



# Voice of Khurasan: Inside Islamic State Khurasan Province's English Language Magazine

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International Centre for  
Counter-Terrorism

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ICCT Report

February 2026



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## Executive Summary

This report provides practitioners and scholars with an accessible guide to Islamic State Khurasan Province's (ISKP) *Voice of Khurasan* magazine. Covering forty-six issues, it explores the strategic and historical context for the magazine's emergence and evolution, broadly identifies thematic and motivational patterns across its content, and draws out research and policy lessons from those findings. This study argues that *Voice of Khurasan* is characterised by thematically and stylistically diverse content, responsive to shifting historical and strategic conditions, yet built on a consistent core narrative that frames Islamic State as singularly capable of defending the *ummah* and reversing its crises through perpetual war. A persistent feature of that core narrative is that the *ummah*'s crisis is so acute that an intra-jihadi civil war is necessary to purify Islam's ranks with sectarian violence lauded as a genocidal tool that must be wielded to help collapse a global architecture of enemies coalesced by their "cascading apostasy." Designed specifically for English-speaking audiences, especially South and Central Asian diasporas in the West, *Voice of Khurasan* is unequivocal in its incitement to violence and its efforts to educate the next generation of media jihad operatives.

This report is organised into three parts. Part I outlines the historical and strategic context for *Voice of Khurasan*'s emergence and evolution from January 2022 to the end of 2025. Part II features a quick reference guide to forty-six issues of the publication with overarching analyses of annual trends in narrative, thematic, and editorial approaches. Finally, Part III identifies the key findings and lessons to be drawn from this study especially concerning the dominant motivational levers deployed in *Voice of Khurasan*'s contents and the advice its editors offer to the next generation of media jihadists.

# Introduction

*“We intend to incite our believers to the path of Jihad, to the path of Caliphate.”*

**Voice of Khurasan.<sup>1</sup>**

Emerging in late-2014 in Afghanistan as a melting pot of disgruntled jihadis from across South and Central Asia, Islamic State’s Khurasan province (ISKP) has demonstrated extraordinary organisational resilience and strategic adaptability during its rise to the forefront of the global jihad.<sup>2</sup> For several consecutive years, counter-terrorism authorities around the world have declared that ISKP poses both the greatest transnational jihadist threat and is the group which is most actively engaging in and attempting to incite terrorist attacks in the West.<sup>3</sup> In ISKP’s pursuit of these ends, *Voice of Khurasan* magazine has been the group’s primary means for communicating to English-speaking audiences. Since the release of *Voice of Khurasan*’s inaugural issue in January 2022 until March 2025, ISKP devoted what must have been a significant amount of time and resources to releasing a slickly produced and article-heavy-magazine almost every month. It is quite a feat given the operational risks associated with such an effort, the immense counter-terrorism pressures the group absorbed, and the sheer volume of offline and online, multimedial and multilingual offerings produced by ISKP’s central media unit, the Al-Azaim Media Foundation. However, the cumulative effects of counter-terrorism operations would prove too much and, by the end of 2025, ISKP had only released one additional issue in nine months.

The purpose of this report is to provide an accessible guide to the first forty-six issues of *Voice of Khurasan* and to broadly examine its narrative, thematic, and motivational characteristics over that time. It proceeds by outlining the historical and strategic context for *Voice of Khurasan*’s rise and evolution, identifies and analyses the magazine’s narratives, themes, and editorial traits, and considers how ISKP has sought to shape the media jihad amongst its English-language supporters. In its first year, *Voice of Khurasan* was largely focused on Afghanistan and the Khurasan region. However, by its second year of publication, *Voice of Khurasan* was prioritising globally focused content. Since its third year, the magazine had not only established itself as the English-language flagship of the global media jihad but forged its own niche relative to other jihadi English-language magazines. If *Inspire* magazine’s trademark was its colloquial style and ‘Open Source Jihad’ section, and *Dabiq*’s is its more authoritative style and ‘Just Terror’ section, *Voice of Khurasan* is characterised by the variety of stylistic, thematic, and influence levers its editors are willing to deploy and calibrate to shape the perceptions, polarise the support, and motivate the behaviour of its English-speaking readership. Due to mounting counter-terrorism pressures, the magazine experienced a steep decline in 2025 with only four issues released the entire year. Unravelling the key features of how these dynamics play out in *Voice of Khurasan* promises important insights into both ISKP’s strategic rationale and, more broadly, how the global jihad against the west is transitioning.

1 Unidentified author. 2022. “Caravan of the Shuhada,” *Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 1: p.16.

2 For the field’s most comprehensive analysis of ISKP’s history and rise see Jadoon, A. & Mines, A. 2023. *The Islamic State in Afghanistan and Pakistan: Strategic Alliances and Rivalries*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder.

3 Australian National Security, 2024. “Islamic State Khurasan Province,” *Australian Government*. Available online: <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/islamic-state-Khurasan-province>; Gul, A. 2025. “UN Security Council raises alarm over rising IS-K threat from Afghanistan,” *Voice of America*. 10 February 2025. Available online: <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-security-council-raises-alarm-over-rising-is-k-threat-from-afghanistan/7969985.html>; U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 2025. *Homeland Threat Assessment 2025*. Office of Intelligence and Analysis. Available online: [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/24\\_0930\\_ia\\_24-320-ia-publication-2025-ha-final-30sep24-508.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/24_0930_ia_24-320-ia-publication-2025-ha-final-30sep24-508.pdf)

## Methodology

It is important to highlight the methodology that underpins this report's findings to identify what guided the narrative interpretation. The primary source dataset consists of forty-six issues of *Voice of Khurasan* magazine released between January 2022 (issue 1) and June 2025 (issue 46). The principal coding scheme is based on the linkage approach<sup>4</sup> whereby items (articles, infographics/ads, statements) in each issue are assessed by the way in which in-group and out-group identity constructs are attached (i.e. linked) to solution and crisis constructs. Each item was categorised as value-reinforcing (in-group/solution, out-group/crisis), dichotomy-reinforcing (in-group/outgroup, solution/crisis), or crisis reinforcing (in-group/crisis). Each item was also coded and categorised based on whether the dominant motivational factor is a rational-choice (cost-benefit) or an identity-choice (value-based) appeal. A secondary coding scheme was developed iteratively, after a pilot review of the primary sources, with seventeen thematic categories identified and defined to track thematic trends across the content.<sup>5</sup> Theme identification, axial coding, and frequency tracking enabled the occurrences of each theme and relationships with other themes to be recorded across the dataset to measure prioritisation comparatively and inform evidence-based qualitative assessments about strategy, messaging, and motivational priorities in the corpus. This process was repeated three times for every issue for verification and to ensure methodological and analytical rigor. By combining qualitative analysis and interpretation and quantitative frequency, this method enables the identification of *Voice of Khurasan's* propaganda methods, an assessment of the frequency and intensity of their application, and a temporal analysis of the relationship between those strategies and ground realities. While a forthcoming in-depth scholarly analysis, designed for more esoteric scholarly and policy audiences, will feature the full suite of the findings generated by this approach, the purpose of the current report is to provide a more generally *accessible* guide for practitioners and scholars.

## Limitations

The limitations of the subject and the study itself must also be acknowledged. There is neither the space nor scope to delve deeply into ISKP's propaganda apparatus let alone the historical, organisational, strategic, and operational nuances of the group more broadly.<sup>6</sup> This study also does not engage in an in-depth scholarly analysis of *Voice of Khurasan's* contents.<sup>7</sup> Rather, it provides scholars and practitioners with an accessible and broad examination of *Voice of Khurasan's* context, content, and its implications for research and practice. On this point, it is also important to acknowledge that while this analysis may offer insights into ISKP's broader propaganda strategy, it should be read as a relatively narrow study of a single format (online magazine) in a single and largely peripheral language for ISKP (English). The vast majority of ISKP's propaganda is produced in the languages of South and Central Asia, spanning a diversity of formats, and targeting both local populations within the region as well as diaspora populations.

4 For other studies that have applied the methodology see Berger, J. 2018. *Extremism*. MIT Press, Cambridge MA; Whittaker, J. and Elsayed, L. 2019. "Linkage as a Lens: An exploration of strategic communications in P/CVE," *Journal for Deradicalization*, Fall 2019: pp.1-46.

5 The seventeen thematic categories are: say-do positive, say-do negative, responsibility to protect, jurisprudential/ideological, Islamic history, ISIS history, modern history, nostalgia, eulogy, leader, other personal, media jihad, insurgency/guerrilla, lone wolf terror, governance, great power competition, local/regional politics.

6 Instead see Jadoon, A. & Mines, A. 2023. *The Islamic State in Afghanistan and Pakistan: Strategic Alliances and Rivalries*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder.

7 This will be the focus of a forthcoming peer-reviewed journal article.

## Structure

This report proceeds in three parts. Part I sets the scene by broadly positioning the emergence and evolution of *Voice of Khurasan* magazine in the context of ISKP's historical and strategic trajectory. It also considers the parallels between *Voice of Khurasan* and other jihadist English-language magazines. Part II then doubles as both a quick reference guide for the magazine's forty-six issues and an analysis of its narrative and thematic trendlines. Part III draws on these findings to delve into the ways in which *Voice of Khurasan* seeks to shape reader perceptions, incite violence, and direct a new generation of media jihadis. Ultimately, this report is designed to look behind the curtain of *Voice of Khurasan*'s propaganda to understand the basic psychosocial and strategic mechanisms being deployed by its editors and writers. In doing so, this report may help to advance scholar and practitioner understanding, as well as provide a reference for methodical and evidence-based preventative and counter strategies especially in the information theatre.

## Part I: Strategic & Historical Context

*“Do not join the ranks of this state just because “this state is weak, it will be stronger if we join it,” but because it is the army of Allah, and you believe that Allah will protect it. Join this state for the sake of protecting your faith because the tyrants will not allow you to keep your faith intact and your beliefs healthy, and they will try to break it under various pretexts and try to force you into the side of kufr like them. Our duty is to deliver the clear message.”*  
**Voice of Khurasan.<sup>8</sup>**

Propaganda analysis must be grounded in an historical and strategic context. After all, propaganda is rarely produced as an end unto itself. Rather, when deployed by a violent political actor, propaganda is the communicative means to achieve, in full or part, persuasive objectives that contribute to broader politico-military goals. To isolate the message from the socio-political environment of the time, the organisation that produces it, and the broader legacies from which it arises is to dislocate the propaganda from the factors that are typically most important for driving its strategic rationale and fuelling its persuasive intents. To these ends, this section traces the emergence of *Voice of Khurasan* within the context of ISKP’s trajectory from 2022 as the group expanded its media efforts and adopted a strategically bullish campaign to accelerate its ascent to the forefront of the global jihad through 2024 and the magazine’s steep decline in 2025. Part I also positions *Voice of Khurasan* within the context of other jihadist English-language magazines to explore the ways in which it builds on and diverges from the legacies of magazines such as *Inspire*, *Dabiq*, and *Rumiyah*.

### ISKP’s Oscillatory Trajectory

ISKP’s origin story can be traced to 2014 when breakaway factions from the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) defected to Islamic State.<sup>9</sup> This was the year that Islamic State swept across Iraq and Syria culminating with its then-leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, being declared as the caliph of the group’s newly re-established caliphate. Across the world, jihadis who pledged allegiance to Baghdadi were typically those disgruntled by the status quo in their local milieu and looking to leverage the Islamic State’s brand, strategy, and support to establish their own *wilayat* (province). In January 2015, the Islamic State formally recognised the Khurasan province with a TTP commander, Hafiz Said Khan, as its first *wali* (governor). While the nascent Khurasan province was initially dominated by TTP breakaways, the publicity boon for being one of the Islamic State’s first provinces outside of Iraq and Syria attracted jihadis from across South and Central Asia. Establishing its base of operations in Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan, former Afghan Taliban further swelled ISKP’s ranks. With this, the stage was set for ISKP to embark on its first brutal campaign of expansion.

In the year proceeding ISKP’s formal establishment as an Islamic State province, the group sought

<sup>8</sup> Unnamed author, 2024. “Why should you join the Islamic State?” *Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 41: p.43.

<sup>9</sup> For more on ISKP’s origins and history see Jadoon, A. & Mines, A. 2023. *The Islamic State in Afghanistan and Pakistan: Strategic Alliances and Rivalries*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder; Jadoon, A., Sayed, A. & Mines, A. 2022. “The Islamic State Threat in Taliban Afghanistan: Tracing the Resurgence of Islamic State Khurasan,” *CTC Sentinel*, Volume 15, Issue 1. Available online: <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-islamic-state-threat-in-taliban-afghanistan-tracing-the-resurgence-of-islamic-state-Khurasan/>; Australian National Security, 2024. “Islamic State Khurasan Province,” *Australian Government*. Available online: <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/islamic-state-Khurasan-province>; Doxsee, C., Thompson, J. & Hwang, G. 2021. “Examining Extremism: Islamic State Khurasan Province (ISKP),” *Center for Strategic & International Studies*. Available online: <https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-islamic-state-Khurasan-province-iskp>



to rapidly expand its areas of territorial control across Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar and Kunar provinces that bordered Pakistan. Several TTP commanders who had defected to ISKP, including Khan, had been responsible for TTP operations in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) which helped ISKP with both its recruitment and external operations over the border into Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> Co-option of regional jihadi groups and breakaways, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, helped to expand its capabilities, pool of experts, and perhaps most importantly, its transnational reach in the region.<sup>11</sup> While ISKP fought Afghan security and even international forces, from its inception ISKP's number one enemy was and remains the Afghan Taliban. Indeed, ISKP's early successes, through 2015 and into early-2016, were at the expense of the Afghan Taliban. However, as ISKP's rapid expansion stretched its capabilities and the Taliban ramped up its counteroffensives through 2016 and into 2017, the group's gains slowed, then stalled, and began to reverse. The joint efforts of Taliban, US military, and Afghan security forces to combat the group, especially in ISKP's strongholds of Nangarhar, would devastate it and force a strategic pivot.

ISKP's initial campaigning sought to replicate the rapid expeditionary operations of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and it enjoyed some success even consolidating territories in districts of Nangarhar in attempts to establish its own pro-state. However, with its guerrilla operations now under intense pressure, ISKP began to increasingly pivot to urban operations in late-2017. Kabul in Afghanistan and Jalalabad in Pakistan would suffer the greatest casualties as ISKP's bloody campaign of terror targeted not just government and security personnel but Afghanistan's minority Hazara communities and Pakistan's Sufi communities.<sup>12</sup> The lethality of ISKP operations spiked in 2018 and, in its aftermath, counter-terrorism operations helped to drive the group to arguably its lowest operational and strategic point by the end of 2019. Hopes that ISKP may have been decimated were soon quashed by a resurgence a year later characterised by yet another campaign of terrorist attacks. As Jadoon, Sayed and Mines assert, "Starting in June 2020, ISK attacks in Afghanistan steadily rose month after month all the way through to June 2021, surging from just three attacks in June 2020 to 41 attacks in June 2021."<sup>13</sup> By 2022, ISKP were also starting to expand its transnational operations in neighbouring countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Iran. ISKP were learning the value of adopting the full suite of external operations<sup>14</sup> – from local expeditionary to coordinated transnational operations – for not just sowing chaos and building brand but forging strategic depth, stretching its adversaries, and laying the foundations for positioning itself as the vanguard for taking the fight to the world's great powers.

Three events between February 2020 and August 2021 had a pivotal impact on ISKP's strategic

10 For more see Zahid, F. 2017. "The Islamic State in Pakistan: Growing the Network," *The Washington Institute*. Available online: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/islamic-state-pakistan-growing-network>

11 For more see Jadoon, A., Sayed, A. & Mines, A. 2022. "The Islamic State Threat in Taliban Afghanistan: Tracing the Resurgence of Islamic State Khurasan," *CTC Sentinel*, Volume 15, Issue 1. Available online: <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-islamic-state-threat-in-taliban-afghanistan-tracing-the-resurgence-of-islamic-state-Khurasan/>

12 For more see Mines, A., Ingram, H. & Azizi, A. 2025. "A Practical Approach to Understanding ISKP's War on Minority Communities," *The Center for Justice & Accountability*, May 2025. Available online: <http://cja.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Mines-Ingram-Azizi.Practical-Understanding-ISKP.pdf>; Also see Mines, A. 2023. "Refuting the Lying Tongues": Unpacking the Islamic State Khurasan Province's Campaign against Humanitarians in Afghanistan," *George Washington University*. 15 February 2023. Available online: <https://extremism.gwu.edu/islamic-state-Khurasan-targeting-humanitarians>

13 For more see Jadoon, A., Sayed, A. & Mines, A. 2022. "The Islamic State Threat in Taliban Afghanistan: Tracing the Resurgence of Islamic State Khurasan," *CTC Sentinel*, Volume 15, Issue 1. Available online: <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-islamic-state-threat-in-taliban-afghanistan-tracing-the-resurgence-of-islamic-state-Khurasan/>

14 For more on Islamic State's external operations and an ISKP case study see Ingram, H. and Mines, A. 2023. "From Expeditionary to Inspired: Situating External Operations within the Islamic State's Insurgency Method," *International Center for Counter-Terrorism*, The Hague. Available online: <https://icct.nl/publication/expeditionary-inspired-situating-external-operations-within-islamic-states-insurgency>

trajectory. First is the signing of the peace deal<sup>15</sup> between the United States and the Afghan Taliban on 29 February 2020.<sup>16</sup> For ISKP, this proved once and for all not just the deep political corruption but apostasy of the Afghan Taliban. Second, a little over a month later in early-April 2020, ISKP appointed Sanaullah Ghafari, aka Shahab Muhajir, as *emir* and it is under his leadership, which continues at the time of this report's publication, that ISKP simultaneously expanded its propaganda apparatus alongside increased regional and global operations. Third, the disastrous withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan on 30 August 2021 signalled the end to almost two decades of US troop presence in the country and the return of the Afghan Taliban to power.<sup>17</sup> The US's exit was punctuated on 26 August 2021 by an ISKP suicide attack that killed 170 Afghan civilians and 13 US military personnel outside Kabul's international airport.<sup>18</sup> Afghanistan was once again the focus of global media attention and, with this devastating, headline grabbing attack, ISKP sought to position itself as the ascendent Islamic State affiliate.

Through this period and into 2022, ISKP continued to focus its operations on Afghanistan. According to a review by the Australian government, between 2020 and 2021 Afghanistan had a 400 percent rise in ISKP attacks.<sup>19</sup> Then, for the first year of the Taliban's control of Afghanistan, ISKP focused most of its operations on attacking its arch-rival.<sup>20</sup> However, a significant strategic pivot to transnational operations occurred in 2023 which escalated in 2024.<sup>21</sup> As the *Global Terrorism Index 2025* details, while the Sahel is the "global epicentre of terrorism," thanks in large part to the impact of Islamic State's affiliates in Africa,<sup>22</sup> ISKP has pivoted to focus on transnational operations to such an extent that "since 2022, attacks within the country [Afghanistan] have declined, while those outside its borders have risen to a comparable level."<sup>23</sup> Most of ISKP's cross border terrorist operations have been in countries neighbouring Afghanistan that it designates as part of the greater Khurasan region such as Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. For example, one of its deadliest strikes was the 3 January 2024 suicide bombings of a procession mourning the death of Qasem Solemani in Kerman, Iran which killed over

<sup>15</sup> *Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America*, February 29, 2020. Available online: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/u-s-taliban-peace-deal/7aab0f58-dd5c-430d-9557-1b6672d889c3/?itid=lk\\_inline\\_manual\\_3](https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/u-s-taliban-peace-deal/7aab0f58-dd5c-430d-9557-1b6672d889c3/?itid=lk_inline_manual_3)

<sup>16</sup> Maizland, L. 2020. "U.S.-Taliban Peace Deal: What to Know," *Council on Foreign Relations*. 2 March 2020. Available online: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-taliban-peace-deal-agreement-afghanistan-war>

<sup>17</sup> For more see Kiely, E. & Farley, R. 2021. "Timeline of U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan," *FactCheck.org*. Available online: <https://www.factcheck.org/2021/08/timeline-of-u-s-withdrawal-from-afghanistan/>

<sup>18</sup> Olay, M. 2024. "Kabul Airport Attack Review Affirms Initial Findings, Identifies Attacker," *U.S. Department of Defense*. April 15, 2024. Available online: <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3741245/kabul-airport-attack-review-reaffirms-initial-findings-identifies-attacker/>

<sup>19</sup> Australian National Security, 2024. "Islamic State Khurasan Province," *Australian Government*. Available online: <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/islamic-state-khorasan-province>

<sup>20</sup> Mines, A. & Jadoon, A. 2023. "A string of assassinations in Afghanistan point to ISIS-K resurgence – and US officials warn of possible attacks on American interests in next 6 months," *The Conversation*. 21 March 2023. Available online: <https://theconversation.com/a-string-of-assassinations-in-afghanistan-point-to-isis-k-resurgence-and-us-officials-warn-of-possible-attacks-on-american-interests-in-next-6-months-201852>

<sup>21</sup> Zelin, A. 2023. "ISKP Goes Global: External Operations from Afghanistan," *The Washington Institute*. 11 September 2023. Available online: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iskp-goes-global-external-operations-afghanistan>

<sup>22</sup> Institute for Economics & Peace, 2025. *Global Terrorism Index 2025: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. Sydney, March 2025: 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid: 73.

a hundred and injured over two hundred people.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, in Europe, audacious plots and bloody strikes have highlighted ISKP's ability to not only directly coordinate but indirectly inspire terrorist attacks. The 22 March 2024 attack on Crocus City Hall in Russia, which killed almost 150 and injured many hundreds more,<sup>25</sup> and a foiled plot to attack the Paris Olympics in May 2024, are two of the highest profile cases.<sup>26</sup> For further context, while ISKP had been linked to twelve international plots in 2023 that number had almost doubled in 2024.<sup>27</sup>

At the dawn of 2025 it seemed that ISKP was destined for another deadly year of external operations that its Al-Azaim Media Foundation would exploit for global attention and to inspire further attacks. Instead, ISKP's external operations, overall propaganda output, and online activities all steeply declined. Most notably for this study, only four issues of *Voice of Khurasan* were released in 2025 compared to nineteen in 2022, twelve in 2023 and eleven in 2024. The cumulative impact of counter-terrorism operations – including the arrest in May 2025 of Sultan Aziz Azam, ISKP spokesman and a senior Al-Azaim Media Foundation official,<sup>28</sup> as well as other media operatives,<sup>29</sup> and the dismantling of online translation and distribution nodes during, for example, Operation HOPPER II in mid-2024<sup>30</sup> – seems to have critically disabled ISKP's propaganda machine and its broader online enabling ecosystem. ISKP's response has been to contract and consolidate by prioritising the sustainment of its guerrilla operations and terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan while narrowing the focus of its propaganda efforts to more local constituents and closed online channels. ISKP remains the leading transnational global jihadist threat and, to sustain that status, its leadership seems to understand the importance of multilingual propaganda operating as a strategic enabling function and amplifier of its operational activities.

## Messages to the West

In its efforts to be the flagship of the global jihad, it is perhaps unsurprising that ISKP has had the most sophisticated and comprehensive propaganda apparatus of arguably any Islamic State or al-Qaeda affiliate. ISKP's propaganda efforts are centralised in its Al-Azaim Media Foundation which is responsible for the full spectrum of its offline and online, multimedial, and multilingual messaging.<sup>31</sup> Initially, ISKP's Al-Azaim Media Foundation focused almost entirely on local and

24 Hafezi, P., Elwely, E. and Tanios, C. 2024. "Islamic State claim responsibility for deadly Iran attack, Tehran vows revenge," *Reuters*, 5 January 2024. Available online: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-vows-revenge-after-biggest-attack-since-1979-revolution-2024-01-04/>

25 BBC News. 2024. "What we know about attack on a Moscow concert hall," *BBC News*, 10 April 2024. Available online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68645755>

26 Al Jazeera News, 2024. "France says it foiled three plots to attack Paris Olympics," *Al Jazeera News*, 11 September 2024. Available online: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/11/france-says-it-foiled-three-plots-to-attack-paris-olympics>

27 Webber, L. & Smith, P. 2024. "IS Khurasan's Multipolar War: Propaganda and Operations Against the Great Powers," *Hudson Institute*, 11 November 2024. Available online: <https://www.hudson.org/foreign-policy/khurasans-multipolar-war-propaganda-operations-against-great-powers-peter-smith-lucas-webber>

28 Alarabiya English, 2025, "Pakistan arrests senior official from ISIS offshoot," *Alarabiya English*, 19 December 2025: <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2025/12/19/pakistan-arrests-senior-official-from-isis-offshoot>

29 Basit, A. 2025, "Is the Islamic State of Khorasan Province losing momentum?" *The Diplomat*, 26 June 2025: <http://thediplomat.com/2025/06/is-the-islamic-state-of-khorasan-province-losing-momentum/>; Afghanistan Studies Center, 2025, "Senior Daesh figure captured in joint Pak-Turkish intelligence operation near Afghan border," *Afghan Studies Center*: <https://www.afghanstudiescenter.org/senior-daesh-figure-captured-in-joint-pak-turkish-intelligence-operation-near-afghan-border/>

30 Europol, 2024, "Europol-coordinated operation tackles the threat of terrorist-operated websites," *Europol*, 14 June 2024: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/europol-coordinated-operation-tackles-threat-of-terrorist-operated-websites>

31 For more see Clarke, C., Webber, L. & Smith, P. 2024. "ISKP's Latest Campaign: Expanded Propaganda and External Operations," *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*. 27 June 2024. Available online: <https://gnet-research.org/2024/06/27/iskps-latest-campaign-expanded-propaganda-and-external-operations/>; Webber, L. &

regional propaganda activities. By 2022, however, Al-Azaim Media Foundation's linguistic offerings had diversified, and its overall media output was surging. It was a development that would prove crucial to enabling its strategic pivot to prioritising transnational operations and amplifying the impact of those activities. One of ISKP's offerings as part of its revamped propaganda campaign was its English-language magazine, *Voice of Khurasan*. Before delving into the magazine's contents, it is useful to position it within the context of other jihadi English language magazines.

For over four decades, jihadists have used English-language magazines to communicate to global audiences, especially in the West. In the 1980s, the *Afghan Jihad Quarterly* was an English language publication that brought readers the latest news from the battlefields of the Afghan-Soviet war and looked to generate financial and recruitment support for the *mujahideen*. In the 1990s, an Australian publication titled *Nida'ul Islam* was arguably the first jihadist magazine that was similar, at least in content if not format, to the e-zines that would become the trademarks of al-Qaida and Islamic State's English-language propaganda. *Nida'ul Islam* featured stories from the battlefronts and interviews with jihadi personalities such as Osama bin Laden.<sup>32</sup> It wasn't until the 2010's that the magazine with arguably the greatest legacy in this format would emerge: al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) *Inspire* magazine.

Two Americans, Samir Khan and Anwar al-Awlaki, revolutionised jihadist propaganda efforts targeting English-speaking audiences in the West.<sup>33</sup> While the charismatic Anwar al-Awlaki projected himself as the jihadi warrior-scholar, Samir Khan was the propagandist working behind the scenes who had previously edited what was arguably the precursor to *Inspire* magazine, *Jihad Recollections*. The influence of both al-Awlaki and Khan are clear in *Inspire*'s pages. Awlaki's colloquial style of communication, in a tone much like a friendly older brother or friend, is mirrored in *Inspire*'s writing. Al-Awlaki also used the magazine to construct his warrior-scholar image by filling its pages with inspirational photos of himself as a scholar and fighter. On the other hand, Khan brought a slick editorial style to *Inspire* and a format that canvassed a range of issues from the latest battlefield news to historical narratives and eulogies for martyred warriors. The magazine's "Open Source Jihad" section, which featured instructional material and operational advice for committing acts of terrorism, would become its most notorious section. Strategically, *Inspire* emerged at a time when al-Qaida central had largely been driven underground, having suffered terrible losses due to the counter-terrorism operations of the Wars on Terror, and AQAP had emerged as al-Qaeda's most dominant affiliate. It is a dynamic that draws parallels with ISKP's ascendancy at a time when Islamic State central in Iraq and Syria had declined. Like AQAP, ISKP also included in its upgraded propaganda apparatus English-language offerings.

*Inspire*'s legacy is evident in the jihadist English-language magazines that have emerged in the fifteen years since its first issue was released in 2010. From As-Sahab's *Resurgence*, and the Mujahideen of Shaam's *Al-Risalah* to the Taliban in Khurasan's *Azan*, English-language outreach is no longer an outlier in jihadist propaganda strategies. However, none of these publications have captured the attention of scholars, practitioners and the public like Islamic State's English-language magazines. Between 2014 and 2017, English-language magazines *Islamic State*

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Cadenhead, C. 2025. "The terror group expanding beyond borders and into cyberspace," *Vision of Humanity*. Available online: <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/the-terror-group-expanding-beyond-borders-and-into-cyberspace/>

32 Unnamed author. 1996. "Mujahid Usamah bin Ladin Talks Exclusively to 'Nida'ul Islam' About The New Powder Keg in the Middle East," *Nida'ul Islam*, Issue 15, October-November 1996. <https://irp.fas.org/world/para/docs/LADIN.htm>

33 For more on al-Awlaki and Khan's legacies see Ingram, H. & Lewis, J. 2021. "The Founding Fathers of American Jihad: The Impacts and Legacies of Anwar al-Awlaki, Samir Khan, and Ahmad Abousamra," *George Washington University*. Available online: <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/The%20Founding%20Fathers%20of%20American%20Jihad.pdf>



*News*, *Islamic State Report*, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* emerged as part of Islamic State's historically unprecedented propaganda campaign at the time.<sup>34</sup> While there were similarities in format and content between *Inspire* and Islamic State's offerings, the latter was generally more formal and authoritative in its language reflecting Islamic State's need to present its caliphate as *the* authority for all Muslims around the world. *Voice of Khurasan* magazine builds on the legacies of Islamic State's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines. In many respects, *Voice of Khurasan* is the direct descendent of these offerings. However, despite the conflict between al-Qaeda and Islamic State, it is also clear that *Voice of Khurasan*'s propagandists are deeply influenced by Anwar al-Awlaki. This is hardly surprising given al-Awlaki's extraordinary posthumous charismatic appeal that continues to influence jihadis from the West to this day. Ultimately, as Part II explores, *Voice of Khurasan* would carve out its own niche in this history.

## Conclusion

Part I of this report broadly outlined the historical and strategic context for *Voice of Khurasan*'s rise and evolution. While the magazine's first issue would not be released until January 2022, it was important to canvass ISKP's origin story and key milestones over the past decade because *Voice of Khurasan* constantly refers to that history. Indeed, it is proud of the ebbs and flows of its fortunes because, from the perspective of its propagandists, these are the inevitable successes and challenges that emerge on the path of jihad. This background is also important because historical context is strategic context. To try to understand the rationale of ISKP's decision-making now and make projections about how it may evolve into the future, it is necessary for scholars, analysts, and practitioners to consider its history of strategic decision-making. ISKP is a group that has weathered near-decimation by building a resilient core organisation and demonstrating a willingness to strategically pivot. Under the leadership of Shahab Muhajir, ISKP prioritised transnational external operations and building a propaganda apparatus to drive and amplify that strategic direction. *Voice of Khurasan*, as the primary means by which ISKP communicates to the West and reaches out to English-speaking audiences, must be understood within that context. The magazine became the preeminent jihadi English-language magazine of the global jihad and, as Part II will explore, it has built on the legacies of antecedents like *Inspire*, *Dabiq*, and *Rumiyah* while also forging its own unique traits. That counter-terrorism pressures on ISKP have forced a contraction of its propaganda campaigns only reinforces the importance of better understanding the mechanics and priorities of its messaging efforts.

34 For more on these magazines see Ingram, H. 2018. "Islamic State's English-language magazines, 2014-2017: Trends & implications for CT-CVE strategic communications," *International Center for Counter-Terrorism*, The Hague. Available online: <https://icct.nl/sites/default/files/import/publication/ICCT-Ingram-Islamic-State-English-Language-Magazines-March2018.pdf>

## Part II: Voice of Khurasan, January 2022-June 2025

*“So, follow the command of Allah and His prophet Muhammad and perform hijrah. For those who cannot perform hijrah make dar al-kufr your battle ground. Put your trust in Allah, take a knife and slice the kafir’s throat, poison his food, burn their houses and greenery, turn their joy to sorrow and strike terror in their hearts with Allah’s help. Know that jihad is obligation upon every Muslim whether he likes it or not!!”*

**Voice of Khurasan.<sup>35</sup>**

This section has two major objectives. The first is to provide a quick reference guide to the first forty-six issues of *Voice of Khurasan* magazine. The second is to identify the strategic, thematic, and influence levers deployed by *Voice of Khurasan*’s propagandists and consider how the publication has changed its style, format and editorial approach over time. When the magazine emerged in January 2022 and for roughly its first year of publication, *Voice of Khurasan* predominantly focused on Afghanistan and the broader Khurasan region. However, by its second year, *Voice of Khurasan* had shifted to a more global focus and, with it, began to incorporate more direct appeals to western audiences. By the magazine’s third year, it had developed a consistent approach to its format, style, and content that, in mostly subtle but nonetheless important ways, distinguished it from other jihadi English language magazines. The evolution of *Voice of Khurasan* played out during a tumultuous period of great regional and global unrest that its pages sought to explain by plunging its readers into a world of unprecedented historical and cosmic crises. This was also a time of strategic and organisational transitions within ISKP as the group pivoted from its 2022 push in Afghanistan to prioritising transnational operations beginning in 2023 and then weathering the counter-terrorism storms of 2025.

The following analysis is organised by calendar year. Each section opens with a summary of the historical and strategic context of the time followed by an overarching analysis of the strategic, narrative, thematic, and editorial trends that characterised *Voice of Khurasan*’s issues released that year. This is followed by a quick reference guide that presents the cover, release date, feature story, sample contents, and a short summary of the major thematic focus of each *Voice of Khurasan* issue for that year.

### Year 1: Issues 1 – 19, January – December 2022

To appreciate the context for *Voice of Khurasan*’s launch in January 2022 and the eighteen issues that followed, it is necessary to highlight the critical role of the preceding eighteen months.<sup>36</sup> The disastrous US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban’s return to power that year was punctuated by ISKP’s Abbey Gate bombing that killed over 180 people including thirteen US service members. More broadly, for the year prior to ISKP’s most high-profile terrorist attack, the group had mounted a resurgence campaign especially around its traditional strongholds of Nangarhar and Kunar provinces in Afghanistan. ISKP entered 2022 with a sense that it had momentum in its ground operations against the Taliban and sought to leverage that opportunity by expanding its propaganda apparatus. It would be a bloody year with high profile bombings,

35 Al-Hindi, A. 2023. “A message to the inhabitants in the land occupied by cow and mice worshipping filths,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 23: p.7.

36 Jadoon, A. & A. Mines, 2021, “What is ISIS-K? Two terrorism experts on the group behind the deadly Kabul airport attack and its rivalry with the Taliban,” *The Conversation*, 27 August 2021: <https://theconversation.com/what-is-isis-k-two-terrorism-experts-on-the-group-behind-the-deadly-kabul-airport-attack-and-its-rivalry-with-the-taliban-166873>



especially against sectarian targets, characterising ISKP's insurgency campaign in its heartlands. Yet the tempo of ISKP operations would be down from previous years as Taliban counterefforts tightened.<sup>37</sup> By the end of 2022, foiled plots abroad suggested ISKP was laying the groundwork for expanding its external operations. Thematic pivots in its multilingual propaganda outputs suggested the group was rapidly adopting a new global focus.

In 2022, the Al-Azaim Media Foundation published nineteen issues of *Voice of Khurasan*. Launched in January 2022, its first issue featured a Taliban explainer<sup>38</sup> as the cover story alongside a eulogy for the 'martyr' of the 2021 Kabul Airport bombing designed to grab global attention.<sup>39</sup> In its inaugural year, *Voice of Khurasan* lived up to its name by prioritising content that focused on bringing the attention of the English-speaking world to local dynamics in Afghanistan, and by presenting broader global and strategic issues from an ISKP and Khurasan regional perspective. The first critical thematic transition in *Voice of Khurasan* was a shift in the proportionality of Afghanistan-centric content versus regionally and globally focused content. By the later months of 2022, its issues increasingly focused on regional and global issues to the point that, by the beginning of 2023, that content would eclipse locally focused content. What has remained constant, through 2022 and beyond, is *Voice of Khurasan*'s core narrative.

The fundamental narrative at the heart of *Voice of Khurasan* is that the Islamic State, to whom, ISKP claims, it remains obligatory for all Muslims to pledge allegiance and *actively* support, are the champions and protectors of Sunni Muslims at a time of unprecedented crisis brought upon by an array of enemies. For *Voice of Khurasan*'s propagandists, the most important contest in the information theatre is the intra-jihadi struggle, with the Taliban and their longtime allies al-Qaeda and its affiliates front and centre. There are several reasons for this focus.<sup>40</sup> First and foremost, the Taliban are ISKP's direct local rival. Moreover, with the Taliban's ascent to power, Afghanistan was again the focus of media attention as the world watched to see how the Taliban would govern, engage with the international community, and counter threats from terrorist groups operating within Afghanistan's borders. In short, if ISKP could derail the Taliban it would likely have a global audience for its efforts.

There were equally high strategic and ideological stakes too. At the core of the Islamic State's credibility claims is the contention that it alone is purely applying the Prophetic *manhaj* (method) for establishing an Islamic State. A decade ago, the Islamic State pointed to its sweeping territorial gains across Iraq and Syria as testimony to the divine favour of its aggressive and uncompromising approach.<sup>41</sup> The comparatively more gradualist and compromising approach underpinning the Taliban's success in 2021, and later the Abu Mohammed al-Jolani (Ahmed al-Sharaa) led Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's success in Syria in 2024,<sup>42</sup> was not just a challenge but an affront to the Islamic State's claims. In *Voice of Khurasan*'s pages, the intra-jihadi theatre represents an existential struggle for not just the same constituents, fellow jihadis and sympathisers, but the strategic, ideological, and jurisprudential heart of the global jihad. Centralising the intra-jihadi struggle also has the effect of exacerbating perceptions of crisis. In other words, the world was now

37 Jadoon, A., Mines, A., and Sayed, A. 2023. "The enduring duel: Islamic State Khorasan's survival under Afghanistan's new rulers," *CTC Sentinel*, vol.16 iss.8 (August 2023).

38 Unnamed author. 2022. "Who are the Taliban?" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 1: 6-11.

39 Unnamed author. 2022. "Caravan of the Shuhada," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 1: 16-20.

40 For the field's most detailed analysis see Jadoon, A. & Mines, A. 2023. *The Islamic State in Afghanistan and Pakistan: Strategic Alliances and Rivalries*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder.

41 Ingram, H. 2020. "The Long Jihad: The Islamic State's Method of Insurgency," *George Washington University*. Available online: [https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/The\\_Long\\_Jihad.pdf](https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/The_Long_Jihad.pdf)

42 Al-Lami, M. 2024. "From Syrian jihadist leader to rebel politician: How Abu Mohammed al-Jolani reinvented himself," *BBC*, 9 December 2024. Available online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0q0w1g8zqv0>

so corrupt that even the supposed warriors of Islam – whether al-Qaeda affiliates,<sup>43</sup> HTS,<sup>44</sup> or Hamas<sup>45</sup> – were treacherously destroying the faith and killing the faithful. That the Taliban were actively seeking the support of the international community,<sup>46</sup> including courting both eastern and western powers<sup>47</sup> at a time of volatility and upheaval in the international order, epitomised the treachery which the magazine constantly sought to reveal. Anti-sectarian narratives were also an important component of *Voice of Khurasan*'s messaging with Shia frequently portrayed as the most reprehensible of “true” Islam's enemies and therefore worthy of extermination.<sup>48</sup> The picture *Voice of Khurasan* paints is of a global web of alliances that, despite tensions and conflict between eastern and western powers, is driven by a Judeo-Christian-Shia power structure, helped along by the likes of India,<sup>49</sup> to destroy Islam and kill true Muslims.

For *Voice of Khurasan*'s propagandists, especially in its first year of publication, Khurasan is presented as a microcosm of the global jihad where all the forces of malevolence converge. This has the effect of centralising ISKP in Islam's global and cosmic battle. In its early issues, ISKP positions itself and its leadership within the context of Islamic State's broader history and leadership. For example, issue 2's foreword symbolically places an image of ISKP's founding leader alongside images of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, and Abu Umar al-Shishani.<sup>50</sup> From issue 8, when a “new phase” in ISKP's war is announced, *Voice of Khurasan* begins to include operational narratives and data in its contents.<sup>51</sup> By its tenth issue, the magazine is consistently releasing a variety of content from long, multipart articles,<sup>52</sup> operational updates,<sup>53</sup> and lessons from history,<sup>54</sup> to eulogies for martyred fighters<sup>55</sup> and highly personalised stories from the frontlines.<sup>56</sup> In its first year, *Voice of Khurasan* grew in size with the average number of pages for each issue increasing from about twenty-five in its first six months to over forty-six in the second half of 2022. With its final issue for the year, *Voice of Khurasan*'s operational summaries switched from being ISKP centric to being global in perspective declaring: “As the Khilafah soldiers continue waging war against the enemies of Allah, we enumerate some developments during the course of the past few weeks throughout different Wilayat of the Islamic State.”<sup>57</sup>

43 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “Al-Qaeda in Africa: The traitors wearing the cloak of jihad in Africa,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 25: 28-30.

44 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “Jihad Betrayed: The Riddah of al-Jawlani the Munafiq,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 19: 4-7.

45 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “Hamas in Sham and Taliban in Khurasan 1” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 16: 19-24.

46 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “They satisfied the international community,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 12: 3-12.

47 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “They meet CIA operatives in secret,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 16: 3-19.

48 Mines, A., Ingram, H. & Azizi, A. 2025. “A Practical Approach to Understanding ISKP's War on Minority Communities,” *The Center for Justice & Accountability*, May 2025. Available online: <http://cja.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Mines-Ingram-Azizi.Practical-Understanding-ISKP.pdf>

49 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “What is left for the Muslims in the constitution of the cow worshippers' state?” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 14: 3-5.

50 Unnamed author. 2022. “Foreword,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 2: 3.

51 Unnamed author. 2022. “Khurasan: Graveyard for Kuffar and Apostates,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 8: 3.

52 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “Nullifiers of Islam: Applicable to the Taliban Part 2,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 10: 9-16.

53 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “Harvest of Soldiers: From Wilayat Khurasan on Dhu Al-Hijjah 1443H,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 11: 25.

54 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “How many times has a small force vanquished a mighty army by the will of Allah,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 13: 33-36.

55 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “Memories of Shuhada: Umais al-Kashmiri,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 15: 23-30.

56 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. “A long dark night,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 12: 40-43.

57 Unnamed author. 2022. “Operations Paving the Way to the Victory,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 19: 37.



### Voice of Khurasan, Issue 1

**Issue Date:** 1443 Jumad Al Thani (January 2022)

**Pages:** 37

**Feature Story:** “Who are the Taliban?” (pp.6-11)

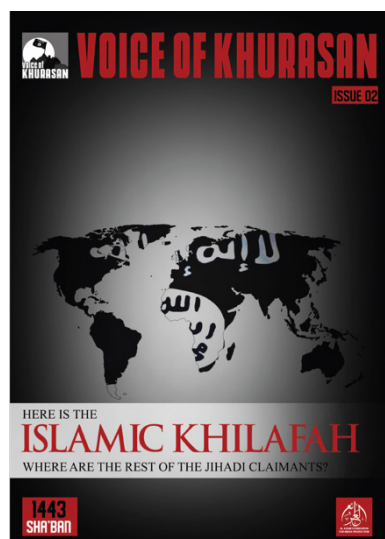
#### Example content:

“The Fighting Has Just Begun” (pp.3-5)

“Caravan of the Shuhada” (pp.16-20)

“We remain bi idhnillaahi” (pp.25-32)

**Key Theme/s:** The magazine launched with a Taliban ‘explainer’ charting its history of ideological misguidance and willingness to “gain the pleasure of the Kuffar by doing whatever they demand of them.” The inaugural issue also featured a eulogy for Abdurrahman Logari, the 2021 Kabul airport bomber. The overall theme of issue 1 is best captured in the foreword’s title: “The fighting has just begun.”



### Voice of Khurasan, Issue 2

**Issue Date:** 1443 Sha'ban (March 2022)

**Pages:** 35

**Feature Story:** “Here is the Islamic Khilafah” (pp.23-27)

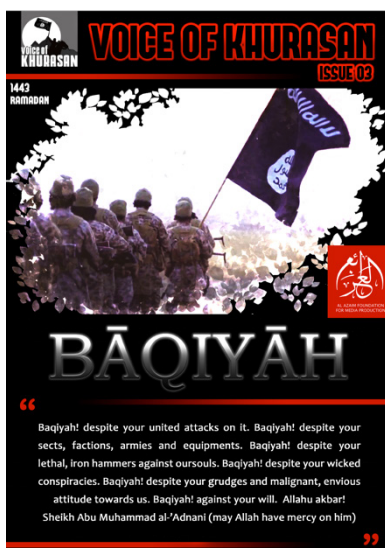
#### Example content:

“Are Taliban Murtadeen?” (pp.4-12)

“Among the Believers Are Men” (pp.13-15)

“Why Khilafah is our only choice?” (pp.28-34)

**Key Theme/s:** A major theme woven throughout this issue is the condemnation of the Taliban and al-Qaeda as ideologically misguided, political sell-outs, and strategically incapable versus the Islamic State as religiously pure, uncompromising in politics and war, with a proven strategy. The authors constantly position ISKP and its leaders in the context of the Islamic State and its legendary figures.



### Voice of Khurasan, Issue 3

**Issue Date:** 1443 Ramadan (April 2022)

**Pages:** 20

**Feature Story:** “Baqiyah” (pp.1-2)

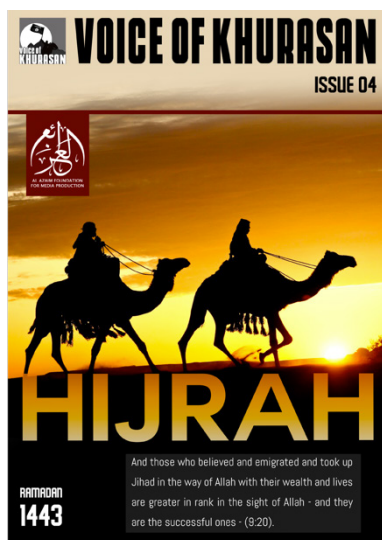
#### Example content:

“The Crusader War” (pp.4-8)

“What is the Call of the Islamic State?” (pp.9-11)

“Ramadan – The Blessed Month of Conquests and Worship” (pp.12-20)

**Key Theme/s:** *Baqiyah* (remaining) is the major theme as ISKP acknowledges its pledge of allegiance and opens Issue 3 with a series of excerpts from speeches by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This issue also contains the magazine’s first article that provides guidance on the ‘media jihad’ concluding with an inspirational excerpt from Anwar al-Awlaki. The issue concludes with well wishes and guidance on the month of Ramadan.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 4**

**Issue Date:** Ramadan 1443 (April 2022)

**Pages:** 10

**Feature Story:** "Hijrah" (p.3)

#### **Example content:**

"Yes! Certainly, the help of Allah is near!" (pp.4-6)

"Harvest of the Soldiers" (p.7)

"Our War with the Mushrikin will remain" (pp.8-9)

**Key Theme/s:** This is the shortest Issue of *Voice of Khurasan* at only ten pages. All its contents read as generic and mostly drawn from other sources and translated into English (e.g. *Al-Naba*) apart from the periodical's first *Harvest of the Soldiers* infographic which features ISKP operational statistics alongside graphic imagery.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 5**

**Issue Date:** Shaw'wal 1443 (May 2022)

**Pages:** 19

**Feature Story:** "They intend to put out the light of Allah with their tongues" (pp.11-12)

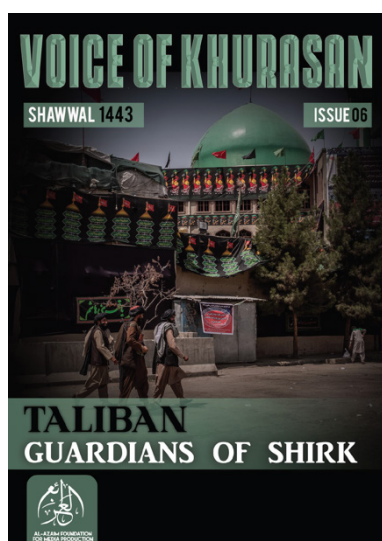
#### **Example content:**

"Allies of the Jews and Mushrikeen" (pp.4-6)

"Tawhid and the Purpose of Creation Part 1" (pp.7-9)

"The media and psychological warfare" pp.17-19)

**Key Theme/s:** The feature article highlights ISKP's recent cross-border attacks as evidence the Taliban cannot uphold the US-Taliban peace deal. Issue 5 concludes with an article that establishes the religious and historical precedents for engaging in media jihad.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 6**

**Issue Date:** Shawwal 1443 (May 2022)

**Pages:** 24

**Feature Story:** "Taliban: Guardians of Shirk" (pp.18-22)

#### **Example content:**

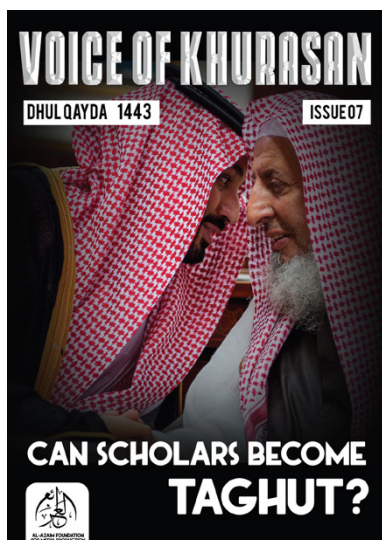
"Putrid fruits of democracy" (pp.3-7)

"The media war upon the Islamic State" (pp.8-12)

"The value of dua and takbir when facing the enemy" (pp.23-24)

**Key Theme/s:** The overarching theme for this issue is the importance of recognising, forbidding, and wherever possible attacking democracy, nationalism and misinformation. This theme culminates later in the Issue with an article that condemns the Taliban for protecting Shia and Sufi.





### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 7**

**Issue Date:** Dhul Qayda 1443 (June 2022)

**Pages:** 28

**Feature Story:** “Can scholars become taghut?” (pp.8-10)

#### **Example content:**

“The three stages of jihad” (pp.3-7)

“Women: Commodity or human?” (pp.14-15)

“Shirk of Obedience” (pp.16-28)

**Key Theme/s:** The Issue’s feature piece condemns the corruption of religious scholars. It is preceded by an article outlining jihad’s three stages and proceeded by an article explaining the proselytising of the *salafs*. The issue concludes with a jurisprudential explanation of *shirk* by famed Islamic State ideologue, Abu Ali Al-Anbari.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 8**

**Issue Date:** Dhu al-Qa’adah 1443 (June 2022)

**Pages:** 28

**Feature Story:** “Khurasan: The Graveyard of Kuffar and Apostates” (pp.3-5)

#### **Example content:**

“American Project” (pp.7-9)

“Wounded Lion” (pp.23-25)

“The Polytheistic Hindus and the Polytheistic Taliban” (pp.26-28)

**Key Theme/s:** The issue opens with ISKP declaring a “new phase” in its war with detailed reporting on its latest operations. The issue’s primary focus is the Taliban’s lies and corruption. “Wounded Lion” is the first article in a series that tells emotional, personal stories from the frontline.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 9**

**Issue Date:** Dhu al-Hijjah 1443 (July 2022)

**Pages:** 51

**Feature Story:** “Khurasan – The Graveyard of Murtaddin and Kuffar” (pp.42-45)

#### **Example content:**

“India Between Pain and Hope” (pp.3-6)

“Abu Muhammad At-Tajiki” (pp.13-21)

“Islamic State: March forth towards jihad” (pp.34-40)

**Key Theme/s:** From Issue 9, the average number of pages per magazine almost doubles. Continued coverage of ISKP’s latest operations is reinforced by battle data graphics and a fighter eulogy. Long, multipart articles devoted to ideology or international conspiracy dominate this issue.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 10**

**Issue Date:** Dhu al-Hijjah 1443 (July 2022)

**Pages:** 53

**Feature Story:** “Nullifiers of Islam Applicable on Taliban Part 2” (pp.9-16)

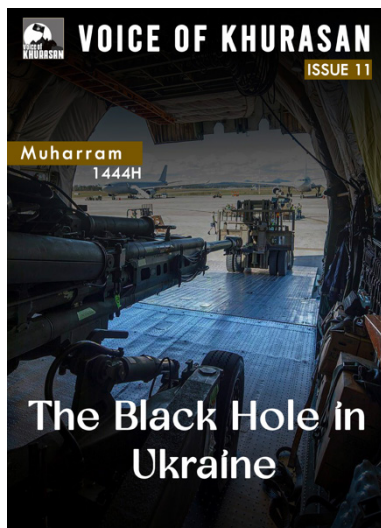
#### **Example content:**

“The hungry orphans” (pp.32-33)

“American boomerang” (pp.42-46)

“The establishment of Khurasan Wilayah” (pp.47-52)

**Key Theme/s:** The feature is the final article in a series arguing that the Taliban satisfy the “nullifiers of Islam.” Contrasts between the Taliban as corrupt and living in luxury versus ISKP as pure and enduring hardships are woven throughout the pages of this Issue.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 11**

**Issue Date:** Muharram 1444H (August 2022)

**Pages:** 53

**Feature Story:** “The Black Hole in Ukraine” (pp.30-34)

#### **Example content:**

“Lessons of the Muslim Warriors” (pp.10-15)

“Memories of Shuhada: Sa’d al-Imarati” (pp.20-24)

“The millah of Ibrahim” (pp.43-48)

**Key Theme/s:** A prominent theme is the value of history for providing lessons to the present generation of Muslims. The feature article celebrates the bloodshed in Ukraine as a clash between eastern and western *tawaghit* with historical parallels drawn to the time of the Prophet.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 12**

**Issue Date:** Muharram 1444H (August 2022)

**Pages:** 51

**Feature Story:** “They satisfied the international community!” (pp.3-11)

#### **Example content:**

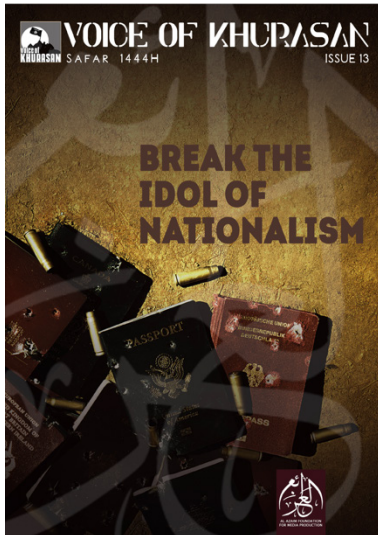
“Advice for the leaders of the Islamic State” (pp.27-30)

“A long dark night” (pp.41-43)

“What our enemies are thinking” (49-51)

**Key Theme/s:** This Issue is dominated by content designed to show that ISKP understands its adversaries while the Taliban are complicit with them. An article by Shaykh Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, who helped guide Islamic State in Iraq through its nadir in the early-2000s, provides advice to field commanders on gaining advantages.





### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 13***

**Issue Date:** Safar 1444H (September 2022)

**Pages:** 51

**Feature Story:** “Breaking the idol of nationalism” (pp.3-9)

**Example content:**

“After a Year, the US is still licking its wounds” (pp.13-17)

“How many times has a small force vanquished a mighty force by the will of Allah” (pp.33-36)

“China’s Daydream of Imperialism” (pp.37-42)

**Key Theme/s:** A call for Muslims in India to engage in jihad, a celebration of the one-year anniversary of the Kabul airport attack, and an historical perspective of triumphs over materially superior enemies contribute to a rousing Issue.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 14***

**Issue Date:** Safar 1444H (September 2022)

**Pages:** 45

**Feature Story:** “Fighting for Worldly Means is not Jihad” (pp.30-34)

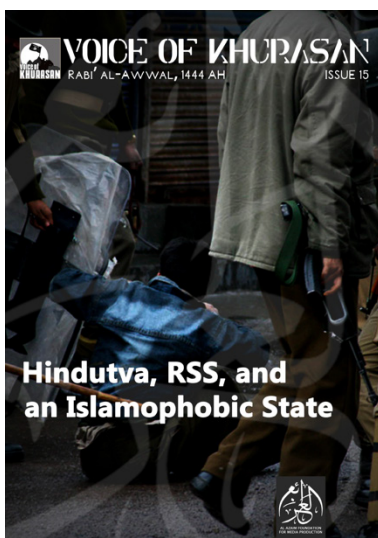
**Example content:**

“What is left for the Muslims in the constitution of the cow worshippers’ state?” (pp.3-5)

“Doha Agreement or Submission to Kuffar” (pp.6-16)

“America: From the Land of Free to a Banana Republic” (pp.40-44)

**Key Theme/s:** Mirroring a trend in recent Issues, an article critiquing aspects of Taliban-US relations is later followed by content that explores specific examples of US corruption or ineptitude.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 15***

**Issue Date:** Rabi’ Al-Awwal 1444H (October 2022)

**Pages:** 45

**Feature Story:** “Hindutva, RSS, and an Islamophobic State” (pp.3-7)

**Example content:**

“Understanding the matter of takfir” (pp.8-12)

“The fall of the Ottoman Empire and their deviance from the straight path” (pp.13-18)

“Al Azaim Foundation for Media Production: For Contact” (pp.44)

**Key Theme/s:** For the fourth consecutive Issue, articles to incite Muslims in India are prominent although, on this occasion, such content is the cover story for the first time. The Issue concludes with details for contacting the magazine.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 16***

**Issue Date:** Rabi' Al-Awwal 1444H (October 2022)

**Pages:** 40

**Feature Story:** "They meet CIA operatives in secret" (pp.3-9)

**Example content:**

" Hamas in Sham and Taliban in Khurasan" (pp.19-25)

"Some actions that nullify one's Islam" (pp.26-30)

"The Prophetic Method is Uniting the Scatter Ummah" (pp.36-39)

**Key Theme/s:** The lead article accuses the Taliban of CIA meetings then compares Hamas and the Taliban through the Issue's middle section. This sets up a contrast with the remaining content that presents Islamic State as a unifier of the ummah.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 17***

**Issue Date:** Rabi' At-Thani 1444H (November 2022)

**Pages:** 38

**Feature Story:** "Palace worship can't protect them from the reckoning of Allah" (pp.3-5)

**Example content:**

"Ruling on those judging by laws other than those revealed by Allah" (pp.6-10)

"Modesty is a gift for women" (pp.32-33)

"French colonization in Africa and their barbarism on Muslims" (pp.34-37)

**Key Theme/s:** Over half of Issue 17 is devoted to condemning the Taliban for its ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, its misguided legal system, and comparisons to Hamas.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 18***

**Issue Date:** Rabi' At-Thani 1444H (November 2022)

**Pages:** 38

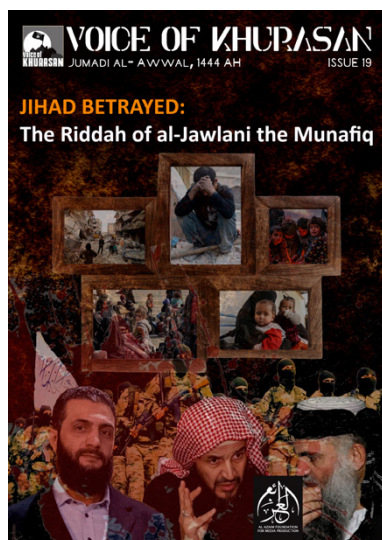
**Feature Story:** "Today's traitors following in the footsteps of yesterday's traitors" (pp.3-8)

**Example content:**

"Memories of Shuhada: 'Asadullah al-Urgenchi-Taqqabballah" (pp.19-23)

"Taliban the patronizer of shirk and its people" (pp.28-33)

**Key Theme/s:** The Issue focuses on the Taliban's treachery contrasted with heroic jihadi stories. History is an important lever for comparing the origins and legacies of ISKP versus its enemies as a means to reinforce contrasting values and actions.



### ***Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 19**

**Issue Date:** Jumadi al-Awwal 1444AH (December 2022)

**Pages:** 51

**Feature Story:** “Jihad Betrayed: The riddah of al-Jawlani the Munafiq” (pp.4-7)

**Example content:**

“Hypocrisy (An-Nifaq)” (pp.8-11)

“Operations paving the way to victory” (pp.36-39)

“Answer to those raising questions about bay’ah to a stranger” (pp.40-42)

**Key Theme/s:** The final Issue for 2022 doubles down on two major themes for the year. First, the treachery of fellow Sunni jihadis with the feature focussed on Al-Jawlani in Syria and two articles on the Taliban. Second, the purity and unrelenting campaign of the Islamic State including, for the first time, an article summarising its global operations.

## **Year 2: Issues 20-31, January to December 2023**

Across its heartlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan, ISKP operations fell to levels not seen since its 2019 nadir. As the group re-postured to focus on external operations, foiled ISKP directed and inspired cells and plots signalled that ISKP was practically progressing with its plans.<sup>58</sup> ISKP’s messaging to audiences outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan, such as in *Voice of Khorasan*, was dominated by a global focus through 2023. The Al-Azaim Media Foundation’s propagandists frequently drew upon current events – from Quran burning incidents in Europe and earthquakes in Turkey and Syria to the 7 October attacks by Hamas on Israel – as both a demonstration of the group’s awareness of global issues and to frame, through ISKP’s lens, how its readers should perceive the world.

Twelve issues of *Voice of Khurasan* were released in 2023. From the start of the year, when only two of eight articles in its twentieth issue were predominantly Afghanistan focused,<sup>59</sup> it was clear the balance of the magazine’s contents had shifted to a more global perspective. Across 2023, only two covers were devoted to Afghanistan: issues 21 and 27. To be clear, the Khurasan region and the Taliban are a constant presence in *Voice of Khurasan*. South and Central Asia are clearly ISKP’s priority and the Taliban its arch-rival. While the magazine increasingly *prioritised* globally focused content, *Voice of Khurasan*’s propagandists would weave the Khurasan region and/or the Taliban into much of this messaging. For example, *Voice of Khurasan* is obsessed with exposing what it sees as a global web of eastern and western aligned nations that, despite their antagonisms with each other, are united by their hatred of Islam and willingness to work with corrupt Muslim regimes and pseudo-jihadis to cripple the *ummah*.<sup>60</sup> Inevitably, the Taliban are presented as a crucial actor, if a weaker and pathetically subordinate one, in that global conspiracy.<sup>61</sup>

58 Zelin, A. 2023. “ISKP goes global: External operations from Afghanistan,” *The Washington Institute*, 11 September 2023: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iskp-goes-global-external-operations-afghanistan>; Giustozzi, A. 2024. “The Islamic State in Khorasan between Taliban counter-terrorism and resurgence prospects,” *International Center for Counter-Terrorism*, 30 January 2024: <https://icct.nl/publication/islamic-state-khorasan-between-taliban-counter-terrorism-and-resurgence-prospects>

59 Unnamed author. 2023. “Memories of Shuhada: Abu Muhammad al-Uzbeki-Taqqabbalallah,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 20: 8-11; For example, Unnamed author. 2023. “The allies of shaytan and the allies of Ar-Rahman,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 20: 12-17.

60 For example, Unnamed author. 2023. “The real defenders of the ummah,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 28: 36-43.

61 For example, Unnamed author. 2023. “Why their tables have become so narrowed?” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 27: 35-37.



*Voice of Khurasan* reaches several milestones during this period in its evolution as a piece of English-language jihadi propaganda. Issue 21 is the magazine's first issue to explicitly and predominantly focus on addressing western audiences with direct appeals and calls to violence. Quran burning incidents in the Netherlands and Sweden provide the backdrop for the first appearance of a "Just Terror" section in *Voice of Khurasan*,<sup>62</sup> a feature of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines, alongside content glorifying lone terrorists in the West<sup>63</sup> and presenting the jurisprudential justification for such violence.<sup>64</sup> It was also during this period, beginning with issue 24, that the magazine started to feature authors supposedly from Europe,<sup>65</sup> North America,<sup>66</sup> and eventually Australia.<sup>67</sup> Another important milestone for this period was *Voice of Khurasan*'s first call for cryptocurrency donations in issue 29 which would become a staple for the magazine.

Through 2023, *Voice of Khurasan*'s editors are clearly seeking to establish a consistent approach to format, style, and contents. While the magazine is dominated by articles, infographics and promotional contents are increasingly incorporated into its pages. During this period, *Voice of Khurasan* grows again with its average number of pages per issue increasing to almost sixty. The size of the magazine and its article-heavy content would require a significant amount of work to maintain a near monthly publication tempo. However, it is worth noting that each issue has a large amount of broad strategic and ideological content that could potentially be published in any issue without losing relevance.

Most importantly for the purposes of this report is the way in which the persuasive intent of the magazine evolved. *Voice of Khurasan*'s contents are a mix of authoritative pieces, typically long jurisprudentially focused articles written by an unidentified author and reading like a series of excerpts from the holy books,<sup>68</sup> and more colloquial styles, such as the articles written by its European and North American authors, with the tone of an older brother or popular opinion commentator.<sup>69</sup> This contrasts with, for instance, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* that adopted a more authoritative tone versus *Inspire* that was more informal in style.<sup>70</sup> *Voice of Khurasan* also engages with a variety of subject matter from global geopolitics<sup>71</sup> and Islamic history<sup>72</sup> to highly personalised, emotional, and introspective pieces.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, this mix of styles and the variety of persuasive levers the magazine deploys distinguishes *Voice of Khurasan*.

The 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas on Israel and the war in Gaza that followed provided the propagandists of *Voice of Khurasan* with a rolling crisis that perfectly captured, at least from their perspective, the global conspiracy they had railed against since its first issue. Here, once

62 Unnamed author. 2023. "Just Terror in the recent times across Europe and America," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 21: 43.

63 Unnamed author. 2023. "And dusts will never settle down until the day of reckoning," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 21: 3-7.

64 Unnamed author. 2023. "The 'ibadah of qital killing and corpses" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 21: 22-27.

65 Unnamed author. 2023. "A message from the heart to our Muslim brothers in Ukraine written by a sincere mujahid from the 'European Dar al-Kufr,'" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 24: 40-49.

66 For example, Al-Kanadie, S. 2023. "Don't despair: We are few among many," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 26: 11-18.

67 Al-Australi, A. 2023. "O mothers of the ummah, bring up your children for bringing back izzah," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 31: 70-78.

68 For example, Unnamed author. 2023. "So flee to Allah," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 25: 49-52.

69 Al-Italy, A. 2023. "In Sha Allah, the real Shami revolution," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 29: 8-15.

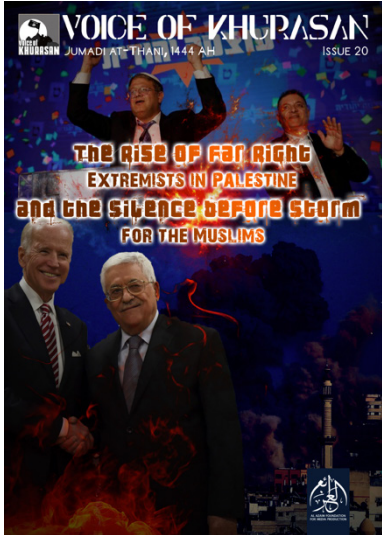
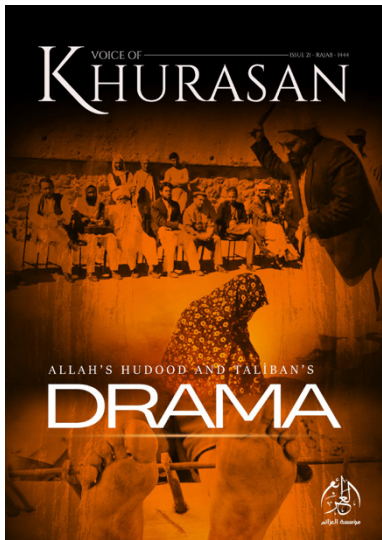
70 For more on these contrasts see Ingram, H. 2017. "An analysis of *Inspire* and *Dabiq*: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol.40 iss. 5. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1212551>

71 For example, Unnamed author. 2023. "The international world order is crumbling," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 29: 3-6.

72 For example, Unnamed author. 2023. "Heroes of Islam: Rukn ad-din Baybars," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 30: 27-36.

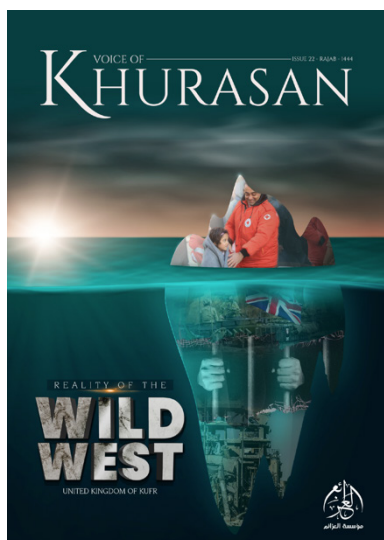
73 For example, Unnamed author. 2023. "O Allah, Guide us on the straight path," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 25: 3-5.

again, was an example of sell-out jihadis in Hamas, with deep connections to Shia interest in Iran, sacrificing the *ummah* at the bloody hands of a Judeo-Christian assault.<sup>74</sup> The final issues for 2023 argued that the cascading apostasy and complicity that rendered not just those who supported Israel, but those who were friendly with those nations offering assistance, as legitimate targets for attack.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, while calling for attacks on Jews, *Voice of Khurasan* was quick to declare that attacks on Israel's support structures was as, if not more, important. These were themes that would persist through its third year of publication.

	<p><b>Voice of Khurasan, Issue 20</b></p> <p><b>Issue Date:</b> Jumadi At-Thani 1444AH (January 2023)</p> <p><b>Pages:</b> 45</p> <p><b>Feature Story:</b> “The rise of far right extremists in Palestine and the silence before storm for the Muslims” (pp.35-44)</p> <p><b>Example content:</b>          “The Allies of Shaytan and the Allies of Ar-Rahman” (pp.12-17)          “The al-Fallujah Complex” (pp.18-21)          “Operations Paving the Way to Victory” (pp.25-29)</p> <p><b>Key Theme/s:</b> The first issue of 2023 has a noticeably global focus. Two of eight articles are focused on Afghanistan with a third, the issue’s opening article, focused on India. The rest have a broad ideological, strategic or global focus.</p>
	<p><b>Voice of Khurasan, Issue 21</b></p> <p><b>Issue Date:</b> Rajab 1444 (February 2023)</p> <p><b>Pages:</b> 51</p> <p><b>Feature Story:</b> ““And Dusts will never settle down until the day of reckoning” (pp.3-7)</p> <p><b>Example content:</b>          “The ‘Ibadah of Qital – Killing and Corpses” (pp.22-27)          “In response to incidents of burning and desecrating the Holy Quran by the infidels of Sweden and Netherlands” (p.36)          “Just Terror in the recent times across Europe and America” (p.42)</p> <p><b>Key Theme/s:</b> This is a milestone issue for the evolution of <i>Voice of Khurasan</i> with direct calls for violence in the West and the first “Just Terror” infographic.</p>

74 Al-Italy, A. 2023. “Message from the heart to our brothers and sisters in Palestine: Join the caravan of Izzah,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 30: 23-26.

75 Unnamed author. 2023. “Practical steps to fight the Jews,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 31: 3-8.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 22**

**Issue Date:** Rajab 1444 (February 2023)

**Pages:** 48

**Feature Story:** “It was not Allah who wronged them, but they wronged themselves” (pp.3-10)

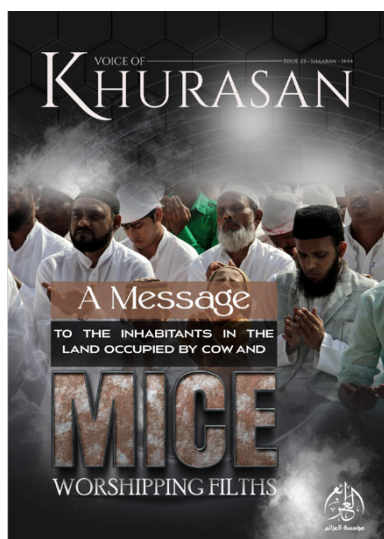
**Example content:**

“Advice for the Soldiers of the Islamic State” (pp.17-23)

“Kill them wherever you find them” (pp.30)

“Reality of the Wild West: United Kingdom of Kufr” (pp.37-42)

**Key Theme/s:** The issue’s opening article and supporting infographic argue that a devastating earthquake in southern Turkey and northern Syria is a divine sign to join the caliphate. All this issue’s contents are regionally or globally focused.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 23**

**Issue Date:** Shaaban 1444 (March 2023)

**Pages:** 68

**Feature Story:** “A message to the inhabitants in the land occupied by cow and mice worshipping filths” (pp.3-8)

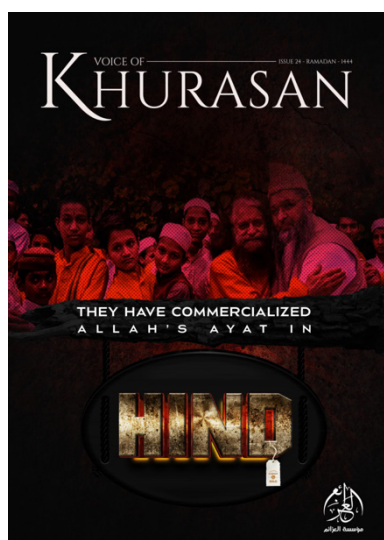
**Example content:**

“Strengthen the media war” (pp.9-21)

“Victory belongs to the patient” (pp.23-29)

“Operations that pave the way to victory”(pp.43-49)

**Key Theme/s:** Calls to directly engage in jihad are a prominent theme including a feature article inciting India’s Muslims to jihad and a lengthy justification for the media jihad. These themes are reinforced by the return of the global operations summary and personalised battlefield accounts.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 24**

**Issue Date:** Ramadan 1444 (April 2023)

**Pages:** 62

**Feature Story:** “They have commercialized Allah’s ayat in Hind” (pp.3-13)

**Example content:**

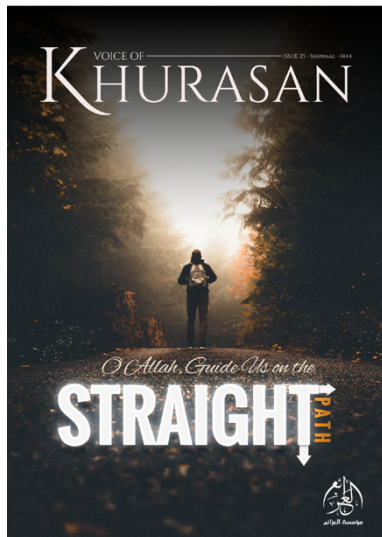
“Life of the Companions” (pp.20-27)

“A message from the heart to our Muslim brothers in Ukraine” (pp.40-51)

“Pakistan – a tumour cell in the body of the Islamic ummah Part 2” (pp.52-61)

**Key Theme/s:** In a reversal from 2022, the magazine is now dominated by jurisprudential, strategic, regional and global content. An article written to Muslims in Ukraine, apparently by a fellow European, is a significant milestone.





### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 25**

**Issue Date:** Shawaal 1444 (May 2023)

**Pages:** 58

**Feature Story:** “O Allah, Guide Us on the Straight Path” (pp.3-5)

**Example content:**

“Muttaqi Don’t Cry!” (pp.12-19)

“Al-Qaeda in Africa: The traitors wearing the cloak of Jihad in Africa” (pp.28-30)

“To them, practising Islam is extremism”(pp.53-57)

**Key Theme/s:** Content to inspire spiritual reflection is common but here it’s a feature followed by a typical spread of articles mocking the Taliban foreign minister, condemning al-Qaeda in Africa, and highlighting Uyghur oppression.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 26**

**Issue Date:** Dhu Al-Hijjah 1444 (June 2023)

**Pages:** 53

**Feature Story:** “Call to the Turkish people: Abandon Erdogan’s highway to hell and join ‘the century of the Islamic Khilafah’” (pp.3-10)

**Example content:**

“Don’t despair we are a few among many” (pp.11-18)

“Opinion: Self Destruction” (pp.29-33)

“Neo-reformist or Atataturk of Al-Salul” (pp.34-40)

**Key Theme/s:** Authors with names suggesting they are from Europe and North America wrote three articles in this issue. The magazine appears to be trying to balance the authoritative style of *Dabiq* and more colloquial style of *Inspire*.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 27**

**Issue Date:** Muharram 1445 (July 2023)

**Pages:** 66

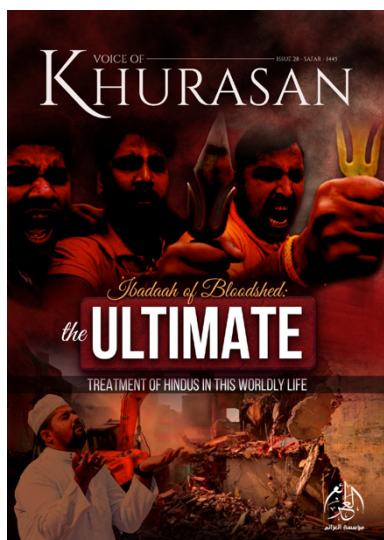
**Feature Story:** “The ‘Sahil Wilayah’ of the Islamic Khilafah” (pp.3-7)

**Example content:**

“The betrayal of the Rafidah against the religion of Allah and its people” (pp.14-33)

“Do not consider our silence as an opportunity to reassure your infidel masters” (pp.60-65)

**Key Theme/s:** This issue is dominated by critiques of ISKP’s most despised enemies. The longest article offers an exhaustive history of apparent betrayals by Shia while another condemns Sufis as heretics. The issue concludes with a call to “kill the imams of kufr.”



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 28**

**Issue Date:** Safar 1445 (August 2023)

**Pages:** 54

**Feature Story:** Counter-open-letter: To MEMRI... There is no match for you with the mujahidin" (pp.3-8)

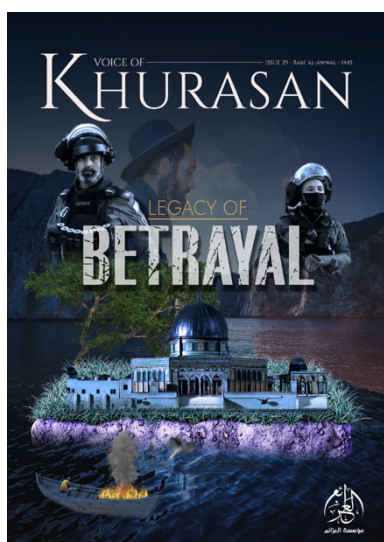
**Example content:**

"Why do you stay behind?" (pp.9-14)

"Ibadaah of bloodshed: The ultimate treatment of Hindus in this worldly life" (pp.23-27)

"Between the hammer and the anvil" (pp.48-53)

**Key Theme/s:** India is a major focus of this Issue with articles that highlight contemporary and historical examples of violence against Indian Muslims and call for jihad. The "Heroes of Islam" series features an historical Indian Muslim figure.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 29**

**Issue Date:** Rabi' Al-Awwal 1445 (September 2023)

**Pages:** 62

**Feature Story:**

"Legacy of Betrayal" (pp.30-37)

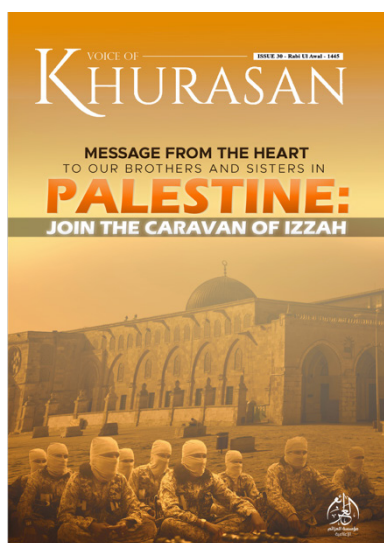
**Example content:**

"The International World Order is Crumbling!" (pp.3-6)

"Truly, history repeats itself" (pp.38-41)

"Please donate for waging jihad with wealth" (p.61)

**Key Theme/s:** The theme of a world order in crisis is explored via a range of topics from Taliban deviations in Afghanistan, a Christian-Jewish conspiracy to establish Israel, a stinging critique of democracy, and China's treatment of Uyghurs. It is the first Issue to call for cryptocurrency donations.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 30**

**Issue Date:** Rabi Ul Awwal 1445 (October 2023)

**Pages:** 55

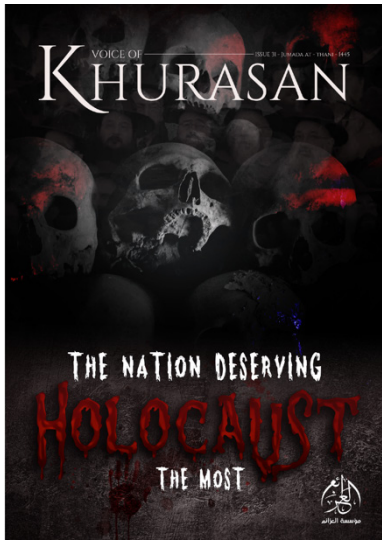
**Feature Story:** "Message from the heart to our brothers and sisters in Palestine: Join the Caravan of Izzah" (pp.21-24)

**Example content:**

"From Jihad to Politics" (pp.7-11)

"Moderate Islam: Normalization or the process of making Muslims unaware of the path to salvation" (pp.19-22)

**Key Theme/s:** The feature article focuses on the war in Gaza and highlights civilian casualties to criticise Israel, Hamas and Arab regimes for their complicity. Moderate Islam and the abandoning of jihad are tackled in various ways in this Issue.

	<p><b>Voice of Khurasan, Issue 31</b></p> <p><b>Issue Date:</b> Junada at-Thani 1445 (December 2023)</p> <p><b>Pages:</b> 80</p> <p><b>Feature Story:</b> “The nation deserving holocaust the most” (pp.40-52)</p> <p><b>Example content:</b>  “Practical steps to fight the Jews” (pp.3-8)  “O Mothers of the Ummah, Bring up your children for bringing back Izzah” (pp.70-78)</p> <p><b>Key Theme/s:</b> With the war in Gaza as backdrop, this Issue offers a mix of al-Naba reprint and exclusive content to call for multifront attacks on nations supporting Israel and terrorist attacks on Jewish communities.</p>
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### Year 3: Issues 32-42, January – December 2024

2024 was a breakout year for ISKP’s external operations. The year began with high profile, mass casualty terrorist attacks in Kerman, Iran (3 January 2024),<sup>76</sup> Istanbul, Turkey (28 January 2024),<sup>77</sup> and Moscow, Russia (22 March 2024)<sup>78</sup> followed by thwarted plots throughout the year that could have been equally as destructive.<sup>79</sup> On the surface, the Al-Azaim Media Foundation is thriving as its propagandists set a tempo of strategic messaging to amplify the effects of its external operations as “propaganda of the deed.” Behind the scenes, the takedown and disruption of ISKP’s online infrastructure on important platforms, such as during Europol’s Operation HOPPER II,<sup>80</sup> would critically wound its propaganda apparatus. However, there was a lag in the full effects of these counter-terrorism operations being outwardly evident until the following year. For the meantime, 2024 would prove to be the peak before the decline of ISKP’s transnational outreach.

*Voice of Khurasan* released eleven issues in its third year of publication. Now the flagship English-language magazine of the global jihad, its first three issues of 2024 were devoted to justifying and celebrating ISKP’s mass-casualty terrorist attacks in Iran,<sup>81</sup> Turkey,<sup>82</sup> and Russia.<sup>83</sup> These opening issues set the tone for a dominant theme for the year: closing the say-do gap. *Voice of Khurasan’s* calls intensified for its readers to engage in violence<sup>84</sup> while admonishing

76 Nadimi, F. 2024. “Terrorist bombings in Iran: Implications and potential responses,” *The Washington Institute*, 5 January 2024. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/terrorist-bombings-iran-implications-and-potential-responses>

77 Zelin, A. 2024. “The Islamic State hits Turkey after years of plotting,” *The Washington Institute*, 30 January 2024. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/islamic-state-hits-turkey-after-years-plotting>

78 Roth, A. 2024. “Islamic State’s deadly Moscow attack highlights its fixation with Russia,” *The Guardian*, 23 March 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/23/theres-little-reason-to-doubt-attack-on-moscow-venue-was-by-islamic-state>

79 For example, the terrorist plot to attack a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna, Austria. For more see, Stockhammer, N. and Clarke, C. 2025. “The August 2024 Taylor Swift Vienna Concert Plot,” *CTC Sentinel*, vol.18 iss.1.

80 Europol, 2024, “Europol-coordinated operation tackles the threat of terrorist-operated websites,” Europol, 14 June 2024: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/europol-coordinated-operation-tackles-threat-of-terrorist-operated-websites>

81 Unnamed author. 2024. “The attack of Kerman,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 32: 41.

82 Unnamed author. 2024. “Attack on Turkey,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 33: 47.

83 Unnamed author. 2024. “Moscow attack,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 34: 39.

84 For example, Unnamed author. 2024. “They are one with us and we are one with them,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 39: 20-25.



those who hesitated at a time of such intense suffering for the *ummah*.<sup>85</sup> In the year's later issues, reminders of the apocalypse were threaded into issues that incessantly sought to expose the crucial role treacherous, self-proclaimed jihadis had as enablers of a global Judeo-Christian-Shia alliance to destroy Islam.<sup>86</sup>

It is worthwhile highlighting how *Voice of Khurasan* seeks to cover a spectrum of subjects and themes in its contents. As other studies have analysed in great depth,<sup>87</sup> at one end of the spectrum are the magazine's analyses of geopolitical issues. *Voice of Khurasan* often reads like an ISKP version of *Foreign Policy* or *Foreign Affairs*. This content is even more prominent in 2024 as the war in Gaza is presented as a revelatory crisis that, as one peels the layers back, the full extent of the global conspiracy emerges.<sup>88</sup> The notion of cascading apostasy became a succinct way for *Voice of Khurasan*'s propagandists to capture the centripetal forces that hold an otherwise "crumbling world order."<sup>89</sup> As always, the Taliban are presented as both the epitome of the problem and the glue that ties regional players, such as the despised India, Iran, and Pakistan, with global powers from the East, led by Russia and China, and the West, led by the United States, and other jihadi groups from al-Qaeda to Hamas. These geopolitical perspectives are augmented by articles that present history as both strategic precedent and a source of lessons,<sup>90</sup> heroic ancient and contemporary figures as a source of emulation,<sup>91</sup> and timeless ideological guidance.<sup>92</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum are highly personalised, emotional, introspective, and often spiritual content. Personal stories are presented as microcosms of broader geopolitical and cosmic battles which *Voice of Khurasan* explores through a variety of different approaches. Ongoing series, such as "On the path of being a faithful servant" that tells the story of a man's journey to a life of jihad,<sup>93</sup> are all designed to offer deeply personal accounts to connect to readers on a visceral, emotional, and spiritual level. In many ways, *Voice of Khurasan*'s contents that cater to a specific audience, whether women,<sup>94</sup> or Muslims in India,<sup>95</sup> are designed to have a similar effect of appealing at a personal level and demonstrating that its propagandists "get it." Overall, *Voice of Khurasan*'s readers are left with a sense that they are not only living at a time of great geopolitical and cosmic turmoil, but a moment of great personal opportunity to be part of something consequential. Through 2024, it is these qualities that are thread through every issue of the magazine. New "Lesson" and "Question Answer" series are introduced as, once again, *Voice of Khurasan*'s average number of pages increases to almost eighty pages per issue. A growing sense of acute crisis is clear throughout the year and, with it, desperate calls for action

85 For example, Unnamed author. 2024. "O, young Muslims living in those countries: If not now then when?" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 34: 69-80.

86 For example, Unnamed author. 2024. "Signs before the Apocalypse," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 40: 23.

87 Webber, L. & Smith, P. 2024. "IS Khurasan's Multipolar War: Propaganda and Operations Against the Great Powers," *Hudson Institute*. 11 November 2024. <https://www.hudson.org/foreign-policy/khurasans-multipolar-war-propaganda-operations-against-great-powers-peter-smith-lucas-webber>; Rath, E., Tollersrud, T. 2025. "The foreign policy and enemy perception of the Islamic State Khurasan Province: An Assessment of Voice of Khurasan and Sawt al-Khurasan," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol.19 Iss.2.

88 Unnamed author. 2024. "Palestine, the new war on 'tyrants' has just begun," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 32: 32-41.

89 Unnamed author. 2024. "Sibling quarrel," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 35: 26-29.

90 For example, Al-Italy, A. 2024. "From the 'sahaba' to the 'dawla', there is no jihad without the sword," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 37: 39-46.

91 Unnamed author. 2024. "A life filled with love and knowledge: Aisha, the Humayrah of the Messenger of Allah," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 42: pp.20-27.

92 Unnamed author. 2024. "Stories from the Quran 1: The story of Solomon," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 40: 38-43.

93 For example, Unnamed author. 2024. "On the path of being a faithful servant 6," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 39: 69-78.

94 For example, Unnamed author. 2024. "To the loyal women of the ummah," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 41: 23-33.

95 For example, Unnamed author. 2024. "O Polytheist Indian Kings! Be ready to face Mahmud Ghaznavi again!" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 36: 25-34.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 32***

**Issue Date:** Rajab 1445 (January 2024)

**Pages:** 75

**Feature Story:** "Silence of the Maldivian Muslims amid the Transgression of the Tawagheet in their Land" (pp.3-12)

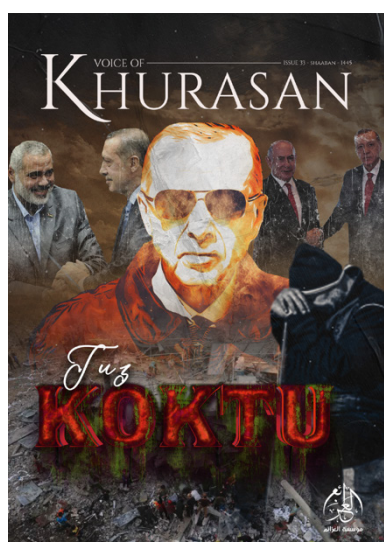
**Example content:**

"Palestine, the new war on 'tyrants' has just begun" (pp.32-41)

"The attack of Kerman" (p.41)

"Would you desire me to slay him?" (pp.64-72)

**Key Theme/s:** The war in Gaza is woven throughout this issue. The cover story presents a 'responsibility to protect' style argument for jihad and condemns an Iranian-Shia axis. An infographic then celebrates ISKP's attack in Kerman, Iran.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 33***

**Issue Date:** Shaaban 1445 (February 2024)

**Pages:** 92

**Feature Story:** "The Liar Amir-ul-Muminin!" (pp.3-20)

**Example content:**

"Tuz Koktu" (pp.40-46)

**Key Theme/s:** The issue opens with a long article mocking the laziness of Taliban communications for re-publishing an old speech by its leader which is then extensively critiqued. Another article describes COVID-19 as "the soldier of Allah." Like the previous issue, an article presents Turkey as a corrupt and treacherous nation followed by an infographic celebrating a recent terrorist attack in Istanbul, Turkey.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 34***

**Issue Date:** Ramadan 1445 (March 2024)

**Pages:** 83

**Feature Story:** "A message for Bangladesh" (pp.3-7)

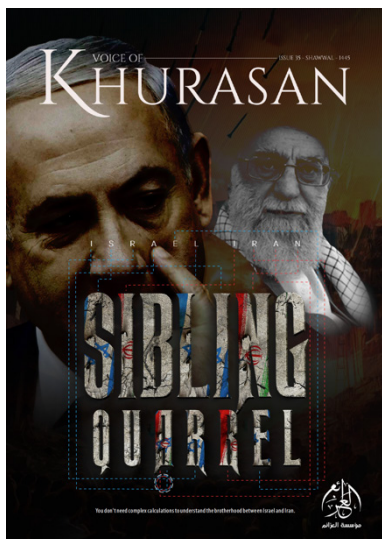
**Example content:**

"The Bear Bewildered" (pp.32-38)

"O, young Muslims living in those countries. If not now then when?" (pp.69-78)

**Key Theme/s:** For the third issue in a row, the cover story, this time focused on Russia, reads as a justification for the devastating ISKP terrorist attack in Moscow and is followed by a celebratory infographic. A major theme throughout this issue is calling on Muslim youth across the West and East to engage in jihad.





### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 35**

**Issue Date:** Shawwal 1445 (April 2024)

**Pages:** 67

**Feature Story:** “The ruling on sorcerers and the position of the Taliban” (pp.3-11)

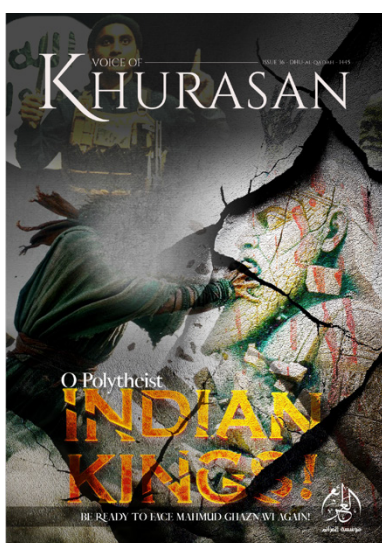
#### **Example content:**

“The hidden enemy of the ummah: comfort” (pp.19-24)

“Sibling quarrel” (pp.26-29)

“If not now then when 2?” (pp.60-64)

**Key Theme/s:** The theme of cascading apostasy and complicity via association is particularly prominent and used to justify and incite terrorist attacks. With conflict in the Middle East raging, the editors are keen to ensure that Iran and Shia Muslims are presented as central actors.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 36**

**Issue Date:** Dhu-Al-Qa'dah (May 2024)

**Pages:** 71

**Feature Story:** “Actions speak louder than words” (pp.3-10)

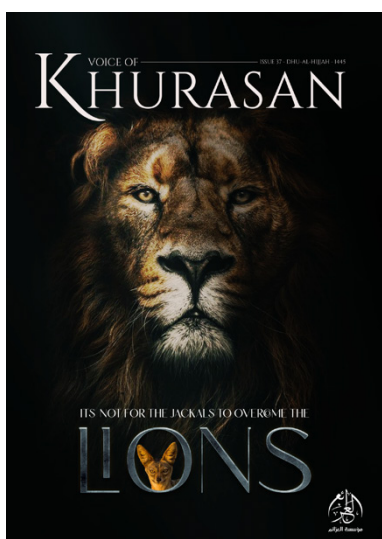
#### **Example content:**

“What is happening to the earth?” (pp.12-15)

“They were women. Which one are you?” (p.24)

“Light of Darkness 3” (pp.50-58)

**Key Theme/s:** While the first half of this issue focuses on strategic and geopolitical issues, the second half is more inwardly focused on ideological and spiritual matters. There is a noticeable increase in infographics including new ‘Lesson’ and ‘Question Answer’ series.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 37**

**Issue Date:** Dhu-al-Hijjah 1445 (June 2024)

**Pages:** 65

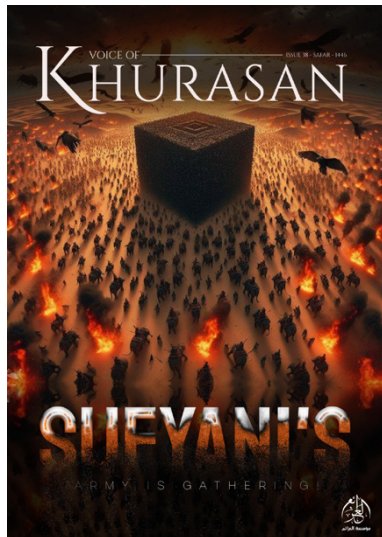
**Feature Story:** “The Apostate Taliban Militia’s Foolish Logic” (pp.3-7)

#### **Example content:**

“It is not for the jackals to overcome the lions.” (pp.31-37)

“From the ‘Sahaba’ to the ‘Dawla,’ there is no jihad without the sword” (pp.39-46)

**Key Theme/s:** This issue opens with a photo report style article highlighting ISKP’s criticisms of the Taliban while its feature article condemns the Taliban for its role as counter-terrorism stooges for the West. Infographics proceed both articles to reinforce the message.



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 38***

**Issue Date:** Safar 1446 (August 2024)

**Pages:** 94

**Feature Story:** “Honorable Muslim Brothers!” (pp.3-18)

**Example content:**

“Sufyani’s Army is Gathering” (pp.30-36)

“Evidence of the Taliban Making Halal Haram and Haram Halal” (pp.82-89)

**Key Theme/s:** The dominant themes are a mix of condemning Shia Muslims, especially Iran, for the crisis facing Sunnis and the complicity of the Taliban as protectors and enablers of that global conspiracy. The issue closes with a graphic photo of a man being beheaded and the message “this is how the Islamic State treats hypocrites and spies.”



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 39***

**Issue Date:** Rabi' Al-Awwal 1446 (September 2024)

**Pages:** 82

**Feature Story:** “Kashmir: The paradise under the control of infidels” (pp.3-11)

**Example content:**

“They are one with us and we are one with them” (pp.20-25)

“The Spider’s Web” (pp.27-38)

**Key Theme/s:** Content to inspire and incite violence dominates this issue. For example, a new series titled ‘Stories of Mobilization,’ articles hailing lone actors in the West, and an infographic celebrating a mass stabbing in Germany. The issue closes by asking “O lone wolf where are you?”



### ***Voice of Khurasan, Issue 40***

**Issue Date:** Rabi' At-Thani 1446 (October 2024)

**Pages:** 65

**Feature Story:** “Stories of Mobilization of the Soldiers of the Islamic State – 2” (pp.3-7)

**Example content:**

“The Islamic State has been defeated” (pp.14-22)

“Signs before the apocalypse” (p.23)

“On the path of being a faithful servant – 7” (pp.53-60)

**Key Theme/s:** There is an intensifying sense of crisis, but also opportunity, in this issue. Inspirational calls to join the Islamic State or become a lone actor are followed by reminders of the apocalypse. The issue closes with a call to target Jews and Christians in America and Europe.

	<p><b>Voice of Khurasan, Issue 41</b></p> <p><b>Issue Date:</b> Jumada Al-Awwal 1446 (November 2024)  <b>Pages:</b> 90  <b>Feature Story:</b> “ Hamas: The right hand of the Rafidis and the Evil Ones who believe in democracy” (pp.3-15)</p> <p><b>Example content:</b>  “To the loyal women of the ummah” (pp.23-33)  “Why should you join the Islamic State?”(pp.35-43)</p> <p><b>Key Theme/s:</b> Patience and resilience are central themes. The cover story offers nine reasons to join Islamic State while also acknowledging that the movement is currently weak. The intra-jihadi rivalry remains a regular topic with articles linking Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Taliban to Shia, Jewish and western interests.</p>
	<p><b>Voice of Khurasan, Issue 42</b></p> <p><b>Issue Date:</b> Jumada At-Thani 1446 (Dec 2024)  <b>Pages:</b> 82  <b>Feature Story:</b> “From tie-wearing slaves to turbaned deceivers” (pp.3-12)</p> <p><b>Example content:</b>  “A life filled with love and knowledge: Aisha, the Humayrah of the Messenger of Allah” (pp.20-27)  “The Pharaoh was overthrown, but his successor was Samiri” (pp.29-42)</p> <p><b>Key Theme/s:</b> The feature article is devoted to attacking the credibility of Taliban communications and its leadership more broadly. Another article presents Syria’s leader as similarly corrupt and a traitor to Islam.</p>

## Year Four: Issues 43-46, January-March and June 2025

Far from building upon the momentum it had generated in 2024, ISKP’s external operations and propaganda machine faltered under the weight of sustained counter-terrorism operations. The effects of online translation and distribution nodes being dismantled and disrupted in 2024 were compounded by the arrest of Al-Azaim Media Foundation operatives, most significantly Sultan Aziz Azam in May 2025.<sup>96</sup> Reflecting a strategic re-prioritisation of focus and effort, ISKP looked to sustain its guerrilla operations and terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, although at a relatively low operational cadence. ISKP’s media operations also contracted and consolidated to focus on local audiences, and more secure and insular online channels at a lower volume of outputs. For the first three months of 2025, however, it looked as if *Voice of Khurasan* would continue to evolve on its ascendent 2024 trajectory.

96 Alarabiya English, 2025, “Pakistan arrests senior official from ISIS offshoot,” *Alarabiya English*, 19 December 2025: <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2025/12/19/pakistan-arrests-senior-official-from-isis-offshoot>;

Basit, A. 2025, “Is the Islamic State of Khorasan Province losing momentum?” *The Diplomat*, 26 June 2025: <http://thediplomat.com/2025/06/is-the-islamic-state-of-khorasan-province-losing-momentum/>; Afghanistan Studies Center, 2025, “Senior Daesh figure captured in joint Pak-Turkish intelligence operation near Afghan border,” *Afghan Studies Center*: <https://www.afghanstudiescenter.org/senior-daesh-figure-captured-in-joint-pak-turkish-intelligence-operation-near-afghan-border/>



As *Voice of Khurasan* enters its fourth year of publication, the first three issues of the year averaged over eighty pages each. In these issues, the magazine's editors enthusiastically leveraged a tumultuous period in global geopolitics drawing on a variety of subjects and an array of motivational approaches to reinforce and triple-down on a core narrative that has remained unchanged since issue 1: only the Islamic State can solve the *ummah*'s crises. Predictably, President Trump's second term was a prominent theme. In contrast to the sense of greater uncertainty typically predicted in western media reporting at the dawn of the Trump administration, *Voice of Khurasan* stressed continuity with articles reminding readers of the history between President Trump and the Taliban.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, the magazine predicted that the relationship would remain characterised by the Taliban's sycophancy to the US President, treachery to the Afghan people, and complicity in a global conspiracy betraying the *ummah*.<sup>98</sup> After issue 45 was released in March, only one more issue was published in 2025, issue 46 in June, signalling a steep and sudden decline of the Al-Azaim Media Foundation's capacity to sustain *Voice of Khurasan*'s publication quality and tempo.

The first quarter of *Voice of Khurasan*'s releases in 2025 suggested the publication would hold the trajectory and momentum it had built in 2024. The magazine opened the year with a jurisprudentially focused reminder of the obligations of all Muslims to join and actively support the Islamic State.<sup>99</sup> The Los Angeles fires were covered, as *Voice of Khurasan* had similarly argued with COVID-19<sup>100</sup> and earthquakes in Syria and Turkey<sup>101</sup> in previous issues, as a divine affliction.<sup>102</sup> Both the Taliban's efforts to join the United Nations<sup>103</sup> and their relationship with President Trump<sup>104</sup> were mocked in issue 44's main articles with another, written by Sultan Aziz Azam, telling the emotional stories of ISKP fighter sacrifices on the battlefield.<sup>105</sup> To ongoing series such as "For Women,"<sup>106</sup> "Stories of Mobilization of the Soldiers of the Islamic State,"<sup>107</sup> and "Lesson,"<sup>108</sup> *Voice of Khurasan* introduced the "Stories from the land of living" series in issue 45.<sup>109</sup> The series' first article is written by a high profile Australian foreign fighter, and traverses his journey into the Islamic State. With the war in Gaza raging and conflicts metastasising across the Middle East, the "apostate alliance" remained a central focus for *Voice of Khurasan*.

After a three-month pause in publication, the forty-sixth issue of *Voice of Khurasan* was released in June 2025 to complete the first three-and-a-half years of the periodical. The magazine was the shortest in almost two years and, unlike issues released through 2024 and 2025 which had a diversity of articles, infographics, and cross-advertising, issue 46 simply consisted of seven articles and concluded with the usual call for donations. Thematically, it maintained an unwavering focus on presenting an *ummah* in deep crisis that is being slaughtered by disbelievers in every corner

97 For example, Unnamed author. 2024. "Our suggestion to the Taliban is to take their divorce from Biden and go as a bride to Trump," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 43: 12.

98 For example, Unnamed author, 2025, "Militia's Mr Trump," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 44: 3-12.

99 Unnamed author, 2025, "Who is the Shari'ah ruler to whom obedience is obligatory for the *ummah*?" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 43: 3-11.

100 Al-Iraqi, K. 2024. "The darkness of the infidels, the revenge of the Muwahideen: Corona, the Soldier of Allah," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 33: 22-30.

101 Unnamed author. 2023. "It was not Allah who wronged you, but you wronged yourself," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 22: 3-9.

102 Unnamed author. 2025. "They will see soon," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 43: 25-30.

103 Unnamed author. 2025. "The desire for a seat," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 44: 32-53.

104 Unnamed author. 2025. "Militia's Mr Trump," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 44: 3-12.

105 Azam, S. 2025. "The Torn Shirt," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 44: 14-21.

106 Unnamed author. 2025. "A prayer dedicated to Allah: Maryam," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 45: 20-31.

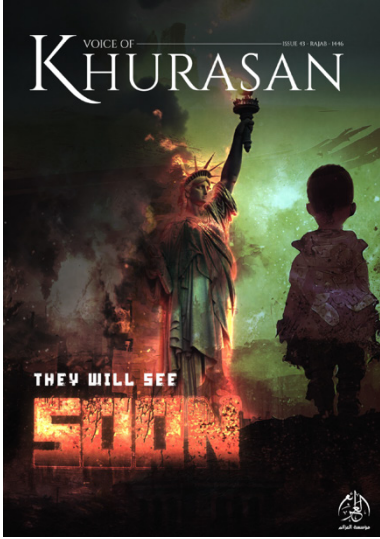
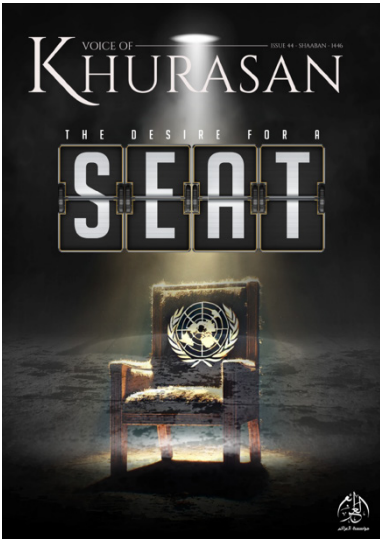
107 For example, Unnamed author. 2025. "Stories of mobilization – 5," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 43: 13-18.

108 For example, Unnamed author. 2025. "Lesson: Isa," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 45: 56-63.

109 Khalid, A. 2025. "Stories from the land of living," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 45: 3-11.



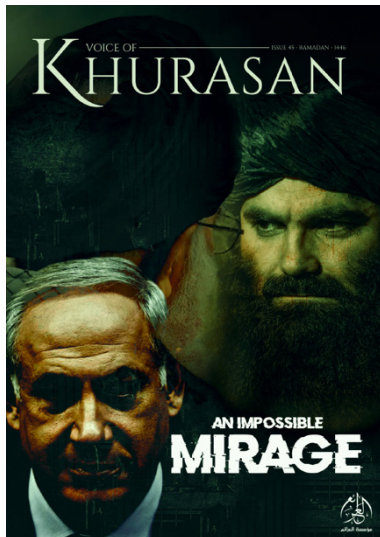
of the globe,<sup>110</sup> betrayed by fake jihadis from within,<sup>111</sup> and, of course, the Taliban was presented as the epitome of this disaster.<sup>112</sup> In a world steeped in such crisis, only the Islamic State offers any hope of revival then glory. No further issues of *Voice of Khurasan* were released in 2025.

	<p><b>Voice of Khurasan, Issue 43</b></p> <p><b>Issue Date:</b> Rajab 1446 (January 2025)  <b>Pages:</b> 74  <b>Feature Story:</b> “Who is the Shari’ah ruler to whom obedience is obligatory for the ummah?” (pp.3-11)</p> <p><b>Example content:</b>          “They will see soon” (pp.25-30)          “Light of Darkness – 5” (pp.44-55)</p> <p><b>Key Theme/s:</b> This issue opens with a lengthy article that presents the jurisprudential case for obedience to Islamic State. The cover story argues that the Los Angeles fires were sent from God. The ‘For Women,’ ‘Stories of the Mobilization of the Soldiers of the Islamic State,’ and ‘Lesson’ infographics series have become staples of recent issues.</p>
	<p><b>Voice of Khurasan, Issue 44</b></p> <p><b>Issue Date:</b> Shaaban 1446 (February 2025)  <b>Pages:</b> 96  <b>Feature Story:</b> “Militia’s Mr Trump” (pp.3-12)</p> <p><b>Example content:</b>          “The torn shirt” (pp.14-22)          “The United Nations and the Taliban militia” (pp.32-53)          “When will the ‘we are in the Meccan era’ excuse end?” (pp.87-92)</p> <p><b>Key Theme/s:</b> In a continuation from the preceding issue, the feature story argues the fundamentals of US-Taliban relations will remain unchanged with the new Trump administration. In a later article, Taliban efforts for UN membership are condemned and mocked.</p>

110 Unnamed author, 2025. “The Weakened Muslim Communities: The Khilafah is the Only Solution”, *Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 46: p.7.

111 Unnamed author, 2025, “Crooked paths and lost destinations,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 46: pp.32-36.

112 Unnamed author, 2025, “Leaving the blacklist of the kuffar and entering the blacklist of Islam,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 46: pp.37-41.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 45**

**Issue Date:** Ramadan 1446 (March 2025)

**Pages:** 77

**Feature Story:** “An impossible mirage” (pp.33-41)

#### **Example content:**

“Stories from the land of living - 1” (pp.3-11)

“Six types of people destined for hell fire” (pp.42)

“Light of Darkness – 6” (pp.65-73)

**Key Theme/s:** A new series opens issue 45 titled “Stories from the land of living” written by an Australian foreign fighter. In an incessantly repeated theme, the feature article portrays the Taliban as in an “apostate alliance” with Iran. This is, typically, framed as merely one part of a wide and varied web of Taliban cooperation with reviled nations from Israel to the US and Arab states.



### **Voice of Khurasan, Issue 46**

**Issue Date:** Dhu Al-Hijjah 1446 (June 2025)

**Pages:** 56

**Feature Story:** “Leaving the Blacklist of the Kuffar and Entering the Blacklist of Islam” (pp.37-41)

#### **Example content:**

“The weakened Muslim communities” (pp.3-7)

“Crooked paths and lost destinations” (pp.32-36)

“Please donate for waging jihad with wealth” (pp.56)

**Key Theme/s:** After a three-month publication pause, this was the shortest issue since October 2023. Reminders of the Taliban’s treachery and the Islamic State as the only solution were combined with the continuation of the “Light of Darkness” series.

## Part III: The Media Jihad

*“...the soldiers of the Islamic State in the field of propaganda and calling to the path of Allah are still alive. Despite limited resources, they have made their dreams impermissible for them. The apostates are trying, in one way or another, to divert the fighters of the Islamic State from their lofty goals or deceive the people through lies and manipulation. Yet, in this field as well, they are facing shame and disgrace.”*

**Voice of Khurasan.**<sup>113</sup>

Part III of this report has two major objectives. First, it draws out the key findings and lessons from the study so far, particularly focusing on the propaganda strategies and behavioural levers deployed in *Voice of Khurasan*'s 'Swiss army knife' approach to influence. Second, it examines the ways in which *Voice of Khurasan* has sought to shape thinking and practice in the media jihad. The regularity of the media jihad guidance published in *Voice of Khurasan* suggests that ISKP is keen to encourage an organic surge capacity of 'informal' propagandists to amplify Islamic State's media jihad. It also offers potentially telling insights into practices and culture within the Al-Azaim Media Foundation. With the near collapse of ISKP's multilingual media in 2025, the success of these efforts will be tested over the coming months as ISKP seeks to rebuild and renew its propaganda capacities.

### Propaganda in Context

This study has broadly tracked the key trendlines in the evolution of *Voice of Khurasan* as ISKP's primary propaganda output targeting English-language speaking audiences. A central feature of this approach has been to contextualise that evolution with ground realities, shifting strategic considerations, and organisational transitions. The magazine emerged in 2022 as part of ISKP's expanding and strategically bullish media campaign that was initially designed to bring attention to Afghanistan and the broader Khurasan region. However, by the end of that first year of publication, *Voice of Khurasan*'s narrative and thematic focus was shifting to synch with ISKP's strategic and organizational pivot to transnational priorities. The influence of antecedents, such as Islamic State's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's *Inspire*, and the legacy of Anwar al-Awlaki, are clear in the *Voice of Khurasan*'s pages.

By 2024, the magazine had established a consistent style, format, and publication rhythm, carving its own niche into the annals of jihadist English-language propaganda buoyed by several high-profile international terrorist attacks. *Voice of Khurasan* was also distinct from other jihadist English-language magazines by virtue of the unique historical and strategic conditions it was simultaneously a product of and seeking to shape. For instance, *Voice of Khurasan*'s centrality of the intra-jihadi civil war, crisis narratives that it further exacerbated with anti-sectarian themes, are an important feature of how ISKP seeks to shape perceptions and mobilise action in its English-speaking readership. But perhaps the starkest lesson to be drawn from *Voice of Khurasan*'s evolution is that, for all the emphasis on counternarratives and proactive messaging to degrade the influence of terrorist propaganda, nothing is more impactful than counter-terrorism operations that kill or arrest personnel, dismantle funding, translation, and distribution networks, and strike fear and paranoia into the ranks.

<sup>113</sup> Unnamed author, 2025. "Militia's Mr. Trump", *Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 44: p.12.

## Deciphering the Call

It should be clear from the preceding analysis that *Voice of Khurasan*'s editors took the time to develop and apply a consistent style, format, and core set of persuasive levers. What emerged from this mix of both organic and deliberate processes is propaganda that is intended to be the 'Swiss army knife' of influence for its readers. Part II detailed how *Voice of Khurasan*'s editors are willing to draw upon a variety of subjects and themes, regularly deploying a range of motivational levers, to shape how their readers perceive themselves and the world and, in doing so, influence their decisions. Central to this approach is the picture that *Voice of Khurasan* portrays of a religion and its community of believers that is so steeped in crisis that even the supposed warriors of the faith are treacherous sell-outs to a coalition of enemies with deep historical and divine origins.

Every page of *Voice of Khurasan* in some way contributes to its core narrative: that only Islamic State can solve the crises facing Muslims. This is what focused and disciplined communications seeks to do as consistency builds credibility and repetition reinforces consistency. Variety in subject matter over time, rather than being distracting or diluting of persuasive goals, can in fact demonstrate the relevance of those key messages. But this is only possible if the core narrative is maintained as the foundation of the entire communications architecture. Conditions change with time, thematic priorities should shift accordingly, but the central narrative and its values remain the same. Open any issue of *Voice of Khurasan* and the same core narrative is there just with different subject matter offering a certain perspective and with different persuasive levers deployed to shape readers' perceptions, trigger certain motivations, and drive behavioural decisions.

Three propaganda strategies are particularly prominent in *Voice of Khurasan* and are worth highlighting. First, and arguably the most important, relates to not only how the magazine presents in-group identity, out-group identity, solution and crisis constructs but how that messaging plays upon the relationships between those constructs to shape readership perceptions.<sup>114</sup> The core narrative that underpins *Voice of Khurasan* epitomises the typical framing in violent extremist propaganda: a pure, benevolent and narrowly-defined in-group identity clashing with an array of malevolent out-groups that are responsible for crises only the self-titled saviours of the in-group identity are capable of solving.<sup>115</sup> Violent extremist propaganda will inevitably produce messaging that elaborates upon each of these constructs but also the various relationships (i.e. linkages) between constructs – whether between in- and out-groups, in-group and solution, out-group and crisis, or solution and crisis.

Arguably the most potent 'linkage' deployed in propaganda to induce a sense of urgent crisis is messaging that connects treacherous members of the in-group identity with the crisis. As the preceding analysis has shown, the dominant focus of *Voice of Khurasan* is the framing of the intra-jihadi battle as the primary information theatre. By constructing other Sunni jihadis, from the Taliban and al-Qaeda to Hamas, as enemies and active contributors to the crisis-afflicting Muslims, the magazine portrays a world that is so rotten that even the faith's supposed defenders are compromised. *Voice of Khurasan*'s anti-sectarian, especially anti-Shia, messaging is a constant presence which works to exacerbate the sense of "enemies within" while also tying into larger global conspiracies of a Judeo-Christian-Shia alliance. For ISKP, like Islamic State more broadly, the Shia are portrayed as the treacherous glue that helps to hold anti-Islamic forces together. Sectarian genocidal violence is not just legitimate, in ISKP's reckoning, but an urgent necessity.

<sup>114</sup> The linkage approach to propaganda analysis focuses solely on understanding this mix of psychosocial and strategic dynamics. A forthcoming scholarly journal article applies the linkage approach to *Voice of Khurasan*.

<sup>115</sup> Berger, J. 2018. *Extremism*. MIT Press, Cambridge MA.



Second, *Voice of Khurasan* strategically deploys a mix of formal and authoritative content alongside messaging that is more informal and colloquial in style. Most of *Voice of Khurasan*'s articles that are written in a formal and authoritative style typically address jurisprudential or strategic issues, have no identified author, and mostly read like a series of excerpts from holy texts. Those articles written in a more authoritative and formal style that do identify the author do so because it reinforces the message's credibility. For example, articles written by legendary Islamic State figures such as Abu Ali al-Anbari's "Shirk of Obedience"<sup>116</sup> and Abu Hamza al-Muhajir's "Advice for the soldiers of the Islamic State".<sup>117</sup> In contrast, *Voice of Khurasan*'s more informal and colloquial content typically takes the tone of a well-informed older friend or a popular opinion columnist and seeks to make a personal, more emotional, connection with the reader. It follows that the author is typically identified for this type of messaging, presumably, because it helps to reinforce a more personal connection with the reader. Some examples include articles by supposedly western authors like Sulaiman al-Kanadie<sup>118</sup> and Abu Khalid al-Australi.<sup>119</sup> Incorporating these different styles has the potential to broaden the scope of those for whom *Voice of Khurasan*'s message may resonate.

Third, *Voice of Khurasan* is filled with content that is specifically designed to drive its readership over the psychological and strategic barriers that may be preventing them from joining the Islamic State and/or engaging in terrorist violence. The overall atmosphere of crisis generated by *Voice of Khurasan* is important because the more extreme the perception of crisis, the more extreme the perceived solution that is required to address it. One of the potentially most powerful means by which this propaganda exercises the crisis-solution mechanism is via 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) appeals. Similar to the international norm that was adopted during the 2005 UN World Summit,<sup>120</sup> jihadist R2P messaging implores Muslims to respond to the deaths of their fellow Muslims by fulfilling their jurisprudential obligation to defend the faithful.<sup>121</sup> *Voice of Khurasan* constantly reminds readers of their obligations to defend an ummah under attack,<sup>122</sup> cites historical precedents from ancient to modern times,<sup>123</sup> leverages this rationale to justify killing outside of conflict areas<sup>124</sup> by engaging in "just terror,"<sup>125</sup> and calls for a closing of the say-do gap.<sup>126</sup> The magazine's mix of highly personal accounts of victimisation but also brotherhood and acceptance, on the one hand, and a portrayal of the world amidst an epic geopolitical and cosmic struggle, on the other, positions the reader as a *potential* player on that stage.

Whether *Voice of Khurasan*'s strategies are having the desired impact on readers and changing their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour is the subject of a different study. What this report has sought to do is to take a "look behind the curtain" and attempt to identify some of the psychosocial and strategic mechanisms ISKP's propagandists are seeking to exercise. That *Voice of Khurasan* is deliberately deploying these motivational levers, not by fluke, is clear with even a rudimentary consideration of the underlying rationale of its messaging. It is also clear when one considers how the magazine seeks to direct understanding and practice in the media jihad.

116 Al-Anbari, A. 2022. "Shirk of Obedience," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 7: 16-28.

117 Al-Muhajir, A. 2023. "Advice for the soldiers of the Islamic State," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 22: 17-23.

118 Al-Kanadie, S. 2023. "Opinion: Self-Destruction," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 26: 29-33.

119 Al-Australi, A. 2023. "O mothers of the ummah, bring up your children for bringing back izzah," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 31: 70-78.

120 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, "What is R2P?", Available online: <https://www.globalr2p.org/what-is-r2p/>

121 For example, Unnamed author, 2025. "Long forgotten oppressed ones: The Muslims of Balkans", *Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 31: 61-69.

122 For example, Unnamed author, 2024. "Why should you join the Islamic State?", *Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 41: 35-43.

123 Unnamed author. 2024. "The Islamic State has been defeated!" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 40: 14-21.

124 Unnamed author. 2023. "The 'ibadah of qital killing and corpses" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 21: 22-27.

125 For example, Unnamed author. 2022. "Just Terror in the recent times across Europe and America" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 21: 43.

126 Unnamed author. 2024. "O lone wolf where are you?" *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 39: 82.

## Guidance to Media Operatives

It is well-established in the scholarly field that the Islamic State reveres the art and science of propaganda. This is evident in the Islamic State's doctrine, the way it practically deploys propaganda as a multifaceted tool in its campaigning, its insistence on affiliates prioritising a recalibration of their propaganda efforts to become a formal *wilayat*, and the culture it seeks to generate within its media units.<sup>127</sup> Reflecting these attributes, *Voice of Khurasan's* editors and writers appear to be not just practitioners and active proponents but students of propaganda. This is best evidenced in not only the advice that *Voice of Khurasan* offers its readership in the areas of media jihad and cyber security but its breakdowns of adversary communications.

In its first two years of publication, *Voice of Khurasan* regularly published articles that sought to rally and advise jihadi propagandists. Echoing the Islamic State's propaganda doctrine *O Media Operative, You are also a Mujahid*,<sup>128</sup> *Voice of Khurasan* declares in an article titled "The Crusader War":

*As much importance the physical clashes hold[,] ideological confrontations also matter if not more. The physical battle can be lost even before it starts if people, in our cases Muslims, are defeated or at the least trapped in the battle for the hearts and minds. Muslims today are in a complete battle against Crusaders and their allies which is fought militarily and intellectually.*<sup>129</sup>

This sentiment is further reinforced in the article's conclusion with a lengthy quote from Anwar al-Awlaki that argues "...we should be more concerned, about what is in the hearts and minds of Muslims rather than what happens on the battlefield!"<sup>130</sup> In another issue, the inspirational example of a martyred ISKP propagandist is presented to encourage the next generation of propagandists.<sup>131</sup> In an attempt to guide the media jihad, *Voice of Khurasan* provides its readers with objectives in the information theatre that will "...propagate and cause defeatism and demoralization of the enemy, and show the strength of the mujahideen."<sup>132</sup> With extensive references to the holy texts, an article titled "Media and Psychological warfare" argues that there are four themes that should be the focus of information warfare: demonstrate strength of the *mujahideen*, spread rumours, cause fear, and deceive the enemy.<sup>133</sup> On the other side, *Voice of Khurasan's* editors are also keen to raise awareness about their adversary's approach to influence operations.<sup>134</sup> It seems clear, especially across its early issues, that ISKP wished to provide its readers with the tools to support its growing propaganda machine. In this multifront theatre, the magazine's editors are clear about their priority: "social media warfare holds the utmost importance."<sup>135</sup>

Having established that the online theatre is vital for the Islamic State's influence efforts, *Voice of Khurasan* also provides its readers with extensive cyber security advice. This is best evidenced by its "Light of Darkness" series.<sup>136</sup> In the opening article, the unnamed author (or authors) suggest that their motivation for writing the series is to give "our mujahidin brothers and sisters" the confidence

127 For more see Ingram, H., Whiteside, C., Winter, C. 2020. *The ISIS Reader: Milestone texts of the Islamic State movement*. Oxford University Press: New York.

128 'Media Operative, You Are Also a Mujahid,' In *The ISIS Reader*. Oxford University Press, New York. <https://academic.oup.com/book/36890/chapter-abstract/322127320?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

129 Unnamed author, 2022, "The Crusader War," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 3: 7.

130 Ibid. p.8.

131 Unnamed author, 2022, "Memories of Shuhada: 'Asadullah al-Urgenchi," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 18: 19-23.

132 Unnamed author, 2022, "Media and Psychological warfare," issue 5, p.17.

133 Ibid. p.19.

134 For example, Unnamed author, 2022, "The media war upon the Islamic State," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 6, pp.8-12; Abu Muhammad Al-Italy, 2023, "MEMRI plans but 'Allah is the best of planners'," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 25: pp.40-48.

135 "The Crusader War," p.8.

136 The first "Light of Darkness" article is published in issue 27. Unnamed author, 2023, "Light of Darkness," *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 27: pp.49-59.

to safely use the internet and social media.<sup>137</sup> What followed was a series of articles that has thus far extended for two years providing readers with cyber security 101 guidelines. While the articles are not specifically written for budding propagandists, it is clearly designed to provide ISKP supporters with the knowledge to confidently use the internet and, with each new iteration of the series, build their knowledge and confidence. Earlier offerings provided advice such as “be selective with sharing personal information” and “use security software,” while others stressed the importance of understanding and minimising “digital footprints”<sup>138</sup> and being conscious of the range of potential threats online. Later issues looked to provide, for example, case studies related to specific platforms and tools, risks associated with them, the challenges of AI, and ways to address those concerns.<sup>139</sup>

*Voice of Khurasan's* critiques of adversary strategic communications offers telling insights into the mentality and approach of its propagandists. This type of content falls into two broad categories. The first are articles, similar in intent to this report, that identify and explore the strategic logic and persuasive rationale of adversary messaging.<sup>140</sup> The second are articles that critically breakdown specific speeches and messages by an ISKP adversary. For example, “Muttaqi Don't Cry” is a counternarrative to the Taliban Foreign Minister's claim that there is no legitimate jihad in Afghanistan with foreign occupiers removed.<sup>141</sup> It criticises the Taliban for their “lying machines” deployed against Muslims and their treachery by fighting on the side of disbelievers.<sup>142</sup> In a lengthy article titled “The Liar Amir-ul-Muminin!”, the unnamed author mocks the “heartbroken media of the Taliban” for republishing an old speech declaring: “...it seems that their lazy and unaccountable media didn't think twice before re-publishing this speech and accidentally revealed the real face of their Amir al-Mu'minin.”<sup>143</sup> The implications are that a more professional and focused media outfit would not make such errors.

## Conclusion

The trademark of *Voice of Khurasan's* approach to influence is the diversity of themes and motivational levers it deploys within and across its issues. This approach, however, is built on the foundations of a consistent central narrative towards which all those diverse elements are designed to contribute. The preceding analysis identified three mechanisms that may be particularly impactful: *Voice of Khurasan's* framing of other Sunni jihadis as enemies responsible for the ummah's crises exacerbated by sectarian animosity, a mix of authoritative and informal styles of communication to broaden potential audience appeals, and a calibration of motivational levers towards inciting violence. Part III also briefly canvassed the ways in which *Voice of Khurasan* tried to guide the broader media jihad. It seems clear that *Voice of Khurasan's* editors and propagandists had, over time, attempted to be strategic, learn from experience, and apply that knowledge and experience to shape practice. As is so often the case, it is hard counter-terrorism operations that have the most direct and practical impacts on terrorist propaganda efforts. This was the case with ISKP and *Voice of Khurasan*. The true test now of ISKP's propaganda apparatus, specifically its globally focused components, is whether it can bounce back from the significant setbacks of 2025.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 51.

<sup>138</sup> Unnamed author, 2024, “Light of Darkness 2,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 34: pp.47-59.

<sup>139</sup> Unnamed author, 2025, “Light of Darkness 6,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 45: pp.65-73; Unnamed author, 2025, “Light of Darkness 7,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 45: pp.12-28.

<sup>140</sup> For example, Unnamed author, 2022, “The media war upon the Islamic State,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 6, pp.8-12; Abu Muhammad Al-Italy, 2023, “MEMRI plans but ‘Allah is the best of planners,’” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 25: pp.40-48.

<sup>141</sup> Unnamed author, 2023, “Muttaqi Don't Cry,” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 25: 12-19.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Unnamed author, 2024, “The Liar Amir-ul-Muminin!” *Voice of Khurasan*, issue 33: pp.3-20.

## Conclusion

*“There is only one way to change the course of the state of the Muslim world today. Loudly remind those in the position of power that their silence is sin, their inaction is betrayal, and their wealth is but a test. As Muslims, we cannot sit and watch our brothers and sisters burn alive. We must be protectors and defenders of justice and show courage and unity.”*

**Voice of Khurasan.<sup>144</sup>**

This report began by examining the strategic and historical context from which *Voice of Khurasan* emerged. Part I argued that the magazine was an important mechanism for ISKP to influence and incite English-speaking audiences especially as it transformed from a Khurasan-centric insurgency to the new vanguard of the global jihad. Part I also positioned *Voice of Khurasan* within the context of other jihadist English-language magazines arguing that while it is a product of influences such as Anwar al-Awlaki and the Islamic State’s *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, it has characteristics which reflect its unique organisational, historical, and strategic context.

Part II then examined the trajectory of *Voice of Khurasan*’s contents over a period that has been characterised by seismic strategic shifts within the global jihad and the world order. Seeking to leverage renewed world attention after the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan, *Voice of Khurasan* initially looked to simultaneously discredit the Taliban and bring ISKP’s struggle, particularly in Afghanistan, to the attention of global audiences. However, by its twentieth issue, *Voice of Khurasan* had achieved the mantle of the global jihad’s leading English-language magazine. Through the lens of ISKP’s propagandists, the machinations of the struggle between the world’s great powers are presented as largely a ruse for their shared goal to destroy true Islam. Naturally, while Khurasan is presented as a microcosm for the larger jihadi struggle, it was also increasingly portrayed as one of many fronts in a global war with existential implications. By its latter issues in 2024, *Voice of Khurasan*’s pages tell of a global war in which ISKP operate as a vanguard in Khurasan targeting the world’s most fraudulent pseudo-jihadis, the Taliban, and taking the fight to the great powers on the world stage.

This report concluded by analysing *Voice of Khurasan*’s contributions to the media jihad. What emerged from Part III is the variety of ways that ISKP looks to not just exploit powerful strategic factors but fuel self-reinforcing psychosocial dynamics that compound both an acute sense of crisis and the urgency of extreme solutions to match it. Whether these efforts are resonating is for another quite different study, but it should be clear from this analysis that this is the intent of ISKP propagandists. *Voice of Khurasan*’s guidance to propagandists is an effort to sustain and broaden the media jihad.

The pendulum of national security and foreign policy priorities has shifted away from counter-terrorism issues in recent years, but the threat persists and continues to evolve. The Islamic State more broadly, much like its Khorasan province specifically, may be broken and weak right now but it still poses significant threats. Policymakers and scholars must remain vigilant, engage with primary sources, and continue to generate lessons for improving understanding and practice.

<sup>144</sup> Unnamed author, 2025. “The Weakened Muslim Communities: The Khilafah is the Only Solution”, *Voice of Khurasan*, Issue 46: p.7.



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Haroro J. Ingram is an honorary senior fellow with the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland, a Harry Frank Guggenheim Distinguished Scholar, and an associate fellow with the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in the Hague. His research focuses on understanding the psychosocial and strategic drivers of state and non-state political violence particularly the role of influence operations/cognitive warfare in these dynamics. Haroro is a former national security practitioner with almost two decades of experience, mostly working on-the-ground in conflict impacted locations towards stabilisation, security, and peace objectives.



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