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NEWSLETTER



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Open Source News reporting Summary: This collection of open source information is offered for informational purposes only. It is not, and should not be, construed as official evaluated intelligence.

Outside Encouragement

Sharia rules Nigeria — with the help of foreign Islamists.



It is a pretty good rule of thumb that where you find Muslim extremism, Islamist terrorism, and women being sentenced to death by stoning, there you will find Saudi funds and Saudi-trained personnel. One exception to this rule has been Nigeria, but now evidence of Wahabbi mischief is surfacing there as well. Since the governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmed Sani, introduced a draconian version of sharia in 1999, 11 of Nigeria's 36 states have followed suit. Five women have been sentenced to death by stoning for adultery, though no punishment has yet been carried out. Thieves have had their hands amputated by court order. One man had his eye removed after accidentally blinding a friend (he could have escaped this by paying 60 camels, but the injured party wasn't interested in the camels).

Full story: <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/marshall200405050847.asp>

Related background reporting.... Also see 'Featured Internet Site:



Zamfara Gov. Orders Demolition of All Churches

Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara State, has ordered the demolition of all churches in the state, as he launched the second phase of his Sharia project yesterday. Speaking at the launch in Gusau, the state capital, Governor Sani disclosed that time was ripe for full implementation of the programme as enshrined in the Holy Quran. He added that his government would soon embark on demolition of all places of worship of unbelievers in the state, in line with Islamic injunction to fight them wherever they are found.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200404290789.html>

2007: Governor Ahmed Sani: Eyeing the Presidency?

After the launch of Sharia in Zamfara State, the Governor, Ahmed Sani, was seen as a hero, not only by the people of Zamfara, but by the whole of the Muslim North. The teeming masses of the North, especially the Ulama, saw "Yerima" as another messiah, who had roused Nigerian Muslims from a deep slumber. Ahmed Sani was hailed and praised wherever he went. His colleagues envied him. It was his moment and nobody could deny him his glory.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200404290812.html>

100 die in communal fighting in Nigeria



More than 100 people were killed and 1,000 wounded in fresh ethnic and religious fighting in central Nigeria, the country's Red Cross reported yesterday. The border clashes highlight Nigeria's continuing tensions, with rural violence combining with growing friction between Muslim and Christian communities in Zamfara state over new restrictions imposed under sharia law.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1207372,00.html>

'New Sharia law' in Nigeria state

All businesses in the state will have to shut down during the five daily Muslim prayers. The state government also says that all "unauthorised" places of worship will be shut down under "Sharia phase two". Zamfara was the first Nigerian state to introduce strict Sharia laws in 2000 and thousands turned out to welcome the new measures on Wednesday.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3667515.stm>

COMMENT:

Nigerian authorities in the central town of Yelwa, Plateau State imposed a 2000 - 0600 (dusk to dawn) curfew May 5 in an effort to preempt any further violence after hundreds of people were killed in sectarian fighting in late April. Red Cross officials report that at least 600 bodies were found in a mass grave but the death toll will likely rise as more bodies are recovered. Approximately 4,000 mobile policemen are in Yelwa maintaining order and have been sanctioned by the government to shoot any troublemakers on sight. Retaliatory attacks are possible in the coming weeks. Tribal fighting erupted in 2001 involving Christians (mostly farmers) and Muslims (mostly cattle ranchers), and has killed more than 1,300 people. The conflict involves the Fulani and Hausa tribes pitted primarily against the Tarok tribes, but recently involved neighboring tribes, including the Sarkin Kudu tribe in Taraba State.

Arrests in Italy raise questions over role of mosques in inciting violence

Italian police announced on 9 May that it had dismantled an Ansar al-Islam terrorist sleeper cell in Florence and arrested an Algerian imam and four Tunisians. The men are believed to have been plotting to carry out suicide attacks against unspecified Western targets in Iraq. The arrests follow an investigation that has been underway since 2002 by the terrorism team of the Division of Special Operations, which had been concentrating its investigations on the port city of Genoa and Florence. The arrested imam, 34-year-old Mahamri Rashid, was the spiritual head of a Florentine mosque since 2003, replacing the Moroccan Mohamed Rafik, who had been arrested at Morocco's behest for his alleged involvement in the 2003 attacks in Casablanca. The four Tunisians arrested, all between the ages of 23 and 27, were planning to travel to Yemen and Syria to obtain arms and explosives from other Ansar al-Islam operatives to carry out attacks in Iraq.

ANALYSIS

Italy has seen an increased number of arrests linked to Ansar al-Islam, a terrorist group loosely tied to al Qaeda, which was believed to have been planning a suicide attack on the Istanbul NATO summit on 27-28 June before being caught by law enforcement authorities on 3 May. Perhaps more important is that the 9 May arrests will bring the broader issue of mosques as hotbeds of Islamic fundamentalism to the fore in Europe. Italy has long been considered a logistical base for terrorists, with previous investigations having uncovered evidence that Islamic militant groups procured false documents and hiding places for their members in the country. But the key role played by an imam in the dismantled sleeper cell serves as vindication for those European countries attempting to control Islamic clerics allegedly inciting violence in mosques. Despite opposition from select groups concerned about violations of freedom of speech, European countries with large Muslim communities, including France, Spain, Italy, and the U.K., can be expected to further examine and install mechanisms through which they can control and monitor the type of Islam preached in their mosques.

Extremism said to gain in prisons

Groups promoting extremist brands of Islam have gained a foothold in American prisons, and counterterrorism officials believe that Al Qaeda is likely to try to use the prisons "to radicalize and recruit inmates," according to a Justice Department investigation. In a report from the inspector general's office of the Justice Department, investigators said safeguards were so loose in the 105 federal prisons that inmate chapels were "vulnerable to infiltration by religious extremists." A copy of the report, which was being released on Wednesday, was obtained by The New York Times.

Full story: <http://www.iht.com/articles/518548.html>

Al-Qaeda recruiting Hondurans

The Honduran Attorney General's office and the Ministry of Security are investigating possible links between the terrorist group al-Qaeda and Islamic organizations in Honduras. After three months of investigations, Attorney General Ovidio Navarro stated that a network of Islamic organizations in Honduras is attempting to recruit Honduran youths. The Muslim groups offer to finance their studies in Middle Eastern countries, but their ultimate objective is to locate and enlist followers for a terrorist war against the West. Security Minister Oscar Alvarez commented: "This is very serious. We are talking of Honduran citizens being prepared to commit terrorist acts. We understand that the recruits undergo a kind of 'brainwashing' in order to become Muslim followers and possible martyrs in attacks against civilians.

Full story: <http://www.insightmag.com/news/2004/05/11/World/Analysis.AlQaeda.Recruiting.Hondurans-680284.shtml>

An Al Qaeda 'Chemist' and the quest for Ricin

Menad Benchellali, thin and bearded, was known among his Arab friends as "the chemist" because of the special skills he learned at al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. When he returned to his native France in 2001, according to investigators, he set up a laboratory in his parents' spare bedroom and began to manufacture ricin, one of the deadliest known substances. Working at night with windows open to dissipate fumes from the process, he blended ingredients in a coffee decanter and spooned the doughy mixture onto newspapers to dry. The final product was a white powder that Benchellali stored in small glass flasks and old jars of Nivea skin cream -- to be used, as he later told police, "in the event I became involved in the jihad."

Full story: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A2159-2004May4.html>

Lockdown: Security and terrorism

The turning of four jetliners into air borne weapons of terror on September 11, 2001, abruptly awoke all Americans to the real-life nightmare that terrorists could successfully strike not only targets far overseas, but right here. At home. Yet it was five and a half years earlier on another infamous day, April 19, 1995, that the detonation in Oklahoma City of a hand-made bomb first demonstrated how simply but lethally terrorists can attack anywhere. And with a vehicle as easy to get a hold of as a truck. Let's be blunt. Terror attacks can be accomplished by one person wearing an explosive vest, as has been shown over and over again in Israel. Then there are the car bombs. But the bigger the vehicle, the bigger the bang. Hence, the savage thinking behind the 9/11 attacks. But now that the nation's air transportation system has been "hardened" at least to some degree against terrorists, other means are bound to be considered. Passenger trains have become targets, as was borne out tragically in Spain. In the U.S., it's trucks that can deliver the goods. They can be taken very close to civilian targets without arousing any concern. The question now — nearly three years after the mind-numbing assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon — is what must be done to make trucking as secure as reasonably possible against the threat of terrorism?

Full story: http://fleetowner.com/ar/fleet_lockdown_security_terrorism/index.htm

Intelligence suggests Bin Laden financed Casablanca bombings

The Moroccan Director of National Security, General Hamidou Laanigri, released information May 8 suggesting that Osama Bin Laden was directly involved in the May 16, 2003 bombings in Casablanca. According to General Laanigri, the bombers met with Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2002 at which time Bin Laden agreed to help them finance the attacks. The intelligence also suggests that the bombers are directly linked to the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, which is suspected in the Madrid bombings.

COMMENT:

Moroccan officials continue to arrest hundreds of individuals in relation to the Casablanca bombings and other terrorist activity. If the allegations of funding are true, it serves to prove that Bin Laden remains a direct threat and access to him could help fund other large terrorist attacks.

Statement on seized drugs today

The discovery was made during a drug interdiction exercise carried out recently by the police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Two people appeared in court yesterday charged with offences related to the discovery of the narcotics.

COMMENT:

Five people are in custody May 10 following the discovery of two kg of cocaine in a diplomatic pouch. Three of the suspects, employees of the Trinidad & Tobago Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have been recalled from their posts in Canada, the United Kingdom and the U.S. The two suspects located in Trinidad and Tobago, one of whom is a former Foreign Affairs Ministry employee, were released on bail May 9. The three suspects recalled from abroad all had their names on the diplomatic pouch, but may not have all been involved. The Trinidad & Tobago Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also notified diplomatic channels in the host nations of the recall and its circumstances. The Caribbean is growing as a focal point for drug trans-shipment due to increasing pressure on South American distribution channels.

Full story: http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article_news?id=22962488

Semi-narcotic Khat now a Kenya cash crop

Outlawed in the United States and declared an addictive drug by the World Health Organization, khat remains a legal and cherished pastime in Kenya. Each night in this Indian Ocean port, men young and old gather to chew, sharing gossip and debating politics or simply dreaming up a better life. Women chew, too — just separately. These days, Khat has become an unlikely cash crop, with exports to European countries like Britain, where large East African immigrant communities legally chew. The business reportedly pumps hundreds of millions of dollars a year into Kenya's struggling economy.

Full story: http://www.reflector.com/health/content/shared-gen/ap/Health_Medical/APN_Khat_Country.html;COXnetJSessionID=AhaSAJRmD2PBVEUa1uu85vaEh5VTiCllckOzK2nrcVbv0m1N17Em!803685485?urac=n&urvf=10842998586930.3941269617290214

Also see *DEA report on Khat*: <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/intel/02032/02032.html>

COMMENT:

Khat, (aka Qat, Quat, Gat) is a speed-like narcotic that is widely chewed in the expatriate Yemeni community in NYC, Buffalo and Detroit. Although it only stays potent for a few days, the Yemenis still manage to smuggle it in fresh from Yemen. Allegedly smuggled in through airports in NYC and then driven to Buffalo and Michigan packed in banana boxes. It's usually distributed on Thursday evenings and then chewed after Friday evening prayers. In Buffalo, NY a bundle of Khat stems usually sells for about \$65.00. Before 9/11 it was about \$50.00. We often find it wrapped in corn shucks or banana peels to keep it moist. For reasons probably related to its cost, it has never caught on in the surrounding communities. Users get what looks like coke sweats and very red, bugged out eyes very jittery. Effects can last 24 hrs.

Agencies set security plan for high-profile events

A federal interagency working group will present a plan by the end of this month for coordinating security, preparedness and intelligence-sharing at several major events, including the summer's political conventions in Boston and New York, homeland security officials said Friday. Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., sounded alarm bells about the upcoming events during a homeland security hearing Thursday. "I happen to believe there will be a terrorist attack or more during the course of this year," the lawmaker said. "We have to deal with the World War II Memorial, we have to deal with the G8 Summit, we have two [political] conventions, we have the presidential election, and then the inauguration."

Full story: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0504/050704c1.htm>

Feds might pay National Guard homeland security costs

The federal government would pick up the tab for the National Guard's homeland security activities performed on the state and local level under a provision the House Armed Services Committee is considering as part of the fiscal 2005 defense authorization bill being marked up Wednesday.

Full story: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0504/051104cdpm1.htm>

Featured Internet Site

The Sharia: An Introduction

All aspects of a Muslim's life are governed by Sharia. Sharia law comes from a combination of sources including the Koran - the Muslim holy book, the Hadis - the sayings and conduct of the prophet Mohammed, and fatwas - the rulings of Islamic scholars.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/sharia/index.shtml>

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