



**ALRISALAH**

PRESENTS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
WITH

**SHAYKH AL-MUJAHID HISHAM ABU AKRAM**  
(MAY ALLAH PROTECT HIM)

SHURA MEMBER OF AL QAEDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB (AQIM)

**In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, companions, and his followers:**



**QUESTION 1:  
WOULD YOU FIRST INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO YOUR READERS?**

I am your brother Abu Hisham Abu Akram, from eastern Algeria, al-Awras region. I joined the Afghan Jihad in the early-90s. I received training at the Bari camp that is under the Services Bureau, at the hands of the camp's commander Sheikh Abu Turkia al-Libi, may Allah have mercy on him. I left Afghanistan for Sudan in late-1993 and stayed at the guesthouse of Sheikh Usama, may Allah have mercy on him, till the end of 1995. I entered the Niger desert, where I met brother Khaled Abu al-Abbas and his group. I went into Algeria with them in the same year to the ninth region. Allah made it easy on us to arrive at the emirate of the "Armed Islamic Group" in early-1996. I spent a month and a half with them and returned to the ninth region. I was active there and in the Niger desert till 2000 and then went back to Algeria, where I stayed until I went back to the Mali desert by the end of 2001. I stayed there till the end of 2002 and then returned to Algeria. We ask Allah to grant us and you the good conclusion of martyrdom in His cause, in advance and not in retreat, and in patience as we count the rewards.

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**QUESTION 2:  
WOULD YOU TELL US HOW JIHAD STARTED IN ALGERIA?**

Because of this question, I would like to divert a little for a quick overview on the history of the jihadi movement in Algeria, since a lot of people do not know about it. They think Jihad started in the early-90s after the events of the Armed Islamic Group, which is a severance of the history of this movement. On that basis we say:

The first armed group was established in 1979 under the leadership of Sheikh Mustafa Bui'li group. However, it only became active in the early-80s, which witnessed a campaign of arrests involving most loyalists including preachers, university professors, and activists in various sectors. This environment of

intimidation and terrorism exercised by the authorities against the reformers, paved the way for some members of the movement to resort to secret activism, to call to the necessity of armed action, and to form an armed Islamic group that treats the ruling powers in kind.

In fact, a righteous group among the children of Algeria started to prepare for Jihad and to disobey the infidel rulers, led by Sheikh Bui'li, who managed to mobilize some groups of youths from the various provinces of the country. They began to conduct acts from time to time, the most notable of which was the attack on the police academy in al-Sawma'a (Blida province) on the 26th of August 1986, and managed to seize a considerable amount of light weapons and ammunition.

After this operation, the regime put all of its capabilities on alert in order to chase the Bui'li group. The chase lasted only six months and most members of the organization were caught. Sheikh Bu'ili and some of his companions remained at large until the 3rd of January 1987. The security forces had set up an ambush for the sheikh and five of his companions. After an exchange of fire, the sheikh and his companions were killed, may Allah have mercy on them and accept them among the martyrs.

On the 5th of October 1988 was what came to be known as "the events of the 5th of October", which witnessed a semi explosion in society, resulting in the realization of a margin of liberty, freedom of expression, and political openness. This allowed the formation of political parties and in particular the "Islamic Salvation Front", which played a major role in the field of da'wa and spread of religiosity in society.

Because of the immense momentum enjoyed by the Front since its inception, and considering its domination of the street and its ability to mobilize the

various spectra of the population behind its project, it first demanded the release of the Islamic prisoners sentenced during the one-party rule and to reestablish them, including those from the Mustafa Bui'li group. In fact, they were released. President Chadli Bendjedid issued a presidential pardon which obtained the release of the Mustafa Bui'li group detainees in July 1990, the most prominent of whom were sheikhs Mansouri al-Malyani and Abdul Qadr Chabouti, may Allah have mercy on them.

Thus continued Islamic da'wah and activism. The Islamic Salvation Front played a prominent role in that, especially after it swept the municipalities throughout Algeria. Until the events that came to be known as the "May 1991 strike", when the leaders and the historic sheikhs of the Front were arrested during those very events. At this time, some started thinking of armed action including members who were part of the Mustafa Bui'li group. Other groups from Afghanistan also joined during the strike events and shortly thereafter. They wanted to coordinate among themselves and launch unified military action. However, that did not materialize at that time. One of the first military actions against the tyrant was the famous Aqmar operation. However, the launch of full Jihad and the spread of military operations came after the coup by political and military symbols of the Francophones in Algeria due to the results of the parliamentary elections won by the Islamic Salvation Front, and due to the ensuing random and abusive intimidation and arrests that targeted large segments among the sons of the Islamic movement.

Observation: It is apparent from the journey of the sheikhs of the Front that they were focused on da'wa and political activism. They had no clear interest in the military aspect. This explains their military weakness when Jihad started.

### QUESTION 3: WHAT WAS THE SITUATION OF THE ISLAMIC UMMAH AND THAT OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AT THAT TIME?

As regards Algeria, the da'wa in the 80s was active. Religiosity spread among the people, manifest in mosques being frequented a lot, in the intensive da'wa activities, and in the phenomena of hijab. This was assisted by the coming of various Islamic currents and movements, until the period of political overture after the events of the 9th of October 1991, when political parties were formed, da'wa activism increased, and the difference between the various factions of the Islamic movement (Jihadi current, Muslim Brotherhood with its local and international components, Salafism, some spots of takfiris, da'wa and tabligh, and so on) also started to become visible. People began talking about the obligation to apply Islamic Shariah, unemployment spread among the masses, and the issues of governance, and infidelity, and injustice of tyrants, and so on.

Also, the Afghan Jihad at that time in the mid-80s stood out as well, with strong mobilization to it by the late-80s and early-90s, and most threads leading to it were held by the Muslim Brotherhood.

One of the prominent and active Islamic movements at that time was the Talaba movement, which is known among its adversaries as al-Jazara and



became known as such. It was one of the components of the Islamic Salvation Front later on.

The martyr Sheikh Muhammad Said, may Allah have mercy on him, was one of its prominent leaders. It included among its ranks cadres from different university specializations. When Jihad started in Algeria, many among the sons of this movement marched, and they then joined the union established under the emirate of the martyr Sheikh Abu Abdullah Ahmed, may Allah have mercy on him.





**QUESTION 4:**  
**WHAT WAS THEIR EFFECT ON THE HONEST MUJAHIDEEN WHO CARRIED THE PURE FLAG OF JIHAD? AND WHAT WAS THE POSITION OF THE UMMAH TOWARDS THEM? DID THE UMMAH AT THAT TIME MANAGE TO DISTINGUISH AMONG THE GROUPS OR DID IT MIX THEM UP?**

Since the deviation occurred at the top of the command pyramid, and the role of the command is very important, their effect on jihad was very big. They completely destroyed tourism to the point that the tyrants regained their strength because of their actions at a time when they were about to fall. They took advantage of the situation as best as possible, be it in terms of distorting the Mujahideen because of these acts and incurring the hostility of the public against them and arming them to fight everyone without discrimination, or in terms of opening the door of surrender in return for a pardon for those who flee this hell. This made hundreds of Mujahideen leave the mountains and abandon Jihad.

But because of the geographic largeness of the country, the dispersion of the Mujahideen throughout it, and the difficulty to communicate quickly, the regions were semi-autonomous. This limited the deviation to Blida province, the headquarters of the group's command, and its surroundings. One of the things that prevented deviation from propagating to most areas was the presence of experienced leaders and students of knowledge refusing to apply the statements they received, and which involved rendering protected blood and property permissible. When mischief and deviation became clear, they broke with and fought them, as previously stated.

As for the position of the Ummah, we previously mentioned the people arming themselves and fighting them. Abroad, the supporting brothers expressed their innocence of them. The support that was to reach them also stopped, as we

previously indicated. It was in this way that the people rejected them because of their mischief and excess.

Regarding the people's distinguishing between the people of excess and other Mujahideen, we can conclude with certainty that the crimes of the extremists, their mischief and their corruption had an impact on public sympathy with and their support for the Mujahideen. Support greatly receded. In fact, some sects joined the tyrants and carried arms to fight the Mujahideen. They did not differentiate between a true and committed Mujahid and a mischievous and criminal outsider. For them, they have all become identical.

If we deal in detail, the people who were close to the Mujahideen and dealt with them differentiated this and that. Conduct was based on trust by means of their sons who were with the Mujahideen. So they supported the honest Mujahideen they knew. As for the large majority which was removed from the battlefield, such as in the large cities, especially those who were not infected by the people of excess, they did not believe that the Mujahideen were the ones committing these massacres and violations. Instead, they attributed every act to the militias of the tyrants which were known as the death squads and that sowed fear in the hearts of the people.

In this way, the areas that did not experience massacres continued to benefit from support for Jihad up to now, but to a much lesser extent than before.

## QUESTION 5: WHAT IS THE SITUATION OF JIHAD IN ALGERIA CURRENTLY?

Were we to assess the situation of Jihad currently, we may say it is in its autumn season, and that the Mujahideen have clearly deteriorated on the ground, due to several reasons we sum up as follows:

- The Mujahideen are still paying the price of GIA's deviation and are paying the price of its mistakes, because the crimes they committed against the people cannot be forgotten. They violated the honors of chaste women, spilled forbidden blood, and looted property, unjustly and in a way that is approved neither by Shariah nor by logic.



- This made the general public turn away from supporting Jihad. It was in this way that the Mujahideen lost the most important factors for the success of guerilla warfare. It is a fact that guerilla warfare is based on the idea that whoever gains the support of the people shall win. Unfortunately, most people today are not with the Mujahideen. Various segments of them are against the Mujahideen.

-Therefore, the Algerian regime capitalized on this detail in the best way possible, helped in that by the financial affluence it experienced (more than 200 million dollars in Algerian currency reserves), which it used to win over public loyalty and to mobilize them against the Mujahideen, with great success.

With the long journey of about a quarter of a century of Jihad in Algeria, people get tired, especially after the Algerian regime withdrew the political cover, as they say, on this war. It considered the surrender of the Islamic army an implicit recognition by the front that the question of the coup was



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something now of the past. Then the tyrannical regime attempted to pull the Shariah cover, for which they mobilized and invited to Algeria hundreds of Islamic preachers and intellectuals to prove the error, deviation, and futility of the war waged by the terrorists.

-The tyrants used the policy of the carrot and the stick towards the people. They imposed deterrent punishment, imprisonment as a minimum, upon whoever dealt with the Mujahideen, including those who did not report to have seen them in such and such a place. In return, whoever assisted or provided information against the Mujahideen were offered gifts and rewards, to such a point that a reward for providing useful information to kill the Mujahideen was worth 500 million and good housing, and that was a large sum and a very tempting reward.

-These offers made the Mujahideen experience a strong siege on all sides. And considering the limited number of people joining Jihad and the fierce war of extermination undertaken by the generals loyal to France who control Algeria, the Mujahideen greatly decreased in number and quality. But it is also a fact that war is not a field trip, but rather a mill that exhausts commanders and soldiers together.

However, thanks to Allah, despite the trials and tribulations experienced by the Mujahideen in Algeria, they persevered and remained firm like the mountains and they settled to the point that their slogan became: “Better death than lowliness” and: “By Allah, we regret not the hostility against the apostates or the fight against them at all”.

## QUESTION 6: WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF JIHAD IN MALI AND LIBYA ON JIHAD IN ALGERIA?

The Mujahideen's idea and original goal when they entered the Sahara was to make it a back base to support Jihad in Algeria. The situation changed after good results were obtained. Then efforts started to be made to move jihadi ideology by means of da'wa to the people of the residents of the Saharan areas, until it became, thanks to Allah, one of the battlegrounds of jihad. Some of our children became an example of command and sacrifice for this faith. They are today fighting the sponsor of the Cross, France, and its satanic alliance that it brought from its old colonies. Also, the people are asking for the application of Shariah. The ideologies of Sufi schools dominated those regions before then.

Sheikh Abu al-Laith al-Libi, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Among the blessings of Jihad in Algeria is that the jihadi ideology spread in the Greater Sahara, which is a good deed credited to the Mujahideen in Algeria".

For that reason, the effect was positive. Jihad was purely Algerian, but today, thanks to Allah, it has become widespread throughout the Islamic Maghreb. But to say the least, the effect of Jihad in Mali and Libya on Algeria scattered the enemy forces and opened new sources of mobilization.

This was certainly at the expense of vacating the Algerian field from some of its cadres who were instrumental in establishing the rules for the Jihad in those Saharan territories. This is not something negative, but rather the price to pay in order to spread da'wa and Jihad. Very few among the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) died in Medina. In fact, most of them were scattered in the cities for da'wa to Jihad.



## QUESTION 7: WHAT HAPPENED AFTER JAMA'AT AL-DAWLA ANNOUNCED THEIR EXPANSION INTO ALGERIA?

As you know, since Jama'at al-Dawla announced their expansion into Sham, and since it decided to sabotage the jihadi project and lead it towards extremism, it has been working to sabotage the battlefields. No field has been spared by it. It has a hand in the sabotage of every field and in affecting it. The field of Algeria is not an exception. It has had an echo. Some youths took to it and declared their allegiance to Jama'at al-Dawla and separated from the organization with the same excuses formulated by al-Adnani such as the deviation of al-Qaeda and other broken claims repeated by the followers of the Islamic State.

As for the degree of their effect, yes they had a negative effect on the ground, because the territory and the Mujahideen originally were complaining of weakness and deterioration. They came to them to drive a new wedge in the body of the Mujahideen which was already covered with wounds in the first place.

However, we can say today that the Islamic State in Algeria is over. Its name and design are finished, because it was born through a still birth. No matter how the organization of disbelief and crime attempts to resuscitate it in the media, it was born premature and disfigured. Praise and grace be to Allah, no established Mujahid joined them. No official or commander from the Algerian Jihad who experienced the meaning of dispersion of the ranks and knew the significance of adopting the method of excess anew pledged allegiance to it. They were burned by the fire of excess, or better said, they still experience the effects of its fire and the sting of its fangs.

## QUESTION 8:

### IS IT TRUE THAT SOME GROUPS (LIKE THE PROTECTORS OF THE SALAFIST CALL), WHICH PREVIOUSLY JOINED AL-QAEDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB, HAD CANCELLED ITS PLEDGE AND PLEDGED ALLEGIANCE TO JAMA'AT AL-DAWLA NOW?

Yes, this is true, but not the entire group, just some of it...

Let me be frank, and say the words (for posterity)... the Protectors group was living outside the framework of the era, it was flying in an ivory tower, and it was seeing itself as the only Salafist group doing Jihad in Algeria, and that they were the most right and the first, and thus other groups should join under their banner and brigade. This is what made them delay in joining the Salafist Group for Call and Combat, which included all the battalions and areas that had splintered off and repudiated the method of the Khawarij from the GIA...

This mentality - which controls their leadership - made them weaken until they were almost forgotten and were not mentioned anymore nor had any noteworthy activity. When they reached this aforementioned state, some soldiers were pressured, with

the scream of the conscience of some of them, and they came voluntarily and without prior arrangement, and declared their pledge of allegiance to Qaedat al-Jihad, without condition or restriction, and we were pleased of this joining and this support...

But - unfortunately - when the fitnah of the Dawla, some of their leaders were the first to break the pledge, and declare their loyalty to the Dawla. One wishes they had stopped at breaking their pledge, instead some of them went beyond that in lying and accusing the good Mujahideen of what they had not done, so that he said (and he lies): that al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghrev is a group that refuses to enact Shariah (as if he were hinting of its disbelief)... and this disappointed one did not wait after his attack to put himself in the embrace of the tyrants, surrendering to them with all lowliness and shame, and he began to see the tyrant of Algeria Bouteflika as his caretaker. And Allah forbid loss after increase.

## QUESTION 9:

### WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO THE YOUTH WHO ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT JIHAD? CAN YOU INFORM THEM ABOUT WHAT IS WRONG AND THE PERVERSION OF SOME GROUPS LIKE THE KHAWARIJ AND THE MURJI'AH?

In truth, the people of goodness and reform from the leaders of the Mujahideen and their schools have given advice, and have not left a single door good without showing it to the Ummah and especially its youth and its spearhead, and they did not leave any door of evil without warning from entering it or going on its path. The jihadi library - thanks be to Allah - is full of their pearls of wisdom with words and speeches. May Allah reward them with what He gives His good worshipers. Therefore, my advice would be like a prelude in their hands, but there is no issue in abbreviating it as follows:

\* Raising people to return to the people of knowledge and seeking their fatwas, and glorifying them. Jihad is a book that guides and a sword that supports. "And if the sword leaves the Qur'an it is lost, and if the Qur'an leaves the sword it is humiliated". The people of knowledge have shown the truth of these misguided sects and their truth, old and new.

\* Adhering to faith-based education based on the correct creed and appropriate behavior, and following the guidance of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

\* The leaderships should be aware of the size of the dangers, so as to take care to make the youth aware and fight these thoughts and show their falsehood.

\* Benefiting from the people of precedence and jihadi

experience in knowledge, work, and methodology, and studying their biographies.

\* The jihadi youth, or those thirsting for the obligation of Jihad, should know that the Ummah of the beloved, peace and blessings be upon him, has enough hardships and tragedies, so let him not increase them and burden it more... for Allah had described our Messenger with mercy and gentleness, saying: "Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful." (At-Tawbah, 128)

Note: Through the Algerian experiment, it is clear that both groups (Khawarij and Murji'ah), with their misguided methods, were used by the enemy for his benefit. With Khawarij they invested their actions to move the Ummah away from Jihad and slander the bright image of Islam, and with the Murji'ah they invested in making their throne steadfast and decorated their falsehood and prevented people from going against it.

May Allah pray on and give peace to our master and prophet Muhammad bin Abdullah, and his family, his companions, and those who followed them in goodness till the Day of Judgment.

Your brother, Hisham Abu Akram.