

Islamic State launches new Tajik propaganda network

From [Eurasia Net](#)

It might have seemed like a setback for Islamic State in Afghanistan when Yusuf Tajiki, a prominent Tajik-speaking propagandist, was reportedly killed this month by the Taliban.

But fighting militants is a game of whack-a-mole and Yusuf Tajiki is already being eclipsed by a parallel outlet targeting the same audience: Al-Azaim Tajiki. Islamic State Khurasan Province's magazine has recognized Al-Azaim as part of its central propaganda network, endorsing it in a tribute to Abu Muhammad [al-Tajiki](#), the Tajikistan-born suicide bomber who attacked [Kabul's Sikh](#) temple in June.



Abu Muhammad al-Tajiki, the Tajikistan-born suicide bomber who attacked Kabul's Sikh temple in June. (Telegram)

In line with its recent rocket assaults on [Uzbekistan](#) and Tajikistan, ISKP has intensified its hostile rhetoric against post-Soviet Central Asia's authoritarian

leaders. With Al-Azaim on Telegram, the group has ramped up [efforts](#) to broaden appeal among speakers of Central Asian languages, promising new attacks weekly.

Al-Azaim has distinguished itself by rapidly building a network of Telegram channels that post Tajik translations of official Islamic State media claims. It hosts multiple discussion channels for Tajik-speaking ISKP supporters and publishes original content.

The discussion groups add a more organic and interactive human element, facilitating an intimate setting for Tajik IS sympathizers to share and talk about religious content, regional and international affairs, as well as Islamic State videos and the latest organizational news.

More recently, Al-Azaim has been sharing Islamic State history lessons with its followers and has been posting early IS videos translated into Tajik and Russian.

Though Al-Azaim is a shadowy network that takes security precautions seriously, there are a few regular figures that appear central to the campaign, perhaps most notably those identifying themselves as “Abu Maytuha” and “I’lam Tajiki.” (I’lam means “media” in Arabic.)

...to ensure that followers are not lost when, inevitably, Telegram suspends channels, Al-Azaim released an instructional video on how to download the secure TOR browser and access the Tajik section of I’lam’s dark web platform.

The logic is clear, and it is not new. With the rise of ISKP in multiple provinces of Afghanistan, Al-Azaim and I’lam aim to turn more Tajik sympathizers into recruits. In this way they are mimicking Islamic State’s strategy during its heyday in Iraq and Syria between 2014-2017 by driving targeted propaganda to new regional audiences.