

# INSIGHT

Egypt's Dar al-Ifta Combats Extremism



**EXPOSING  
THE VIOLENT IDEOLOGY  
OF THE MUSLIM  
BROTHERHOOD**



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# The Muslim Brotherhood: Roots and Principles of Violence

Political Islam was created out of the prevailing political context and rising anti-colonial sentiments. Its first prominent expression was the Muslim Brotherhood, a group that followed a very different trajectory from orthodox anti-colonial resistance and rhetoric. They pursued an approach that instrumentalized Islam and turned it into a tool against society and a vehicle for political and societal objectives instead of deploying it for the service of the Ummah.

This discrepancy demonstrates the apparent difference between these two approaches. While the nationalist resistance worked within an institutionalized Sunni framework founded on transparency and straightforward da'wah, the Muslim Brotherhood embraced a language of opposition, described the entire society as degenerate and rooted in jahiliyyah (ignorance), and incited to bloodshed. In the early 20's of the twentieth century, Hasan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood. Its prominent ideologue, however, was Sayyid Qutb who was the main inspiration behind various other militant and terrorist organizations and groups.

The Muslim Brotherhood adopted a terrorist ideology and approach since its inception. Its fifth supreme guide, Mustafa Mashhour, acknowledged the group's terrorist nature and set its militant vision and fundamental concepts in one of his lectures saying, "We will not gain victory except through terrorism and intimidation and we must



not succumb to psychological defeat from being accused of terrorism—yes, we are terrorists!” Mashhour goes on to make use of Islam as an opposition tool against society and government, designating the group as separate and superior to the rest of society. The group, in their view was society’s theological elite whose knowledge must not be revealed to the public. He said, “You must know that this knowledge is for the elite—we are the elite. We must not reveal it to the public lest they recoil from our group.”

Since Hasan al-Banna rejected plurality as non-Islamic, and therefore rejected the party system by declaring, “We are not a political party,” it begs the question of how can they gain access to governance. In such a case, there would be no other way except to subscribe to Ibn Khaldun’s conception of authority which can only be assumed in Islamic societies through religious da’wah and asabiyyah or tribal partisanship. And since asabiyyah does not exist in Egyptian society in this sense, the Muslim Brotherhood’s daw’ah must therefore be supported by a secret armed wing.

The Muslim brotherhood morphed into a two-tiered movement. The first, its public face, profited from addressing the masses under the guise of expressing their concerns and presented itself as an opposition force. The second, a separate unit known as “the secret apparatus” was responsible for the execution of terrorist operations, disseminating fear, and for forcibly taking over the rule of the country at the earliest opportunity.

# The Muslim Brotherhood: Roots and Methodology of Violence

## Hasan al-Banna

Hasan al-Banna is considered the founder of contemporary radical and violent movements since the 20's of the past century. The history and writings of the Muslim Brotherhood contain myriad evidences demonstrating al-Banna's endorsement and promotion of violence as an essential means to attaining the organizations' ultimate goal of restoring Islamic rule.

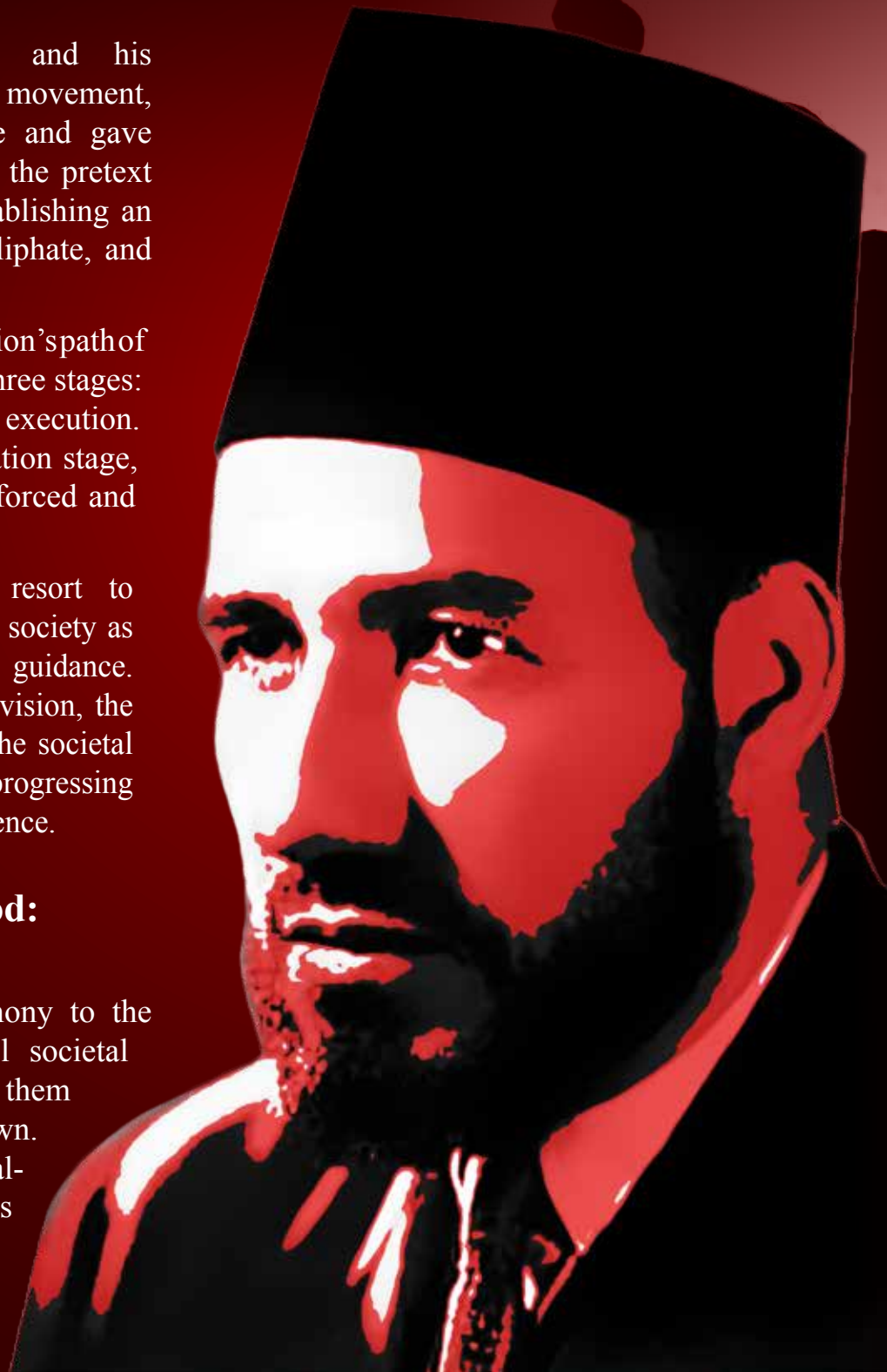
Despite presenting himself and his organization as a reformist movement, al-Banna legitimized violence and gave it a religious coloration under the pretext of "jihad, the necessity of establishing an Islamic state, reviving the Caliphate, and applying Islamic law."

Al-Banna outlined the organization's path of development as consisting of three stages: acquaintance, formation, and execution. The last stage, the implementation stage, is when principles shall be enforced and jihad waged.

Although al-Banna did not resort to excommunication, he perceived society as lacking in Islamic beliefs and guidance. In line with the Brotherhood's vision, the organization sought to restore the societal integrity through all means, progressing from peaceful da'wah to violence.

### The Muslim Brotherhood: Dominance

Hassan al-Banna gave hegemony to the Muslim Brotherhood over all societal strata and factions, assigning them to a special class of their own. In his Da'watuna (Our call), al-Banna categorized the masses into four classes depending





on their attitude towards his conception of da'wah: the mu`min (believer), mutahamil (prejudiced), mutaradid (undecided), naf'i (opportunist)". Al-Banna described the faith of those who have not yet embraced the vision of the Brotherhood as "lying dormant within their souls, one to which they do not wish to submit and act accordingly". In juxtaposition, the faith of the Brotherhood's members "is burning, blazing, intense ... fully awakened in the souls of the Muslim Brotherhood."

At the sixth Muslim Brotherhood conference, al-Banna praised his fellow members and reminded them of their superior rank; he urged them not to "depreciate" themselves nor to "compare" themselves to others. He continued, "You have made da'wah and jihad and you have witnesses the fruits of this minimal effort—voices exclaiming the leadership of God, the supremacy of the Quran, the necessity of action, making our actions sincere for the sake of God, blood flowing from pure youth for the sake of God, and a sincere desire for martyrdom for the sake of God! This is success beyond your expectations. So continue your efforts and work." With these words, al-Banna determined that the Muslim Brotherhood was the cynosure of true believers and its supreme guide the leader of Muslims.

### **Jihad: Objective and Means**

Jihad is a core and indispensable concept in al-Banna's ideology. Self-sacrifice, martyrdom, and jihad for the sake of God permeated al-Banna's speeches and writings. He valorized martyrdom because he believed that Islam and the succeeding Islamic state were based on the power of arms. Stressing fighting in the name of God, al-Banna viewed jihad and a readiness to die an extant duty upon every Muslim until the Last Day. In keeping with this, he exhorted Muslims in his treatise on Jihad with the words, "Brothers! God gives the Ummah that is skilled in the practice of death and that knows how to die a noble death, an exalted life in this world and eternal felicity in the next ... so strive for death and you will be granted life. Know that death is inevitable and comes only once, so if you suffer death for the sake of God, it will be your profit in this world and a reward in the hereafter."

In spite of this militaristic outlook, al-Banna advocated for the wide spectrum of jihad, from its minimal nonviolent level of self-denial right through to the jihad of the tongue and “a word of truth before a tyrannical ruler”, to the highest level of fighting for the sake of God.

### **Force: Roots of Violence**

Al-Banna’s methodology was based on the necessity of establishing a powerful group capable of restoring Islamic rule and applying Islamic law. Two indispensable forces therefore merged for al-Banna—the force of preaching and the force of arms. Deeming that Islam clearly advocates for the use of force, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood called upon his group to embrace force as a goal and means.

Al-Banna developed a gradual three-level constitution for his group designed to establish a powerful entity through strength and force. The first level of power is that of creed and faith, the second is that of unity and association, and the third is that of power of arms and weapons. He goes on to say, “The Muslim Brotherhood will use physical force when nothing else will work and when they are confident that they have completed the preparation of faith and unity. When they use this force, they will be honorable and straightforward. They will warn first and then wait before advancing with honor and dignity and bearing the consequences of their position with full acceptance and satisfaction.”

Al-Banna called upon his supporters in his *Resalat al-Ta’alim* (Message of the Teachings) to sacrifice their lives, wealth, time, and everything for the sake of achieving their ultimate objective for there is no jihad without sacrifice.







## Fighting against Rulers

Al-Banna refrained from the explicit excommunication of ruling regimes and was reluctant to initiate a revolutionary change. However, he was inimical to democracy, renounced its principles, and scorned its institutions, especially the party system, because he deemed it inconsistent with Islamic Law and one of the main reasons behind the decadence of the Ummah. Accordingly, he found it necessary to direct initially his message to the ruler and the ruling elite peaceably. In the event that they failed to implement the values of Islamic rule, the Muslim Brotherhood would wage a bloody war against them.

In the editorial of the first edition of *Al-Nadhir* magazine, al-Banna Al-Banna appealed to his followers to engage in verbal da'wah before pursuing pragmatic jihad. He said, "We will move from the sphere of da'wah to the public to that to the elite, and from da'wah through words to da'wah accompanied by struggle and action. We will direct our da'wah to the leaders of the country—its notables, ministers, rulers, elders, delegates, authorities, and political parties. We will put our program in their hands and demand that they boldly lead this Muslim country, the leader of the Muslim region, along the path of Islam without hesitation, with transparency and without evasion and deception for time does not allow for such machinations. If they respond to our call and pursue the path towards our goal, we will support them, but if they resort to double-crossing and hide behind feeble and unacceptable excuses, we will wage war on every leader, president, party, and authority that does not work for the victory of Islam and undertake to re-establish the rule and glory of Islam. We will declare long lasting enmity, not peace, until God grants us victory over them."

# Sayyid Qutb

## Founder of Violent Movements

Sayyid Qutb is considered the second ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood after Hassan al-Banna. Qutb provided the theoretical framework justifying violence inside Muslim societies under the pretext that people are not Muslims as they proclaim to be as long as they live the life of jahiliyyah. Based on his description of the abject condition of Muslim societies, Qutb legitimized the use of violence.

## Societal Jahiliyyah

Sayyid Qutb concluded that the state of the Muslim world is comparable to the state of jahiliyyah, the pagan period that existed before Prophet Muhammad introduced Islam to the Arabian Peninsula. In his view, the world has abandoned the sound religious and creedal framework set by God and submitted to man-made laws. He said, “This jahiliyyah is based on rebellion against God’s sovereignty on earth. It transfers to man one of the greatest attributes of God, namely sovereignty, and makes men lord over others. It is now not in that simple and primitive form of the ancient Jahiliyyah, but takes the form of claiming that the right to create values, legislate rules and laws, and systems without regard to what God has prescribed Almighty, the result of which is rebellion against the authority of God and consequently the oppression of His servants.”

Qutb’s primary concern was to make human societies governed by no other law except that of God Almighty. Therefore, any society that does not embrace or follow Islamic teachings and governance is non-Muslim and therefore jahili. He explained, “The jahili society is any society other than the Muslim society. If we wish to make a more specific definition, we may say that any society is a jahili society that does not dedicate itself to the submission of God Alone, in its belief and ideas, in its observances of worship, and in its legal rulings. According to this definition, all the societies existing in the world today are jahili.”

Qutb presents a strict dichotomy between the truth of Islam and jahiliyyah that renders him unable to acknowledge man’s civilizational and cultural heritage and categorically refuses to admit the possibility of Muslim-non-Muslim exchange and interactions without detriment to the integrity of Muslims. He said, “A Muslim cannot go to any source other than Allah Almighty for guidance in matters of faith, in the concept of life, acts of worship, morals and human affairs, values and standards, principles of economics

and political affairs and interpretation of historical processes. It is, therefore, his duty that he should learn all these from a Muslim whose piety and character, belief and action, are beyond reproach ... Philosophy, the interpretation of history, psychology (except for those observations and experimental results which are not part of anyone's opinion) ethics, theology and comparative religion, sociology (excluding statistics and observations) - all these sciences have a direction which in the past or the present has been influenced by jahili beliefs and traditions."

### **The Believing Group and the Right to Use Violence**

Sayyid Qutb lays the foundations for the permissibility of using violence based on the prevalent jahiliyyah that has become a practical system of life with a political authority behind it. He lays responsibility of confronting this jahiliyyah through reformation and change, bringing society in line with true Islam, and freeing man from every authority except that of God, on the shoulders of a superior and select few who possess a true vision of Islam. However, before undertaking this sublime duty, they first must remove themselves from all jahili influences and renounce jahili concepts, traditions, and leadership. In short, before changing society, they first have to change themselves. It is then that the true workers for Islam will raise themselves above the jahili society and all of its values and concepts and begin to traverse the difficult road towards bringing society out of ignorance.

The religion of Islam from Qutb's perspective is a practical movement. It faces practical problems and provides practical

solutions progressing from preaching and persuasion to physical force and power i.e. physical jihad by the believing sect depending on the practical needs of the situation.

### **Post-Qutb Violence**

After the execution of Sayyid Qutb, the Muslim Brotherhood continued to promulgate violence under the cover of religion and concepts of hakimiyyah, khilafah, and the implementation of the Shari'ah. However, when they realized the failure of their extremist project to restore Islamic rule, they sought to pursue divergent trajectories and acclimatize themselves to existing politics and ideologies. They therefore began to seek means of reconciling shura (consultation) with democracy, freedom, and modernity. In spite of this, the Muslim Brotherhood did not revise its position on violence as an indispensable tool but instead restructured their violent brand of jihad by penetrating and changing societies by their so-called "civilizational jihad".

### **Supporting Terrorist Groups**

At the beginning of the 80's, the Muslim Brotherhood adopted a contradictory dichotomous discourse propelled by their staunch adherence to their fundamental agenda and a simultaneous claim to embracing reform and the values of democracy.

At this time, the Muslim Brotherhood continued down another path by supporting and backing extremist and terrorist groups that spread violence under the banner of Al-Jihad al-Muqaddas (the Sacred Jihad). This particular strategy is linked to a secret document drafted in 1982 titled, "Towards

a Worldwide Strategy for Islamic Policy: Points of Departure, Elements, Procedures, and Missions”. The document outlines a long-term plan to establish an Islamic State as well as a multi-phased strategy to dominate regional positions of power through infiltrating institutions.

The ninth point of departure outlined in the document articulates the necessity of constructing “a permanent force of the Islamic da’wah and support movements engaged in jihad across the Muslim world, to varying degrees and insofar possible.” Its main elements are:

- Protecting the da’wah with the force necessary to guarantee its security at the local and international levels.
- To make contact with all new movements engaged in jihad, everywhere on the planet, and with Muslim minorities, and to create links as needed to establish and support collaboration.
- To maintain the duty of jihad and awakening throughout the Islamic Ummah.

The document outlines certain procedures safeguards necessary to protect the Muslim Brotherhood and to allow it achieve its aims





# EXAMPLES OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S ARMED GROUPS

## **The Violence Employed by the Muslim Brotherhood**

Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, and its succeeding leaders were determined to create a secret armed wing with the intent purpose of protecting the group and achieving its goals.

## **The Secret Wing of the Muslim Brotherhood**

Al-Banna's wish to defend the organization against enemies and realize its goals was expressed in the establishment of al-Jawwalah (the Rovers Scouts). Despite the 1938 Act banning all paramilitary organizations, the unit eventually grew in number to include around 45, 000 scouts.

Later in 1940, the Muslim Brotherhood formed its secret wing known as the Jihaz al-Khass (the Special Apparatus) or Jihaz al-Sirri (the Secret Apparatus). The primary function of this unit according to Mohammed Mahdy Akef was to train a select group of individuals from the organization to perform special missions, train for military operations against the outside enemy, and to eradicate military illiteracy for the Egyptian people.”

The stated objective behind the creation of al-Jihaz al-Sirri was to fight against the British and the Jews though in reality, it was formed to protect the organization, intimidate its opponents, and prevent dissent within it. Under al-Sindi's leadership, the Brotherhood's military wing launched a campaign of assassinations against political figures, journalists, writers, etc.

In the early 1950's Hasan al-Hudaybi, al-Banna's successor as the organization's Supreme Guide, attempted to dismantle al-Jihaz al-Sirri. He condemned it as a clandestine unit within the movement whose purpose was no longer necessary. It was moreover a source of conflict between leaders of the organization.

Umar al-Tilmisani spoke of growing tension between al-Banna and al-Sindi concerning the latter's attempts to gain control of al-Jihaz al-Sirri and his unilateral decisions to carry out attacks. The unit was finally dissolved in 1952.

## **Al-Tali'ah al-Muqatila—the Fighting Vanguard in Syria**

After President Abdel-Nassr's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, many of its members migrated to the Gulf, Syria, Algeria, and Morocco. The Brotherhood members who remained in Egypt, resorted to practicing taqiyyah, religious dissimulation, and continued to practice their da'wah in secret to foreign Muslim students in Egypt.

## **Terrorism of the Syrian Muslim Brothers**

Al-Tali'a al-Muqatila (the Fighting Vanguard) was formed after the "Uprising of Hama" in April 1964.

The incident contributed to the evolution of an extremist movement led by Marawan Hadid, a young radical member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Hadid's violent opposition of the ruling "apostate" Baath party in the 1960's and early 1970's grew into a local terrorist group.

After Hadid's arrest and subsequent death in prison, the armed cells he had trained and which were spread out throughout Syria, retaliated by embarking on a series of assassinations against senior security officers and state figures that eventually evolved into random attacks against Alawite civilians.

## **Revival After 2011**

The Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the peaceful uprising against the Syrian regime in 2011 to propel themselves to the forefront of the scene being played out in Syria. Brotherhood members such as Lu'ay al-Zu'by and Abu Basir al-Tartusi who had left the country in 1982, returned once more to resume activities in Syria. To increase their influence within the military opposition councils, the Muslim Brotherhood coordinated military attacks against the Syrian regime and provided logistic support to the revolutionaries by appointing at least one of their members in the control rooms of the "Free Syrian Army".

Although initially the Muslim Brotherhood was hesitant to participate in the revolution, it nevertheless decided to officially endorse the uprising by channeling financial and military support to the rebels such as the Farouq Brigade in Homs, the Tawhid Brigade in Aleppo, the Sham Falcons Brigade in Mount al-Zawiya, and Ahrar al-Sham in Idlib.

This assistance, however, was not pro bono. The objective of the Muslim Brotherhood was to orient the rebel groups towards their own interests and gain their political allegiance.

# HASM AND LIWA' AL-THAWRA

After 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood strived to hijack the gains of the 25 January revolution. They spared no effort to infiltrate the state institutions to seize power by means of electoral fraud and deceit. When they did eventually win the presidential elections, the Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Office asserted its power by taking political and social decisions that totally alienated the people and pushed them to stage a successful revolution against the ruling Muslim Brotherhood and its Guidance Office.

The Muslim Brotherhood tried to restore their rule and reinstate Mohammed Morsi, their man in office, as president by fomenting chaos and perpetuating violence and terrorism. Following the removal of Mohammed Morsi, many extremist and terror movements eventually emerged as offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood.



لواء الثورة



## Liwa` al-Thawra — Banner of the Revolution

The terrorist movement, Liwa` al-Thawra, first appeared on the scene in October 2016 when it claimed responsibility for the assassination of Army Brigadier General Adel Raga`i outside his house. In the same year, the group issued a statement announcing its intention to revenge the death of Mohammed Kamal, a senior leader within the Muslim Brotherhood, and in April of the following year the group declared its responsibility for a bombing outside a police-training center in the city of Tanta.

In August 2017, the group's spokesperson Salah al-Din Yusuf announced that the group shares ideological underpinnings with the Muslim Brotherhood based on the writings of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Banna, thereby confirming its connection to the Muslim Brotherhood. Yusuf said that the group targets police and army personnel as well as judicial figures in response to the court sentences against senior Brotherhood members.

## Sawa'id Misr—Arms of Egypt Movement (HASM)

Hasm is a militant group that emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood. Its first public statement in January 2014 described the group as a revolutionary movement headquartered in Suez. In September 2014, the Egyptian General Prosecutor accused Ahmed Radwan, the spokesperson of the dissolved Freedom and Justice Party, of being involved in inciting violence and forming Hasm.

Hasm targeted Egyptian security forces and public and judicial figures. Some of its most prominent operations included among others its failed assassination attacks against the former Grand Mufti of Egypt, Dr. Ali Goma in 2016, and Assistant Attorney General Zakaria Abdul Aziz in the same year.

After the Egyptian government designated all Muslim Brotherhood offshoot movements as terrorist groups, the Cairo Court for Urgent Matters designated Hasm a terrorist organization in 2017. In December of the same year, Britain added Liwa` al-Thawra and Sawa'id Misr to their terror group list as did USA the following year.

## Connection to Terrorist Groups

With the rise of political Islam and terrorist groups after 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood entered into cooperation with militant groups on myriad occasions especially in Egypt. On the kidnapping of some police officers in 2013, the former president, Mohammed Morsi spoke of the need to guarantee the safety of the kidnapers and captives alike. On another occasion, he granted full pardon to 26 members of outlawed Islamist terror groups.

In yet another instance demonstrating the Brotherhood's links to terror groups, Mohammed al-Biltagy, a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood, maintained that the ongoing violence in the Sinai Peninsula would end the moment Morsi is reinstated.

# Members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Ranks of ISIS

After the 2011 Syrian uprising turned into a civil war, the then incumbent president of Egypt, Mohammed Morsi voiced his endorsement of jihad in Syria, risking the flow of jihadi fighters to Syria in a pattern reminiscent of the Afghan jihad of the 1980's.

After the ousting of Morsi and the emergence of ISIS, numerous field reports confirmed the presence of many Muslim Brotherhood youth in the ranks of ISIS in both Syria and Iraq.

# ASHMAWI

## ADDRESSES THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

After the ouster of Mohammed Morsi, the leader of Al-Murabitun terrorist group, Hisham al-‘Ashmawi, addressed the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood in a video message titled, “So do not weaken and do not grieve” in which he exhorted them to employ violence and wage war against the Egyptian state.

‘Ashmawi stressed the necessity of targeting police and army personnel and explained the means of establishing communication with the terrorist group whether to join its ranks or to carry out individual attacks.

