

Translation of al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri's letter to the leaders of the two Jihadi groups:

Dear brother/ Sheikh Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Huseini and his brothers in the Shura of the Islamic State in Iraq; May Allah protect them.

Dear brother/ Sheikh Abou Mohamed al-Joulani and his brothers in the Shura of Jabhat al-Nusra in al-Sham; May Allah protect them.

Peace and blessings be upon you and those around you, may Allah join us upon what he likes and chooses of worldly bounties and triumph in the hereafter.

1. The proponents of Jihad were all dismayed by the dispute that occurred on the media between our beloved brothers in the Islamic state of Iraq and Jabhat al-Nusra in al-Sham.
2. We have neither been asked for authorisation or advice, nor have we been notified of what had occurred between both sides. Regrettably, we have heard the news from the media.
3. At the outset, I have to remind all the Mujahidin and all Muslims of the role played by the Islamic State in Iraq in aborting the crusaders' plot for occupying and splitting the heart of the Islamic world, along with repelling of the elite Rafidhi expansion that aimed at dominating the Levant, Iraq and the Arab Peninsula.

We have to admit the good deeds done by our brothers; in particular, their Emir Sheikh Abou-Bakr al-Baghdadi in supporting Jihad in al-Sham by sending in the most capable fighters and money, to alleviate their suffering. We have admired our brothers in Jabhat al-Nusra who were praised, along with their Emir Sheikh Abi Mohamed al-Joulani, by Sheikh Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi.

4. I have to remind all the Mujahidin and all Muslims of the job done by our brothers in Jabhat al-Nusra for the people of the Levant in reviving the obligation of Jihad and their revival of the Umma hopes in liberating al-Aqsa and soon reinstating the Khilafa, by the will of Allah. We also praise them for repelling the Batini and secular Rafidhi aggression against the backlog of Islam in our beloved Levant. We also appreciate their praise to their brothers in the Islamic State in Iraq for the support they had offered.
5. When the dispute emerged between the two Jihadi groups, I sought to resolve the dispute by sending a message on 1st Jumada in 1434 to Sheikh Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi and to Abou Mohamed al-Joulani for freezing the dispute at the point preceding its breakout, prior to finally resolving it.

6. I received messages from both sides and from other sides. Accordingly, after holding consultations with my brothers in Khurasan and outside of it, after asking Allah for guidance, and for support to make me capable of putting out the fire of sedition and dispute between the two sides, I resolved the issue, by the help of the Almighty, as follows:

a- Sheikh Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi was wrong when he announced the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant without asking permission or receiving advice from us and even without notifying us.

b- Sheikh Abu Mohamed al-Joulani was wrong by announcing his rejection to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and by showing his links to al-Qaeda without having our permission or advice, even without notifying us.

c- The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is to be dissolved, while Islamic State in Iraq is to continue its work.

d- Jabhat al-Nusra, is an independent entity for Qaedat al-Jihad group, under the (al-Qaeda) general command.

e- The seat of the Islamic State in Iraq is in Iraq.

f- The seat of Jabhat al-Nusra for the people of al-Sham, is in Syria.

g- Sheikh Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi has been approved as the Emir for the Islamic State in Iraq for one year, as of the date of this ruling. The Islamic State in Iraq Shura (council) would then submit a report to the general command for Qaedat al-Jihad group about the progress of work. The general command would then decide whether to extend the mandate for Sheikh Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi as Emir, or appoint a new Emir.

h- Sheikh Abou Mohamed al-Joulani has been approved as the Emir for Jabhat al-Nusra for the people of al-Sham for one year as of the date of this ruling after which Jabhat al-Nusra Shura council submits a report to the general command of Qaedat al-Jihad about the progress of work. The general command would then decide extending the mandate for Sheikh Abi Mohamed as Emir, or appointing a new Emir.

i- The Islamic State in Iraq would supply, as far as it could, to Jabhat al-Nusra for the people of al-Sham, what they need of fighters, arms, money shelter and security.

j- Jabhat al-Nusrah for al-Sham would supply to the Islamic State in Iraq, as far as it could, what it needs of fighters, arms, money, shelter and security.

k- The two sides would cease any attack, by words or by deeds, against the other side.

l- The two sides and all the Mujahidin, would respect the sanctity of Muslim blood, honor and property. No one of them would attack a Muslim or a Mujahid, unless a judicial ruling was issued, as detailed below:

m- Muslim blood is a off-limits for other Muslims. Whoever changes sides from one Jihadi group to another, is not an apostate, instead, he enjoys the protection accorded to other Muslims and the Mujahidin, even if he was wrong in changing sides.

n- Whoever sheds the blood of his Muslim brothers and the Mujahidin, the group would take a tough stand against him as based on the principle of “defending virtue and preventing vice”.

o- Sheikh Abou Khalid al-Soury, is the best of men we had known among the Mujahidin, so we have chosen him as our delegate in al-Sham as regards the following issues:

Firstly: Any dispute arising from the interpretation of this ruling would be resolved by him.

Secondly: In case any side attacked the other side, I hereby authorize him to set up a Sharia justice court for giving a ruling on the case.

p- I hereby obligate all my brothers in Qaedat al-Jihad group, and I call upon all my Muslim brothers and the Mujahidin, to stop arguing over this dispute and to stop sedition among the Mujahidin and to seek harmony and unity, along with winning hearts and uniting ranks among Muslims and the Mujahidin.

They should recognise the good deeds of the two Jihadi groups and to mention only their good deeds.

7- Copy of this ruling would be handed over to :

- a- The Islamic State in Iraq
- b- Jabhat al-Nusra for the people of L-Sham
- c- Sheikh Abou Khalid al-Soury.

(I wanted reform to the best of my ability, but will only succeed by the will of Allah, I would rely on Him and resort to Him)

Your brother,

Ayman al-Zawahiri

Rajab, 13, 1434