-July 9th 2014

Infrequent announcements posted by Al-Asala secretary-general on his Twitter account also reveal part of the support offered by Gulf sponsors. He announced on November 27th 2013 of receiving "a generous donation of 37,000 Riyals (approximately 9,860 USD) from a Saudi brother offered to Al-Sham Campaign". On December 28th of the same year, he again spoke of another "Saudi donation of 185,000 Riyals (approximately 49,805 USD) offered to One Body Campaign. He stated on April 8th of this year, "a contributor from Saudi Arabia donated a truck as part of Mohammed Yousef Caravan For the Relief of Syrian People project". In another statement made on the 20th of last May, he said "Gulf donations are coming forth. A (female) donor from our sister country the UAE contributed with 10,000 Dirhams (approximately 2,722 USD)".

Bahraini laws decisively ban receiving donations from foreign parties. Article number (14) of the Political Societies Law in Bahrain issued in 2005 "prohibits societies from accepting any donation or benefit from a foreign person, entity, international organization, or an anonymous person". Article number (2) of the Law of Associations, Social and Cultural Clubs, issued in 2012 on raising money, stipulates that "civil societies are banned from acquiring money from, or sending



Four al Asala leaders amid a group of extremist fighters in Syria

money to, a party outside Bahrain without written permission from the ministry." Also, "civil organizations are not allowed to raise funds inside houses of worship, during funerals, or inside any religious center." Amendments issued by the king in 2013 to Article number (9) of the Law of Protecting Society from



Al-Asala Society delegation at the Syrian border on January 10th 2014

Terrorist Acts and Organizing Fundraising for Public Purposes stipulate that "Those authorized are not allowed to transfer any amount of raised money to a person or foreign entity outside Bahrain without the minister's approval according to regulations specified by the executive list." Article number (14) of the same law also stipulates that "whoever raises funds for terrorist purposes is penalized by a -10year jail sentence and a fine of not less than 100,000 Dinars and not exceeding 500,000 Dinars."

Nonetheless, these laws are generally enacted in a selective manner only to harass opposition societies. Reassured by this, the Salafist Al-Asala secretary-general Abed Al-Halim Morad spoke of his approach of interfering in the Syrian crisis.

Although the government continued to issue statements warning of "getting involved in regional and international conflicts, joining extremist religious movements or groups listed as terrorist organizations locally, regionally or internationally, or providing any material or emotional support for them," as the foreign ministry statement said on February 25th 2014, Morad continues to act as if he is not subject to these warnings.

One month following this statement on March 19th 2014, he said: "We will continue to support the Syrian revolution until Assad's regime falls or we shall die trying." He certainly knows that nothing has changed except titles: Don't call it "Equipping Invaders," call it "providing schoolbags". He has indeed become an expert in this game!

