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IS-Affiliated Financial Networks Double Down on their Efforts of Exfiltrating Loyalists, Particularly IS Young Boys, from Camp al Hol*

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Abstract

The security threat posed by the sprawling Al-Hol camp in N.E. Syria remains a major security concern as an IS recruiting hub for minors as well as a key financial node for laundering funds to fuel its insurgency and because of the IS-affiliated networks' attempts at exfiltrating detainees to replenish its ranks. Youth in both camps al Hol and Roj have been being exposed to IS indoctrination, training, and abuse under the influence of hardline IS women who crowdfund to keep their activities going. ICSVE' monitoring of the IS-linked financial networks of the past 4 months (November 2022- February 2023) suggest that these entities have prioritized raising smuggling capital for critically ill pro IS women detainees and youth as well as for smuggling young boys out of Camp al Hol before they can be taken to rehabilitation centers where they will

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be separated and protected from this malevolent IS influence. The crowdfunding networks appear on Telegram primarily, but make use of other platforms as well and some financial transactions take place in plain view even using European banks, others by cryptocurrency and in a hidden manner.

Keywords: Camp Al-Hol, N.E. Syria, ISIS, Islamic State, crowdfunding, smuggling

Introduction

The February 2023 UN report of the Analytical and Sanctions monitoring team concerning Al Qaeda and IS reinforced the security threat posed by the Al-Hol camp as Islamic State's major recruiting hub for minors; (31st report of the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIL, Al-Qaida, 2022) as a key financial node for laundering funds to fuel its insurgency; and for smuggling out detainees to replenish its ranks. To counter the rising menace emanating from the sprawling camp and the IS's insurgency in eastern and Central Syria since December 2022, (Mroue, February 2023) the US Special Operations forces with the Kurdish-led SDF forces have launched an aggressive crackdown on IS in Syria targeting its senior leadership. The joint counter-terrorism operations have led to the capture and killing of many of the key IS Syria province officials that were responsible for the group's global recruiting efforts and for planning attacks on Al-Hol and other prisons across northeastern Syria holding IS fighters and ISIS-affiliated youth.

In February alone, the group witnessed the loss of many of its senior leaders in Syria. (Seldin, February 2023) US helicopter raids in northeast Syria have killed Hamza Al Homzi, the leader overseeing the group's network in eastern Syria, Ibrahim al-Qahtani, a senior IS plotter involved in planning prison breaks and another IS leader who headed an assassination cell. Back in August 2022, witnessing a surge in violence and murders, the SDF also conducted a sweeping three-week-long raid in Al-Hol detaining around 200 IS suspects, (Demirjian,

September 2022) also confiscating a large weapon arsenal and communication devices along with discovering many tunnels used for smuggling weapons and inhabitants outside of the camp. Now, since the beginning of January 2023, there has been a brief period of relative calm in Al-Hol (“January Sleeper Cell Report- Two large scale raid campaigns from the SDF”, February 2023) with no major violent incidents or attacks of IS sympathizers or sleeper cells reported along with only a few unsuccessful escape attempts by detainees. Spain, Canada, Norway, (Bechocha, April 2023) and many other countries have also repatriated some of their citizens from Syrian detention camps alleviating the security pressure on the SDF in guarding and administering these facilities. But the sprawling camp still serves to be a pressing security concern with the reports of children being exposed to emotional and sexual abuse (Speckhard, February 2023) under the heavy influence of the hardline IS women and because of the IS-affiliated networks’ attempts at exfiltrating women and young children, particularly orphans out of Al-Hol.

1- ICSVE Findings of Financial Networks through several case studies

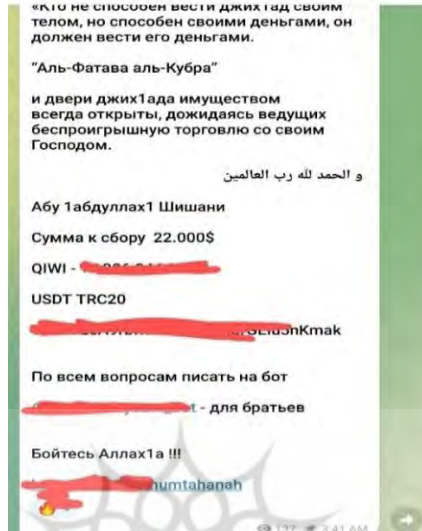
ICSVE' monitoring of the IS-linked financial networks of the past 4 months (November 2022- February 2023) suggest that these entities have prioritized raising smuggling capital for critically ill pro IS women detainees and children. Some prominent pro-IS Russian crowdfunding networks on Telegram that after a period of hiatus resurfaced in late November 2022 “*Al Muwahid and Al Mumtahanah claim of smuggling out women and orphans suffering from “life threatening diseases.”* Initially the narrative — the speedy repatriation of children to their disbelieving home countries endanger the chances of their escape from the camps (Thakkar & Speckhard, August 2022) — was weaponized for garnering financial assistance. But currently the pro IS actors have repeatedly peddled a new narrative, that camp authorities deliberately deprive the detainees

suffering from deadly diseases of adequate medical care and show “no mercy” towards the ailing women. This adds a new impetus to their crowdfunding efforts. In one of the fundraisers posted in November 2022 by an administrator of one of the channels, this narrative gained traction. “With the permission of Allah, we are opening an urgent collection for the ransom of a sister, her daughter with injured eye and her 2 children from captivity. The sister has cancer and the doctor's remarks, and ultrasound reports are attached below. Urgent treatment is needed, which is out of the question in the conditions of the filthy camp. Time goes by and every day the disease progresses, which greatly affects the condition of the sister, who needs to look after the children, as well as maintain life in the difficult conditions of the camp. By the grace of Allah, now there is an option for the sister to be released from captivity for further treatment. The market is open and the cost is known to be \$22,000.”. By the end of February, the admin of the channel claimed to have raised around \$12000 for this campaign.

2- Several Case studies of smuggling & QIWI

Parallel to this, another donation plea was for smuggling out a young 9- 10-year-old suffering from Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), a slowly progressive brain disorder for availing urgent medical attention and treatment options in Turkey. The costs for his release along with the required medical treatment were summed up to \$24,000 for which the donations continue to pour in. Again, in mid-November 2022, the pro IS network *Al Muwahid* declared that they are raising \$29,000 for smuggling out of the camp a woman and 4 other orphans with the option of transferring funds to QIWI, PayPal address and another lesser-known cryptocurrency known as Tether by sharing the link to the crypto wallet. Interestingly, the money collection reports shared by the channel administrators on January 17 claimed that the donors transferred as low as \$250 and as high as \$5000 for this campaign enabling them to collect the required

\$29,000 within a month. In March 2023, the channel declared its intention of raising \$20,000 for smuggling out a family of three.



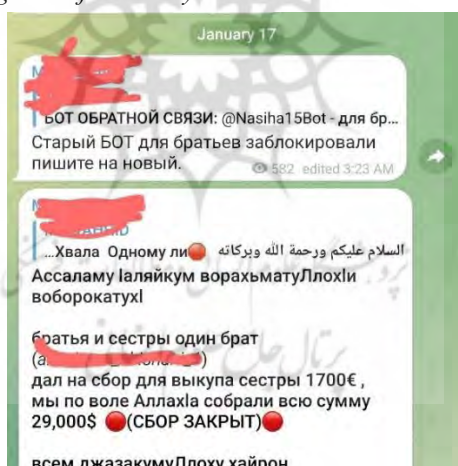
Picture 1 Fundraiser for smuggling an ailing woman and her 4 children out of the camp costs about \$22,000. A post shared on the pro-IS Al Mumtahanah channel.



Picture 2 The channel administrator shared the worsening condition of the child suffering from a slowly progressive brain disease to accelerate money collection efforts.

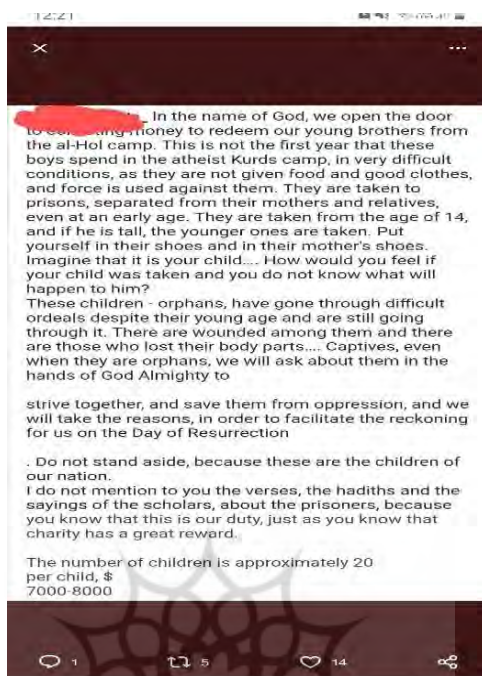


Picture 3 The pro IS channel administrator shared a glossy advertisement of raising \$29,000 for smuggling out a female loyalist and her children out of Al-Hol camp.

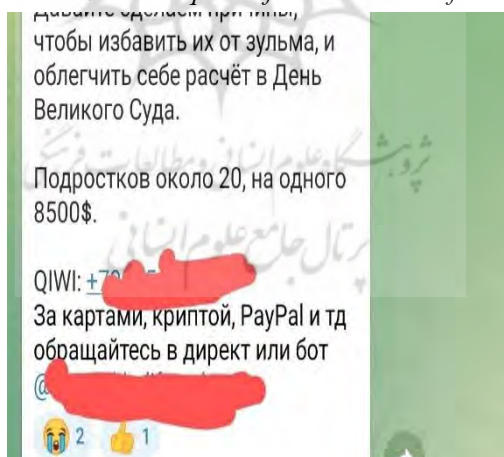


Picture 4 Pro- IS Al Muwahid channel administrator on telegram declared the collection closed as the channel through its crowdfunding campaign successfully solicited \$29000 further announcing a new crowdfunding plea for a family of 4 members for their escape from the camp.

What first appeared merely as a Russian IS media advocacy page started actively fundraising for smuggling out minors out of Al-Hol in December 2022, probably as a response to the SDF and AANES actions of removing criminal, abused and highly indoctrinated boys already in puberty into the newly created Orkesh rehabilitation center. To preempt their removal from the camp, fundraisers went to work to smuggle them out to IS instead. The pro-IS Russian financial network "*the story of the caliphate*" lamented how Muslims have turned their back on the ailing windows/wives and children of the IS fighters as they refrained from contributing a single penny "for buying their freedom." The narrative of — separating young sick teenage boys from their mothers to be shifted to the poorly maintained detention centers where they will be subjected to physical abuse and brainwashing by the "cruel" Kurdish forces— was employed for mobilizing Muslims for securing their financial support. The tirade being, "They are taken to prison and separated from their mothers even at a young age," which was partially true as some boys taken from the camps have been sent to adolescent prisons rather than rehabilitation camps. The plea continues, "There are also the wounded among them, and those who have lost parts of the body and even orphans who have undergone difficult trials. Let us make reasons to release them before the godless Kurds take them to their prisons. The number of teenagers is about 20. For the redemption of one \$8500. The amount for the second has already been collected, it remains to finish the amount for the third, and then the next one, and so on." What was surprising to learn is that these networks ostensibly within the time span of a month were able to amass the required amount of around \$18000 by the end of February for the smuggling of two youths into the hands of militants.



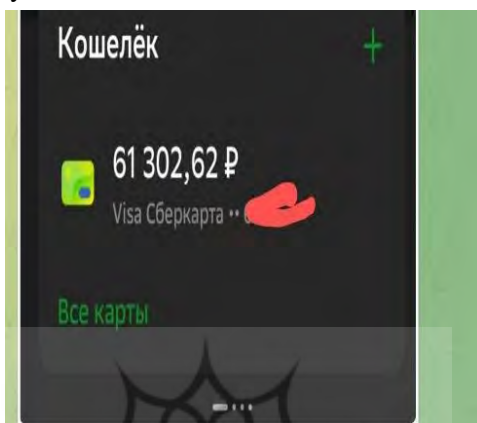
Picture 5 The Russian IS-linked network "Story of the caliphate" posts a plea for smuggling 20 young boys out Al-Hol with \$8500 required for the release of each teenage boy.



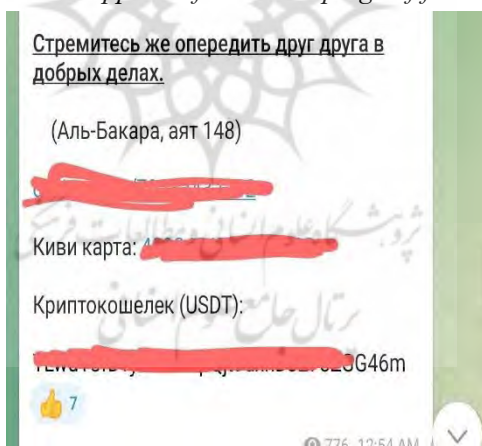
Picture 6 For Card, Crypto, Paypal, etc. You can write to the direct or telegram bot... - message posted on the pro IS financial network's telegram channel

While the supporters were provided with a palette of diverse money transfer options like QIWI, PayPal, Dash, and Western Union by this network, what struck one's attention was the recurrent use of conventional banking systems for accepting transfers that divulge the recipient's personal identity details exposing the trail of the illicit funds moving into Syria. The administrator of the Russian IS-linked network in group chats provided the option of sending money directly into the recipient's bank account by giving the IBAN unmasking the origin of funds flowing from Europe, Russia as well as Central Asia. In most cases, the administrators provided the credit and debit card details of the various Russian IS-linked beneficiaries, which brought to light that Russia's banking giant MTC bank (Our Story. See MTC Federal's history, vision and values.) and Russia's largest state-owned bank SBER were employed for laundering funds for brokering detainees' escapes and the trafficking of minors by ISIS women in the camps to the militants outside the camps. This pro-IS network also provided potential donors living in the EU with the option of sending money to intermediaries in Austria and Germany. In Austria, the intermediaries' accounts were opened with a private savings bank, Sparkasse Bregenz Bank AG located in the westernmost city of Austria, Bregenz, capital of Vorarlberg province. Another beneficiary account provided by this network was registered with a commercial bank in Austria called Dörbner Sparkasse Bank that offers private banking services to Austrian customers. ICSVE's past study of these crowdfunding campaigns has demonstrated how German (Thakkar & Speckhard, August 2022) financial system was exploited for slipping money into Syria for freeing the detainees for IS's "cause". Those unwilling to transfer funds owing to security reasons were offered with the alternative of personally handing over the cash to IS-linked intermediaries anywhere in Germany. In the organizer's own words of this fundraiser, "Praise to Allah, for one lion of the caliphate the amount has already been collected. Anyone who wants to transfer money personally, we

have brothers in Egypt, Turkey, Germany, and Austria to whom you can deliver money in person.” German pro IS network, Spend in the way of Allah, also posted in December on its channel about the need for securing \$2500 for the smuggling out of a Syrian IS women.



Picture 7 The channel administrator posted that around \$820 was transferred into his bank account by the ISIS supporter for the campaign of freeing minors.



Picture 8 The IS- linked channel administrator openly shares Tether wallet addresses and details of the QIWI account for accepting donations for smuggling out women and her children from the camp.



Picture 9 Campaign of freeing minors purportedly endorsed on the Instagram page of ISIS women detained in Rusafa prison.

This deeply entrenched and expansive financial web extended into the central Asian states of Kazakhstan and the Caucasian state of Azerbaijan. While funds were routed to Syria via the recipient's savings account in Uni bank, one of Azerbaijan's largest private financial institutions, other international transfers were accepted into Kaspi.ks wallets- a popular virtual money wallet for making payments or transfer funds in Kazakhstan (Kumenov, Ocotober 2022)introduced by Kaspi bank to be later diverted to Turkey. From Turkey, the IS-linked individuals through their money service business set up in Istanbul or other provinces could ostensibly funnel money into the camps across the border into Syria. In January 2023, the US and Turkish governments-imposed sanctions on two Iraqi nationals living in Turkey who used money service where they worked to transfer to funds to the terror group in Syria as a part of their larger efforts to crack down on terror financing. (The United States and Türkiye Take Joint Action to Disrupt ISIS Financing, January 2023). While the money collection reports posted on the Russian IS-linked channel prove that most of the funds were secured through the QIWI wallets, it is also interesting to note that payments above £300 to £400 were expected to be sent through cards, or Western

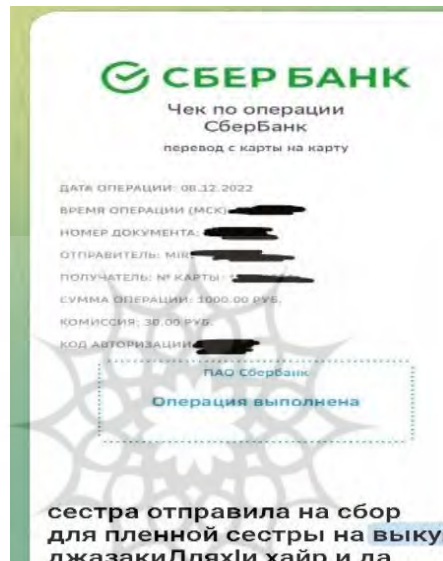
Union.

The "Story of the Caliphate" network not only posted mere money collection reports, but also, proactively produced content for its channel that emotionally appealed to IS sympathizers. True to its name the admin of the channel regularly shared “inspiring” stories about those who made their journey (hijra) from the “infidel countries” to Syria to live under the territory of IS leaving behind worldly pleasures to serve the “ummah”. Every day, the “Mujahideen of Caliphate” series glorified in long posts the “martyrdom” of the IS fighters that died fighting the “enemies of Islam.” This crowdfunding campaign to smuggle out minors earned more legitimacy and credibility and resultant financial support as it was endorsed by the staunch pro-IS women brigade in Rusafa prison in Baghdad. It appears that a couple of pro- IS women are running fundraisers from inside this Iraqi prison under the name of "*Al Baghdadiyah*".



Picture 10 A female IS supporter on the "Story of the Caliphate," channel chronicles how a "heroic brother" (IS fighter) during the final battles stood up against the Peshmerga forces in Iraq for defending “the honor” of IS women.

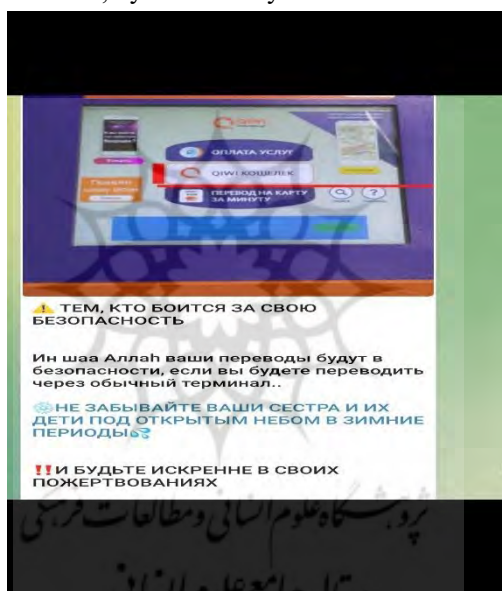
“This day was a day of mourning in which much blood and tears were shed. And the worst thing was that we lost our lands, lost our beloved Caliphate... and as for our priceless brothers, we are still waiting for them. May Allah return our lands and our greatness to us, return the Caliphate to us where We can live according to His laws. Amine...” - a message posted on the “Story of caliphate” telegram channel.



Picture 11 The channel administrator shares that he received 1000 RUB as a donation in his SBER bank account for their crowdfunding campaign.

To evade scrutiny of law enforcement agencies, pro IS networks instruct their senders to restrain from writing for what purpose they are sending money to their QIWI wallets. One of the admins of the crowdfunding initiative, issued this warning, “For transfers to a QIWI wallet, you cannot write comments that may arouse suspicion from QIWI or FSB. On my behalf, I do not need to write in the comments that the money is for sisters in Al- Hol or ransom or zakat, and so on. Either do not write a comment or write simple things that do not attract attention and make sense for the amount you are sending. For example: For a gift to the

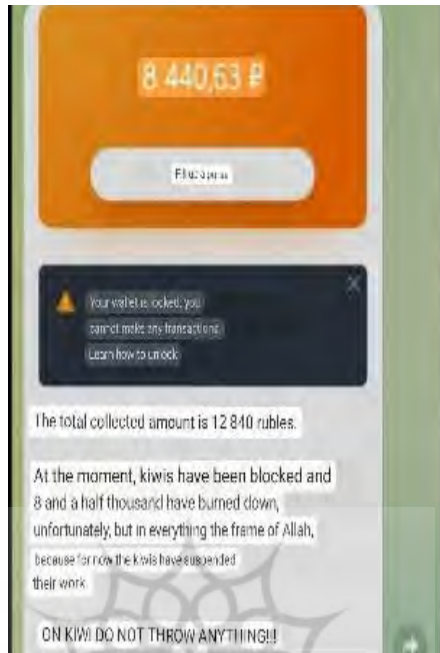
boss, grandmother, or daughter, for new sneakers, for your daily expenses and so on.” These facilitators also asked the donors to undertake the required security precautions by advising them to replenish their accounts through the many QIWI terminals and kiosks set up in Russia and other central Asian states as the user is not asked to register his data while sending money through these terminals. “It would be very good for brothers and sisters to cover their faces with something from being captured by video surveillance cameras when they make deposits,” alarming the donors over the threat of being recognized and identified, even at terminals by remote camera, by the security authorities.



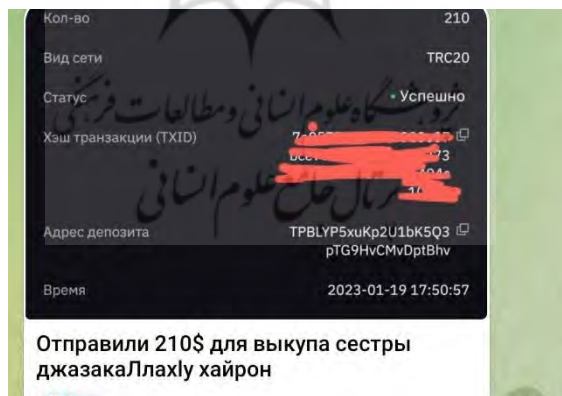
Picture 12 For those who fear for safety, your transfers will be safe if you transfer through a regular QIWI terminal- a message posted on a telegram channel of a pro- IS Russian crowdfunding network.

The admins running these fundraisers were often infuriated as their access to QIWI wallets was frequently blocked owing to the trail of unlawful/illicit transactions recorded by the compliance authorities of QIWI, thus hindering their crowdfunding endeavors. Furthermore, as these networks were deprived of their

access to the QIWI wallets, they couldn't withdraw the money worth hundreds of dollars made to many QIWI accounts set up by them thus forcing them to turn to more secure crypto wallets that provide them with a cover of anonymity and are subject to fewer takedowns by the crypto platforms, thus evading scrutiny from security agencies. (Global Disruption of Three Terror Finance Cyber-Enabled Campaigns, August 2022) Most of the money transfers for this fundraiser and other crowdfunding campaigns that were identified for this report were made through Tether- an asset-based cryptocurrency stablecoin further also indicating the ability of these networks to use diverse cryptocurrencies apart from Bitcoin. (SEKIGUCHI & MANABE, September 2020) Since 2020, apart from Bitcoin, IS has been moving towards adopting a wide variety of other lesser-known emerging cryptocurrencies. In June 2020, a pro-IS onion address website Al- Ilam changed cryptocurrency donation requests from Bitcoin to stablecoin Monero stating that it offers better security and privacy features than Bitcoin further guiding the followers on how to send donations via Monero. (SHEVCHENKO, June 2020) Our observations also suggest that IS-linked financial entities have been adopting the stablecoin Tether as its most favored cryptocurrency for receiving funds. The increasing popularity of such lesser-known/used crypto assets amongst the IS-linked financial networks and other jihadist groups for soliciting donations is corroborated by the findings in the latest UN report that reveal the use of Tether for transactions greater than \$100,000 to fund Islamic State in Khorasan province (ISKP) exhibiting increasing sophistication and interest in the use of such lesser-known cryptocurrencies by terror entities. (31st report of the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (ISIL, Al-Qaida, February 2023) For providing digital literacy, the financial facilitators tied to this crowdfunding campaign have also in the past instructed their supporters on how to set up digital wallet assets and use crypto currencies.



Picture 13 The channel administrator informs the followers about not being able to withdraw money from the QIWI wallet warning supporters to not send any further transfers to his Qiwi account.



Picture 14 \$210 was transferred for this fundraiser via Tether as per the claims of the pro IS channel administrator.

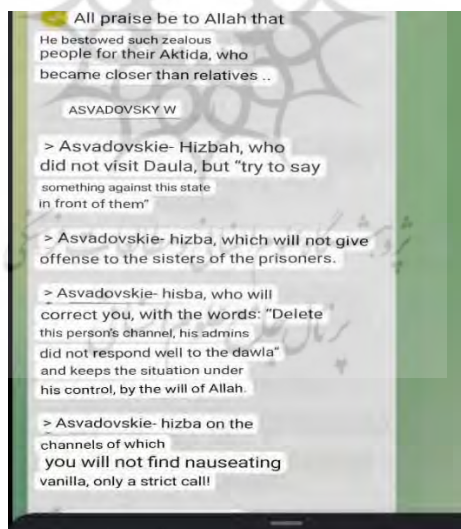
While these financial collaborators are running these crowdfunding campaigns from outside Syria, the foreign IS women in Rusafa prison of Central Baghdad, Iraq have been able to smuggle contraband devices inside the prison cells for communicating with their relatives and the members of the group and running crowdfunding campaigns from inside the prison.

Funds are also regularly raised for paying the debts of the IS women in prison who borrowed money from other prison inmates for buying sim cards. The price for smuggling in one communication device or mobile phone is \$3500 and, in each cell, one mobile phone is shared amongst 30 women as per the claims made by these women on their Telegram channel. The women admins of the *Al Baghdadiyah* channel on Telegram actively disseminate messages of prominent deceased IS leaders of Abu Musab Al- Zarqawi, (leader of the Al Qaeda in Iraq) and Abu Bakr Al- Baghdadi, clips from IS's Al Hayat media archive that documented the utopian Islamic life under the IS territory exhorting the channel's followers to adhere to Tawheed (as defined by IS) and implement the "true" Shariah that IS implemented while governing the territories in Iraq and Syria and many other books on Islamic jurisprudence written by IS ideologues. The women running this fundraiser/"IS advocacy page" also purportedly provide lessons to other inmates on doctrinal issues/Islamic creed and methodology adhering to the extremist worldview of IS. In a message shared on the channel, the pro-IS administrator celebrated the news of anti-IS women again making the conscious decision of being loyal to Islamic State's Aqida [Creed]. "The two sisters who went too far in matters of takfir and gave takfir to the Dawla [i.e. Islamic State] as well as to the great Amirs, today officially announced their repentance and said that in reality, they had never seen kufr [disbelief] in the Aqida of Dawla." This is not just the only example of the prevailing widespread pro-Islamic State sentiment amongst the many female detainees and convicted prisoners. Dozens of women in the northeastern Syrian camps have sought arbitration of the Syrian

IS judges on the matters of seeking voluntary repatriation, signing official documents or uttering the national anthem of their home countries would constitute major sins in Islam, showing them as disbelievers.



Picture 15 The crowdfunding campaign for repaying the debt of foreign IS women detained in Rusafa prison in Baghdad who owed money to their inmates for buying new contraband devices and sim cards.



Picture 16 The administrator of the Al Baghdadiyah channel reflects on the intention of correcting anyone who criticizes IS's ideology

«» Аллаг сегодня порадовал сестер замечательной новостью. Две сестры, которые чрезмерствовали в вопросах такфира и вынесли такфир дауле, а так же большим Амирам — сегодня официально объявили о своём покаянии и сказали, что в действительности они куфра никогда не видели в аквиде даули.

Просим Аллагя принять их покаяние.

Пусть же это будет назиданием для остальных. Одумайтесь, покайтесь пока не поздно. Ведь человек может и умереть на этих заблуждениях. И как же мы потом понесём на себе такую тяжёлую ношу.

Пусть Аллаг не собьёт нас с пути истины, сплотит наши сердца, укрепит и не разделяет..

А так же пусть внушит искреннее покаяние остальным... Подобно тому с какой радостью приняли сестры этих двух сестёр и остальным так же будем рады.

Возвращайтесь к Аллагю.

P.S. Встреча сестёр закончилась эмоциональным ..

Picture 17 The pro-IS women running Al Baghdadiyah channel on telegram celebrated the news of the anti-IS women in prison seeking “repentance” for excommunicating the leaders of IS, declaring their intent of adhering to IS ‘s ideological orientation.

или существует конкретное постановление для каждой страны?

Ответ: و عليكم السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته

Во-первых, необходимо знать, что Аль-коль и лагеря /мужьям в целом—это заключение под властью кафиров в дар уль-куфре, где сестры подвергаются фитне в их религии и чести, и для сестер является обязательным поспешить, освободиться и сбежать из этого заключения если она способна на это, из-за высказывания Пророка ﷺ, "Освободите пленника"

[Передано в "Сахих аль-Бухари"]

И этот [хадис] в его общем виде включает в себя, мусульманку, чтобы та тоже делала причины для освобождения себя из заточения...

Во-вторых, из того что является установленным из доводов шарихата и Правил Фикха, так это то, что если есть два вреда, то наиболее серьезное из них отражается [т.е. избегается] путем совершения наименьшего зла, и мусульманин обязан покинуть дар уль-куфр, который является более суровым своей фитной для его религии, в дар уль-куфр, который является меньшей фитной для его религии, точно так же, как сподвижники совершили первую хиджру и бежали со своей религией из Мекки в Хабашу.

Picture 18 IS’s Shariah official in October 2022 gave his ruling on the question of whether the conscious choice of voluntary repatriation undertaken by some women in the Syrian camps constitutes a major sin in Islam

3- Pro-IS Russian financial networks regarding Crowdfunding

Many pro-IS Russian financial networks at times have coordinated their crowdfunding efforts and cross-shared the aid pleas of other networks on their telegram channels for garnering more credibility and legitimacy for securing more funds. However, there is also dissension across some of the groups. For instance, the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISKP) province's official Tajik financial network "Devotion and Loyalty" has slammed some of the financial networks that claim to help the families of IS fighters in the camps as "hypocrites" and "scammers" for having unreliable crowdfunding initiatives cautioning the IS supporters from supporting them financially. ISKP's Tajik propagandists also accuse them of being unjust and practicing inequality based on nationality while delivering aid to women in the camps. One of the leading Tajiki propagandists in a media release of ISKP lamented in December 2022 the iniquitous distribution of food, supplies, and money undertaken by these networks—alleging that they discriminate against Tajik families in the camps. (Webber, December 2022). Further, ISKP's Al Azaim Tajik media wing accused the entities running these crowdfunding initiatives of spreading lies that they are in contact with or have ties to the official members of ISKP or IS' Syria province. ISKP asserts that this was done for milking out money from genuine IS sympathizers. Reflecting this grievance is the message circulated by ISKP's Al Azaim Tajik media wing in December 2022, "this charity channel (Devotion and Loyalty) was opened by the Mujahideen of Khilafat in Khurasan and every ruble and sum of your money goes to the prisoners. Those channels that exist that attribute themselves to us (Mujahideen), beware of these! Do not give your money to them as they are not in the field of Jihad! The Mujahideen have no relationship with them and it was not our emir or any Mujahideen who left them in charge. They are nothing but hypocrites."

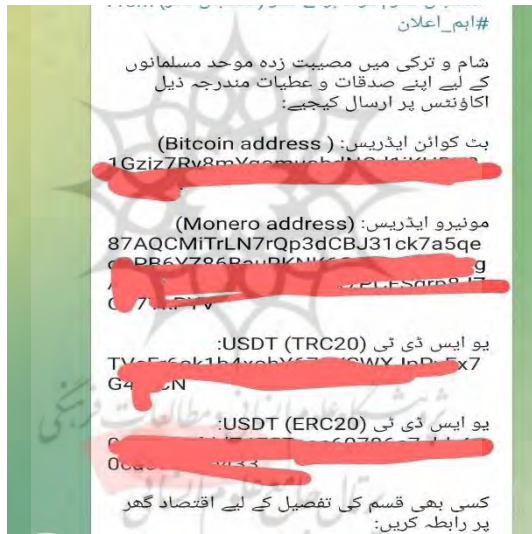


Picture 19 ISKP's Al Azaim's Tajik media wing released a poster warning its supporters not to donate to the crowdfunding campaigns that falsely claim to have ties to the official members of ISKP and who by doing so exploit the emotions of IS supporters. In the past many ISKP members have asserted that behind many of these fundraisers for detainees are intelligence elements and law enforcement authorities prepared to trap "gullible" IS supporters.

4- Turkey Earthquakes and IS-linked financial operatives

Further, as the devastating earthquakes roiled southern parts of Turkey and northwestern Syria, a slew of IS-related crowdfunding initiatives that earlier focused on financially supporting women in detention camps of northeastern Syria are now raising capital for delivering assistance to the earthquake victims by donating tents, food supplies, clothes and other essentials while fuming over the delay of UN-led international aid to Idlib and other parts of northwestern Syria. (Haj & Hezaber, March 2023)What can be seen as a disturbing development, is that the increase in financial aid flows for earthquake victims to the IS-linked financial operatives could also be capitalized upon to launder

money for the detainees' escapes. Most of the funds secured have been through cryptocurrencies. In the pro-ISKP group chat on Telegram, ostensibly the administrator of “Nashir Al Pakistan” media channel -- that releases and circulates attacks claims of the Islamic State in the Pakistan province (ISPP)-- requested IS supporters to donate money for the quake survivors by sharing details of the private Tether (USDT) address in addition to the wallet address of the decentralized cryptocurrency Monero. These proceeds gathered under the garb of relief aid could be diverted for delivering assistance to the families of deceased or imprisoned IS fighters, paying the salaries of IS militants, funding the group’s media operations, or for buying new weapons and training their cadres.



Picture 20 The message forwarded on one of the pro-ISKP group chats by an admin exhorts the followers to send money for the earthquake victims in Turkey and northwestern Syria to the different crypto wallets. The point of contact for sending money was the username “Nashir Al- Pakistan”- the telegram account responsible for unofficially releasing and circulating attack claims/propaganda of Islamic State in Pakistan Province. (ISPP)

Conclusion

The key takeaway from the monitoring of the IS-linked financial networks was not the sudden proliferation of crowdfunding campaigns for smuggling out detainees, but the rapid pace at which these IS-linked facilitators were able to raise thousands of dollars within a shorter window of time through their expansive financial network spread across from Africa to the Middle East and from South Asia to Europe. (US, Turkey Target Financial Network Linked to Islamic State, US Treasury Says, January 2023). The fact that unlawful transfers were regularly made through the banks in Central Asia and Europe without being stopped by security authorities also suggests that financial collaborators linked to these pro-IS networks have been able to easily exploit the loopholes of their country's financial system for terror financing. With cash couriers and hawala transfer networks, the observed surge in the use of cryptocurrencies by nefarious actors linked to IS makes their financial transfers hard to trace and thus creates more problems for security agencies to hunt down the IS-linked financial actors that play a prominent role in laundering money for IS. The female IS loyalists and children and other imprisoned IS members who do manage to be smuggled out of the camps with the group's financial resources to be absorbed into its ranks later, will disappear into thin air with their home countries not being able to keep tabs on them and not knowing what security risk they may pose and in what capacities they might contribute to IS's resurgence.

This all points to the necessity of better monitoring and shutting down of these illicit crowd-funding networks, particularly those that are making use of legitimate banking resources; staying on top of cryptocurrency trends with IS and perhaps most important of all getting ahead of IS women who are smuggling their youth of the camps into the hands of IS. This requires building more rehabilitation centers as more young boys age into puberty and moving youth who are vulnerable to be smuggled out as fighters for IS into them and making them attractive places for the youth to want to go, and if possible, getting their

mother's buy in as well, so that these mothers no longer want to smuggle them out to IS rather than know their sons are being well fed, cared for, educated and are safe in such centers. For some deeply pro-IS women this will be a tall order and perhaps impossible to accomplish, but given the second author's impression of how happy youth moved into the Orkesh rehabilitation center appear to be and say that they are, word may get back to the youth themselves still in the camps, that it's a far better option to be place in a rehabilitation center than smuggled out by their mothers to become IS fighters.

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