

## Al Hazimi Ideology: Radicalization of Extremism

July 23, 2017

### **Information:**

Major Arab information platforms, including [Elaph](#) and [Al Arabiya](#), have just recently introduced a person named Ahmad Bin Omar Al Hazimi, a Saudi [Salafi-Jihadi](#) preacher advocating what is described as "a *more extreme and brutal version of the ISIS ideology.*"

Accumulative, yet unconfirmed, information claims that ISIS in Iraq has executed and arrested militants identifying with Al Hazimi's ideology.

According to one source, the reason for ISIS' actions is an evolving inner power-struggle within ISIS following the alleged death of ISIS' leader, Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi.

In that context, according one source, a senior ISIS leader, named Abu Hafs Al Jazrawi, who is reportedly an adherent of Al Hazimi's ideology, may replace ISIS' leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. (*For more on that please read my [Immediate Intelligence Bulletin - Arab News Platforms Echo Reports ISIS Leader Dead](#), published on July11, 2017).*

Al Hazimi was reportedly arrested in Saudi Arabia in 2015 – the details of his arrest are not clear.

I do not possess information regarding Al Hazimi's whereabouts.

His website appears to be inactive and the contents are not up to date.

However, his [YouTube Channel](#), featuring many of his lectures as well as videos of his religious ordinances, is seemingly active, recently resuming after three years of being inactive.

It is not clear if the narrator in those videos is Al Hazimi himself.

It should also be noted that the number of views per video on his channel varies between a few hundred views to around 20,000.

### **Analysis:**

Al Hazimi's ideology seems to differ from ISIS theology in two significant ways:

#### **1. The Concept of Takfir**

The essence of Islam is the complete and willing submission of an individual to Allah's rule, meaning - full adherence to Islamic law, the *Shari'ah*.

Islamic theologians argue there are two kinds of people: Muslims and non-Muslims. Non-Muslims are Infidels, or in Arabic *Quffar* (also spelled in English *Kufar*), who should be convinced - either through education, or by force if necessary, to adopt Islam.

The concept of *Takfir* says there are actually not two kinds of people, there are three kinds of people: Muslims, Infidels, and Muslims who "pretend" to be Muslims but are not "real Muslims,"

they are “fake Muslims.”

Those fake Muslims are thus even worse than Quffar (infidels).

Why?

Because in the eyes of Takfir ideology, Islam is "contaminated" from within by those fake Muslims. And in order to bring about the realization of the global Caliphate which will be subdued to Shari'ah law Islam must first be “purified” from within.

ISIS theologians argue there are two types of fake Muslims and they differentiate between the two types of fake Muslims:

One type of fake Muslims in the ISIS ideology are Muslims who either, because of laziness and or a lack of religious devotion, knowingly and intentionally do not follow the Shari'ah, and worse – they pretend as if they do. In ISIS' view these people are destined to, and must be executed because they are contaminating Islam from within.

This ideology results in two major outcomes:

1. The majority of the victims of Salafi-Jihadi ideology are Muslims.
2. The top goal and priority of Salafi-Jihadism is to first of all, topple all political structures in Muslim societies, because these governments and regimes are - in the eyes of Salafi-Jihadi ideology - fake Muslims and must be destroyed.

The second type of fake Muslims, in the eyes of ISIS theologians, are Muslims who out of ignorance do not follow the Shari'ah. The term describing that ignorance is "*Jahiliyyah*" - a term used by Islam to describe the pre-Islamic period, a time that is described in Muslim thought as a period of "Barbarism and Darkness." Thus, the second kind of Quffar Muslims are "*Juhhal*" ignorant people, living in darkness. They, therefore should be redirected to see the light – meaning Islam - through education - and if needed, through the use of non-fatal punishments and sanctions - to become "true" Muslims.

On the above two points, Al Hazimi disagrees with ISIS theologians.

Al Hazimi does not differentiate between the types of fake Muslims.

He argues that the Islamist religious ordinance – the Shari'ah, defines very clearly the strict rules according to which a person is considered to be a “Muslim.”

Thus, in his view, if those rules are not fully and strictly met, the person cannot be considered a “Muslim” and therefore can only be “Qafer” (also spelled in English *Kafir*) – an Infidel, and as such must be treated according to the Islamic religious law as an Infidel. Al Hazimi also makes it clear that the treatment of a Qafer must only be according to the Shari'ah and not any other law (state law, traditional law, civil law, common law, etc).

And, according to Al Hazimi's beliefs, the Shari'ah law orders the execution of such a person.

## **2. Obedience to Salafi-Jihadi Theologians**

Present day Salafi-Jihadi movements – ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, Boko Haram, and others throughout the Middle East and in other regions of the world, base their beliefs according to the philosophy and teachings of iconic theologians of Salafi-Jihadi ideology such as as [Ibn Taymiyyah](#) (d.1328) or [Mohammad Bin 'Abd Al Wahab](#) (d.1791). Following and obeying their path and implementing their teachings is a cornerstone of the political and operational praxis of ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and other Salafi-Jihadi groups.

Al Hazimi argues that the philosophy of such Salafi-Jihadi thinkers, teachers, and theologians like Ibn Taymiyyah and `Abd Al Wahab - let alone the current ones, is not to be blindly obeyed.

This outlook completely shakes the very foundation of current Salafi-Jihadi hierarchy and structure.

Al Hazimi's ideology and teachings echoes the philosophy of the Egyptian Islamist thinker [Sayyid Qutb](#) (executed in Egypt in 1966), whose thoughts significantly inspired contemporary Militant Islam.

Sayyid Qutb was a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood, and was profoundly influenced by the philosophy of iconic Salafi-Jihadi thinkers - and especially, Ibn Taymiyyah.

As an adherent of Ibn Taymiyyah's teachings, Qutb argued that the Muslim world was going through a phase of "*Jahiliyyah*," - i.e. a period of "the absence of Allah's rule" - and that that reality must be changed.

Qutb attributed the gloomy reality of Muslims to Western influence, secularism, corrupted governments, and rulers who were - in Qutb's mind "fake Muslims" who must be overthrown by the Muslim masses.

Furthermore, he also accused Muslim clergy of cooperating with the corrupted leaders, and thus he argued that these clergy, and the religious ordinances they provide, were illegitimate and should, therefore, be disobeyed.

Yet, ironically, Al Hazimi, who echoes Qutb's ideas - challenges the consensual authority of Ibn Taymiyyah, and also defines the Muslim Brotherhood as Quffar.

Why does Al Hazimi label the Muslim Brotherhood, the largest Sunni Islamic Muslim movement in the world, Quffar?

In a lecture he gave Al Hazimi argues that the Muslim Brotherhood theologians "*accept the narrative that Judaism and Christianity are legitimate monotheistic religions, thus deserve to be protected by Islam.*" Al Hazimi completely rejects this narrative. Thus, he labels the theologians of the Muslim Brotherhood as Quffar.

Labeling Muslim Brotherhood theologians as Quffar is ironic. A core value of the Muslim Brotherhood is its non-compromising animosity to the west, an entity completely viewed by the Muslim Brotherhood as Qafer - infidels.

Looking retrospectively at the evolution of Islamic Fundamentalism and Militant Islamic ideology since the appearance of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, there is a rapid process of inner extremism within those circles.

Al Hazimi is yet another milestone in that process - proving that extremism, quite often, gives birth to more extremism.

In that context, Egyptian poet and writer Farouk Juweida wrote an article published in [Elaph](#) in July 2017 entitled "[Where will ISIS Militants Go Now?](#)" in which he said this: "*ISIS militants are suffocated with exrtremism. It is unrealistic to expect they will change their skin and will integrate positively in their societies.*"

Indeed, Al Hazimi's path indicates that extremism, often gives birth to more extremism.

### **Evaluation and Prediction:**

Al Hazimi likely has followers within ISIS. However, I'm unable to determine whether he has a significant impact in general, and inside ISIS in particular.

Information regarding an alleged power struggle between ISIS and Al-Hazimi's followers is yet to be confirmed.

The Hazimis may offer a kind of ISIS 2.0 version, yet in my evaluation, "crowning" Al Hazimis as the ISIS' heir is actually irrelevant. The merchandise they sell will be just more of the same: extreme ideology, terror, death, and atrocities.

Salafi-Jihadi groups are on the run and coming under growing military pressure in areas like Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sinai Peninsula, and the northern Sahara.

ISIS is losing its major strongholds in Iraq and Syria, and its militants are defeated and losing momentum.

Muslim societies largely oppose and reject Militant Islam, and the international community has joined forces to combat the challenge of Militant Islam.

Under such conditions, it is hard to envision how the Hazimis will be able to rehabilitate the declining momentum of Salafi-Jihadi groups.

It is also difficult to envision how the Hazimis could mark achievements that match – let alone surpass - ISIS' achievements at its peak.

The current dire situation of ISIS indicates that in the end of the day its path leads nowhere.

That being said, it should be clear that Militant Islam is here to stay. Totally defeating Militant Islam ideology and path is a long-term effort.

In my book [Inside the Middle East: Making Sense of the most Dangerous and Complicated Region on Earth](#) (March 2016) I wrote : "*...Corruption, Illiteracy, lack of civil rights. poverty, violence and other challenges in Muslim societies must be overcome. As long as they exist, Militant Islam will be present.*" (pp. 82)

**Avi Melamed**  
**Middle East Strategic Intelligence Analyst -**  
[A New Middle East Requires a New Understanding](#)

Avi Melamed who serves as the [Salisbury Fellow of Intelligence and Middle East Affairs](#) for the [Eisenhower Institute](#) with offices at Gettysburg College and in Washington, DC, is an expert on the Current Affairs in the Arab and Muslim World Arab and their impact on Israel and the Middle East.

His expertise includes: The Arab Awakening and Regional Ramifications; Arab perspectives on Israel; Current Affairs in the Arab World - and their Impact on Israel; Emerging Challenges and Opportunities in the Middle East; Evolving Forces in the Region; the Gaza Strip; the Geostrategic Environment of the Middle East; the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Jerusalem; Roots and Ideology of Radical Islam; Terrorism; the War in Syria; the West Bank; and In Through the Chimney - A New Approach to Countering BDS.

Avi is a former Israeli Intelligence Official and Senior Official on Arab Affairs. In his decades of public service, Avi - an Israeli Jew who is fluent in Arabic, English and Hebrew, with a unique understanding of Arab society and culture - has held high-risk Government, Senior Advisory, Intelligence and Counter-Terrorist intelligence positions in Arab cities and communities throughout the region – often in very sensitive times - on behalf of the Israeli government agencies.

As an Author, Educator, Strategic Intelligence Analyst, Avi Melamed educates current and future leaders around the world about Israel and the Middle East and trains them to be Media Literate Critical Thinkers who dialogue with reality and don't get sidetracked by concepts, narratives and theories.

Avi's newest book, [Inside the Middle East: Making Sense of the Most Dangerous and Complicated Region on Earth](#), (also just released as an audio book) a GPS to help you navigate the dramatically changing Middle East offers a unique insight into the Arab world, challenges widely-accepted perceptions, provides a guide to make sense of the events unfolding in the region, and offers an out of the box idea that could lead to a positive breakthrough in the Israeli- Palestinian conflict.

He is the Founder and Director of the Eisenhower Institute's "[Inside the Middle East – Intelligence Perspectives](#)" program designed to ensure that the next generation of policy makers and influencers will be knowledgeable about Israel and the Middle East and will apply methods of critical thinking regarding Middle East Affairs.

Avi provides intelligence analysis, briefings and tours to diplomats, Israeli and foreign policy makers, international media outlets and a wide variety of organizations and private clients on a range of Israel and Middle East affairs.

In the private sector Avi facilitates relationships between Israeli and international firms and potential partners in the Arab world.

He is also the founder and creator of Feenjan – Israel speaks Arabic, a non-profit initiative which presents contemporary Israeli society and culture to the Arab world in Arabic, and serves as an online platform for Israelis and Arabs to discover and discuss issues of common interest.

Avi has his finger on the pulse on the Arab world. With a proven record of foreseeing the evolution of events in the Middle East and their impact on a local and regional level.

Through all of his efforts, as an analyst, educator, entrepreneur, and writer, Avi is a bridge builder. He dedicates himself to enhancing the Arabic, English and Hebrew speaking audience's comprehensive understanding of the Middle East and of each other.

His website is [www.avimelamed.com](http://www.avimelamed.com) and he can be reached at [avi@avimelamed.com](mailto:avi@avimelamed.com).