

Samir Khan

American Blogger and Al Qaeda Propagandist

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Introduction

Samir Khan, a 24-year-old American known for distributing terrorist propaganda material online, was killed by a U.S. drone strike on September 30, 2011, two years after he moved to Yemen to align himself with Al Qaeda.

Federal authorities have claimed that Khan was the principal author of *Inspire*, Al Qaeda's first-ever English-language magazine that provides detailed bomb-making instructions and calls on followers to "destroy" America. The graphics, design and overall packaging of *Inspire* resemble those on Khan's various blogs and in *Jihad Recollections*, the self-described "first English Jihad magazine" in which Khan was a contributor.

The [inaugural issue](#) of *Inspire* was released online in July 2010 by [Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](#) (AQAP), Al Qaeda's affiliate in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, where Khan has lived since October 2009. In the second issue, which was released in October 2010, Khan writes that he is "proud to be a traitor to America" and criticizes the U.S. government and its military incursions overseas. The U.S. and its allies, according to Khan, must be defeated in order to "implant Islam all over the world." "I am acutely aware that body parts have to be torn apart, skulls have to be crushed and blood has to be spilled," Khan writes.

In the [seventh issue of *Inspire*](#), published just days before his death, Khan underscored the importance of media for the global jihadist movement, noting that "ideas are bulletproof and have an outstanding lifespan," and that therefore "the credible ideas that we bring is what intimidates them [the West] the most."

Prior to moving to Yemen, Khan was a significant distributor of Jihadist propaganda on the Internet. Known online as inshaAllahshaheed (Arabic for "God willing a martyr"), Khan used various blogs to distribute English translations of Al Qaeda materials, links to videos produced by terrorist groups, and original commentary in support of violence. He currently runs a blog called *Inshallahshaheed*, which is hosted on the server of the Ansar Al-Mujahideen Network, an English-language Web site on which users distribute jihad-related materials.



Khan was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and moved to Queens, New York, with his family when he was seven. As a teenager, Khan became involved with the local branch of Tanzeem-e-Islami, a radical anti-Semitic group based in Pakistan. The group currently operates in the U.S. under the name Islamic Organization of North America (IONA). Khan also reportedly attended meetings of the Islamic Thinkers Society (ITS), a New York-based anti-Semitic group that supports violence in order to establish a global Islamic caliphate.

In 2004, Khan moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, with his parents. At that time, Khan used a mainstream blog hosting service to create his first blog, which mainly included materials about Tanzeem-e-Islami. He later created several other blogs through Islamic Network, a blog hosting network, and began posting materials related to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

Samir Khan's Blogs

Since 2004, Samir Khan has maintained several blogs which he has used to distribute English translations of Al Qaeda materials, links to videos produced by terrorist groups, and original commentary in support of violence. The following is a sampling of these blogs.

Inshallahshaheed

Khan's current blog, *Inshallahshaheed*, launched in August 2009, describes itself as a "blog geared towards Jihad" that aims to revive "the love, spirit and knowledge of Jihad" and to inform Muslims about the "affairs in the battlefields from the perspective of the Mujahideen."

One section of the blog provides original essays, including one titled "Being practical about partaking in the Global Jihaad & its roles," which discusses ways for Muslims to partake in jihad if they are unable to physically go to the Middle East to fight. These ways include making financial donations and helping to spread propaganda.

The "about" section of *Inshallahshaheed* features a list of Muslim extremists and terrorists, who are described as "scholars of Islam... whom we take knowledge from." It includes former Al Qaeda in Iraq commander, [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#), who was killed in June 2006, Abu Layth al-Libi, a top Al Qaeda commander killed in January 2008 during an American aerial attack in Pakistan, and [Anwar al-Awlaki](#), an American-born Muslim cleric living in Yemen who was designated by the U.S. Treasury in July 2010 for being a "key leader" of [Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](#) (AQAP).

In addition to Khan, several other Americans have contributed to *Inshallahshaheed*. One [was Zachary Chesser](#), using the name Abu Talhah Al-Amrikee. Chesser, who was arrested in July 2010 for attempting to travel to Somalia to fight with the terrorist group [Al Shabaab](#), not only contributed to Khan's blog, but also distributed jihadist materials and promoted violence against non-Muslims through a variety of other online platforms, including social networking sites and extremist message boards.

[Abdullah as-Sayf Jones](#), the former leader of [Revolution Muslim](#), a fringe anti-Semitic Muslim organization that justifies terrorist attacks and other forms of violence against non-Muslims, was another contributor. A third contributor to Khan's blog goes by the alias Abu Stratigiyyah. Khan has described Abu Stratigiyyah as

a blogger who "likes to write on subjects related to warfare, strategy, and a wide range of political subjects."

The first blog that Khan operated, launched in 2004, also went by the name *Inshallahshaheed*.

Revolution

Prior to the launch of the *Inshallahshaheed* blog in August 2009, Khan maintained a blog titled *Revolution*, which was hosted by the Islamic Network and featured terrorist propaganda, including links to videos of attacks against American soldiers and Iraqi forces in Iraq.

Many of the videos on the blog were produced by Al-Furqan Media Productions, which is run by the [Islamic State of Iraq's](#) Ministry of Information. The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) is an umbrella organization composed of several Sunni insurgency groups affiliated with Al Qaeda. Al-Furqan creates downloadable video clips glorifying terrorism and encouraging violent jihad, as well as written materials.

In one posting on *Revolution*, Khan explained his views about democracy and Islam's attitude toward non-Muslims: "Islam denounces Democracy, Islam denounces Christians and Jews, Islam denounces the corruption of the disbelievers upon the earth, and Islam is coming to crush the armies of disbelief and smash the false governments and religions of the world to bring humanity from darkness into light."

Revival

Khan's blog *Revival*, which described itself as a venture of "a handful" of Sunni Muslim bloggers who "follow the Salafi Jihadi" creed, was launched in December 2007 and hosted by the Islamic Network, a blog hosting network that also hosted *Revival's* predecessor, *inshaAllahshaheed*, and its successor, *Revolution*.

Revival claimed to provide information about "the lands of Jihad," describing itself as "a channel against the Western media since they only bring lies and deception." The "about" section of *Revival* featured a list of Muslim extremists and terrorists, who were described as "scholars of Islam in this age whom we follow and support." It included former Al Qaeda in Iraq commander, [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#), who was killed in June 2006, and Abu Layth al-Libi, a top Al Qaeda commander killed in January 2008 during an American aerial attack in Pakistan.

Another section of the blog provided original essays calling on Muslims to take up arms against Western democracies. One of the essays - part of a series called "The Love for Jihad" - encourages Muslims to become mujahideen, or holy warriors. "O Believing Mujahid! Don't let Shaytan [Satan] fool you into other Islamic careers when the Lord of Mercy has given you the ability to obtain His Mercy through warfare and martyrdom." Another essay in the series declared, "We hate America and her allies for the sake of Allah and we supplicate to Allah that He destroys them completely."

Revival also produced its own terrorist propaganda video, available on YouTube and elsewhere. A link to the video, which celebrated jihad, was posted on *Revival* on January 21, 2008. The video, titled "We are the Mountains," featured footage of attacks against American forces from both mainstream and terrorist sources. It included graphic images and was accompanied by an English language song encouraging Muslims to "come to the jihad." The song also said, "The men you will be facing are of a certain kind who love to taste their deaths as you love to taste your wines...We're soldiers of religion...The best raised in this nation who establishes the truth and fights against the evils their people and their troops. We'll never compromise and never negotiate. The only thing between us and you is the AK."

Islamic Network

Islamic Network (IN), an internet company that maintains various online forums and blogs, was launched in 2004 by Sarfaraz Jamal and his wife Fatima Hye, who lived in Houston, Texas, where IN is incorporated. They have since moved to Jordan, from where they continue to run IN.

While Samir Khan's *Revival* is one of the more extreme blogs hosted by IN, there are other forums maintained by IN that include support for terrorism and anti-Semitism. For example, an essay entitled *Inciting Religious Hatred*, which was posted to one of the forums in December 2007, says: "the ones who are cursed by Allah...They are the Jews, Christians, Hindus...Atheists." It also argues that "hating all false religions and gods other than Islam and Allah is the very first condition of becoming a Muslim."

IN forums, which encourage "open dialogue" and are open to registered members, are moderated by IN staff. One former IN moderator, [Daniel Joseph Maldonado](#), was sentenced in Houston to 10 years in prison in July 2007, for training with a Somali Al Qaeda affiliated organization. Maldonado (a.k.a. Daniel Aljughafi) started working with IN in August 2005.

Sarfaraz Jamal ran a similar internet enterprise, ClearGuidance, while living in Ohio prior to launching IN. Like IN, users of ClearGuidance forums and its moderators have posted extremist materials, including posts praising terrorism and attacks against Jews. For example, one forum discussion from 2002 about a video documenting a beheading, including a post saying: "I'm gonna try this on some jew right now..."

In addition, the forums were reportedly used by members of a suspected [terrorist cell based in Canada](#) with international links. Two members of the alleged cell, Zakaria Amara and Fahim Ahmad, reportedly made hundreds of posts to ClearGuidance forums between 2002 and 2004 when they were still in high school in Mississauga, Ontario. Ahmed's use of ClearGuidance to search for Jihadist materials reportedly alerted the police to the existence of the cell.

Shortly after users of ClearGuidance became aware of the investigation (Canadian law enforcement questioned one of the moderates of ClearGuidance), Jamal shut down the site, although he told a reporter his decision to shut it down was not related to these events or to threats he claims to have received.

Tanzeem-e-Islami

Samir Khan's first inshaAllahshaheed blog, launched in 2004, mainly included materials about Tanzeem-e-Islami, a radical anti-Semitic group based in Pakistan that has a presence in the U.S. Khan, who became involved with Tanzeem as a teenager through a summer program in Queens run by local members of the group, has identified himself as a member, specifically with the New York Chapter, on various posts to online forums over the years.

Tanzeem-e-Islami, which describes itself as part of a movement to establish a global Islamic state, or the "khilafah," has a long record of anti-Semitism. For example, in August 2004, Tanzeem's Pakistan-based leader, Israr Ahmed, warned during an appearance at the Peshawar Press Club that "the evil genius of the

Jews and the world's only superpower, America, had joined hands" to "eliminate [Islam] from the face of the earth."

In October 2001, Ahmed reportedly sent faxes to mosques in the U.S. in which he claimed that "Jews are undertaking to fulfill their dream of world domination," and that the September 11 terrorist attacks were part of "this Zionist plan." Ahmed also expressed his support for the regime in Afghanistan, saying that the "Taliban government is based on upholding the supremacy of Islamic shariah."

Shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Tanzeem posted to its Web site in Pakistan an article by [David Duke](#), in which he argued that the attack was the result of Jewish influence over the U.S.

Such anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have been spread by Tanzeem in the U.S. as well. For example, the former Tanzeem director of Da'wah (propagation of the faith) in the U.S., Imran N. Hosein, wrote a book, *The Prohibition of Riba*, which blames Jews for spreading usury in order to advance various conspiracies against humanity. In the book Hosein wrote, "Allah revealed the wickedness of those Jews." Hosein returned to his native Trinidad in August 2003, after ten years in New York.

In recent years, the North American members of Tanzeem have attempted to reestablish the group as a mainstream American community organization. In 2004, Tanzeem adopted a new name - the Islamic Organization of North America (IONA) - establishing a mosque in Warren, Michigan, and at least once participated in an interfaith event with a Jewish organization.

Despite its effort to "mainstream" itself, IONA maintains its official ties to the Pakistan and remains committed to its goals and extremist ideology. The press release from July 2004 announcing the formation of IONA, stated: "the Islamic activist movement in North America founded by Dr. Israr Ahmad has reorganized under the newly registered...IONA...This restructuring does not affect our core objectives or methodology."



This photo, from Khan's online photo album, pictures Khan (front left) at a Tanzeem gathering.