

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1263
Land:	Irak
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 5 – Ansæt al-Islam
Udgivet:	1. november 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	27. januar 2020

Document #2019390

USDOS – US Department of State

Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 5 - Ansar al-Islam

Aka Ansar al-Sunna; Ansar al-Sunna Army; Devotees of Islam; Followers of Islam in Kurdistan; Helpers of Islam; Jaish Ansar al-Sunna; Jund al-Islam; Kurdish Taliban; Kurdistan Supporters of Islam; Partisans of Islam; Soldiers of God; Soldiers of Islam; Supporters of Islam in Kurdistan.

Description: Ansar al-Islam (AAI) was designated as a FTO on March 22, 2004. AAI was established in 2001 in the Iraqi Kurdistan region with the merger of two Kurdish terrorist factions that traced their roots to the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan. On May 4, 2010, AAI’s leader Abu Abdullah al-Shafi’i was captured by U.S. forces in Baghdad; he remained in prison at the end of 2018. On December 15, 2011, AAI announced a new leader: Abu Hashim Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman al Ibrahim. AAI seeks to expel western interests from Iraq and establish an independent Iraqi state based on its interpretation of Sharia law.

Activities: AAI conducted attacks against a wide range of targets including Iraqi government and security forces, and U.S. and Coalition forces from 2003 to 2011. AAI also carried out numerous kidnappings, murders, and assassinations of Iraqi citizens and politicians. In 2012, the group claimed responsibility for the bombing of the Sons of Martyrs School in Damascus, which was occupied by Syrian security forces and progovernment militias; seven people were wounded in the attack.

During summer 2014, part of AAI issued a statement pledging allegiance to ISIS, although later reports suggest that a faction of AAI opposed joining ISIS.

Strength: Precise numbers are unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: AAI is active primarily in northern Iraq, but also maintains a presence in western Iraq and in central Iraq. Since 2011, AAI has operated in Syria.

Funding and External Aid: AAI receives assistance from a loose network of associates in Europe and the Middle East.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of Ansar al-Islam Brigades (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2018)



Countries:

Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic

Source:USDOS – US Department of State (/en/source/11558.html)**Original link (no longer valid):**~~https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2018/#AAI~~**Document type:**

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

1 November 2019

Document ID:

2019390

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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

