

**UZBEKISTAN**  
**Last Updated: 29 September 2016**

torg	gname	onset	min	maxgroupdate
T2411	Islamic Jihad Union (Uzbekistan)		2009	2009
T230	JIG	2004	2002	2012
T231	IMU	1999	1997	2011
T28	Al-Qai'da		1989	2012
T1991	Hizb Ut-Tahrir		1953	2006

**I. Islamic Jihad Union (Uzbekistan)**

Min. Group Date: 2009

Max. Group Date: 2009

Onset: NA

Aliases: Islamic Jihad Union; Islamic Jihad Group; Islami Cihad Ittehad; Ittihad al-Jihad al-Islami; IJU; IJG; Islomiy Jihod Ittihodi; al-Djihad al-Islami; Dzhamaat Modzhakhedov; Islamic Jihad Group of Uzbekistan; Jamiat al-Jihad al-Islami; Jamiyat; The Jamaat Mojahedin; The Kazakh Jama'at; The Libyan Society

**Part 1. Bibliography**

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## **Part 2. Narrative**

### **Group Formation**

The group splintered from the IMU in March of 2002 but stayed quiet until March and April of 2004, when the group conducted and claimed multiple suicide bombings and firing attacks mostly targeting Uzbek police. As of 2012, they were still active, often posting images and videos on their site [sehadetzamani.com](http://sehadetzamani.com). According to a published interview with leader Najmiddin Kamolitdinovich Jalolov, the group’s goal is to overthrow the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan but has also expanded that goal to be more global so as to unite Muslims and conduct jihad. It is an extremist Sunni organization according to the U.S. Dept. of State. Other than the March and April attacks, the group also conducted attacks on the Uzbek General Prosecutor’s Office and the US and Israeli offices in Tashkent. German officials also foiled an IJU plot in 2007 involving hydro peroxide bombs, apprehending two German converts and one Turk.

### **Geography**

Geographically speaking, the base of IJU’s operations is in Mir Ali, North Waziristan, Pakistan, though many of the attacks the group claims as their own have occurred within Uzbekistan. The group also operates along the Pakistan-Afghani border.

### **Organizational Structure**

As stated earlier, the group was under the control of Najmiddin Kamolitdinovich Jalolov, also known as Ebu Yahya Mohammed Fetih (Steinberg doesn’t take a stance on whether Jalolov and Ebu Yahya are the same but most other authors agree they are), who has ruled the group continuously since it splintered from the IMU. Jalolov allegedly shares some power with deputy Suhayl Fatilloevich Buranov, who also helped found the group.

The group operates in cells, such as the Saarland Cell in Germany. Most scholars acknowledge that a large part of the IJU’s split from the IMU was ideological, so given that the IMU was already militarized at the time of the split, the group could be said to have started as a political movement within a militarized organization then became militarized itself. The group does not appear to have a formal political wing. Most supporters are ethnic Uzbeks, as are the leaders, with some Chechens, Uighurs, Kyrgyz, Kurds and Germans, though the group seems to be attempting to attract Turkish recruits by using a website all in Turkish.

## External Ties

Some allege that the US CIA and Turkish secret service aided the Saarland Cell specifically by helping smuggle fighters and bomb-making equipment to Germany, though most scholars seem to believe this is a myth. Others allege that the government of Uzbekistan created the IJU, though once again many scholars believe this is also a myth. As for other VNSAs, the group is said to be allied with the Taliban, al-Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, though nothing has been confirmed.

## Group Outcome

Various governments have tried to counter the IJU: multiple European governments, after discovering and apprehending those involved in the Saarland Cell, started targeting and apprehending members of other cells said to be connected to the IJU. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, concentrated bombing campaigns and on the ground troops both caused major damage to the IJU, even killing leader Jalolov in 2009. The group remains active.

## Part 3. Proposed Changes

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 2002

Group End (Outcome): 2016 (Active)

## II. JIG

Min. Group Date: 2002

Max. Group Date: 2012

Onset: 2004

Aliases: Jihad Islamic Group; Jamoat

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## **Part 2. Narrative**

### **Group Formation**

Little information exists about JIG or the Jihad Islamic Group. Some scholars such as Kreiger assert that JIG and the IJU are the same organization. This may come from some name confusion: Jihad Islamic Group and Islamic Jihad Group (the IJU's former name) are extremely similar. In fact, most scholars seem to treat the IJU and the JIG as one entity. Other scholars, seizing on a supposed alias "Jamoat" suggest that JIG is just a new name for the IMU. Either way, the group seems to have similar goals to the IMU and IJU: to overthrow the Karimov regime and install an Islamic one. Their ideology seems to follow Salafi Islam.

### **Geography**

The group had attacks in Tashkent.

### **Organizational Structure**

The leader of the group, its organization and where it bases itself are all unclear, though most sources note that their focus is on Uzbekistan, as the only attacks the group has ever claimed were there. Both attacks claimed by JIG (the March-April suicide bombings and the July attacks on the US and Israeli embassies in Tashkent as well as the Uzbekistan General Prosecutor's Office) were both also claimed by the IJU, though no source seems to make a distinction between the two.

### **External Ties**

NAGS alleges external support from Germany and Pakistan, but no other sources corroborate.

### **Group Outcome**

The only apparent government response was a wave of arrests (Harbom 2006 estimates 135 arrested and convicted).

### **Part 3. Proposed Changes**

Aliases: None

Group Formation: Unknown

Group End (Outcome): (disappear)

### **III. IMU**

Min. Group Date: 1997

Max. Group Date: 2011

Onset: 1999

Aliases: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamic Party of Turkestan, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

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## **Part 2. Narrative**

### **Group Formation**

IMU was formed in 1998 by Juma Namangani and Tahir Yuldashev (Stein 2013; Sanderson et al. 2010). Its roots go back even earlier as Namangani and Yuldashev originally protested against Karimov in 1991, but fled to Tajikistan following a harsh crackdown (Sanderson et al. 2010). In 1997, they returned from Tajikistan after the resolution of the Tajik Civil War and decided to restart their movement (Sanderson et al. 2010; Stein 2013). The group's original goal was to overthrow the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic caliphate in the Ferghana Valley, though over time that goal seems to have shifted to be more about establishing an Islamic state and acquiring wealth through criminal activities (Stein 2013; Mackenzie Institute 2016). The IMU's ideology remains Salafi (Mackenzie Institute 2006). In 1999, IMU fighters "captured several hostages... and expressed their demands from the Uzbek government," as well as a number of highly successful guerrilla attacks in 2000 near Tashkent (Yakin 2005, 76).

### **Geography**

The group was active in Ferghana Valley, Tashkent, Namangan, and parts of Tajikistan (Stein 2013; Mackenzie Institute 2016).

The group's base of operations has changed over the years: though Adolat was based in Namangan, Uzbekistan, the IMU originally operated out of the Tavildara district of Tajikistan, which was then used to establish a base in Afghanistan (Sanderson et al. 2010; Zenn 2013; Stein 2013). Operation Enduring Freedom forced the group to go into hiding in South Waziristan, Pakistan until 2009, where it seems to have remained (Stein 2013). Since 2001, it has expanded operations into Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China (Zenn 2013). Gleditsch et al. (2013) claim the group never controlled territory, although there is no evidence to corroborate this (Gleditsch et al. 2013, 745).

## **Organizational Structure**

As mentioned earlier, Namangani and Yuldashev ruled the group together from 1998 to Namangani's death in 2001, with Namangani as the military leader and Yuldashev as the ideological one (Cuciolla 2014; Mackenzie Institute 2016). After Yuldashev's death in 2009, leadership of the group allegedly passed to Usman Odil, who himself died in 2012 and left the group without a clear leader (Stein 2013). The group is organized into cells. It started as a political movement (aka Adolat) but became militarized after the Tajik civil war and repression from the government of Uzbekistan (Sanderson et al. 2010; Stein 2013). The IMU's supporters were originally mostly ethnic Uzbeks, notably unemployed young men, but have now diversified to include Afghans and Turks (Stein 2013). The group is mostly male (Stein 2013). The IMU funded itself with support from the Pakistani ISI, Taliban, and drug smuggling (Mackenzie Institute 2016).

## **External Ties**

Though some allege that the group is supported by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, they offer little evidence (Rashid 2002; NAGS n.d.). They are also allegedly allied with the Taliban and al-Qaeda, both with significant evidence to back it up (Mackenzie Institute 2016). The type of aid they may get from those two groups remains somewhat unclear, though it seems that both groups allow IMU fighters to hide in territory they control. The IMU has a number of splinters, notably the IJU (Stein 2013). The group pledged support to ISIS in 2015 (Mackenzie Institute 2016).

## **Group Outcome**

In February 1999, the Uzbek government blamed the IMU for a prominent attack in Tashkent although this was never confirmed (Sanderson et al. 2010). The Uzbek government also purportedly blamed HT for the attack and arrested thousands in response - the majority being HT members and not IMU members (Yakin 2005, 75-76). In August 1999, IMU kidnapped several prominent officials in response and asked for a ransom (Yakin 2005, 76). In response, Uzbekistan conducted air strikes in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (Cucciolla 2014).

The group remains active, attacking the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi in 2014. Currently, it primarily operates out of Pakistan (Zenn 2013). Uzbekistan has mounted air strikes, arrested fighters, blamed the IMU for terrorist incidents (like the March 2004 suicide bombings) as well as mined its borders with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, though they started the process of de-mining them in 2004 (Stein 2013; Zenn 2013; Mackenzie Institute 2016).

## **Why 1999 onset?**

IMU's onset is the result of the Uzbekistan government's miscalculation in response to the 1999 attacks. While the Uzbekistan government was never able to firmly identify who was behind the bombings, Karimov focused on targeting Hizb ut-Tahrir rather than IMU in his follow-up campaign. The Uzbekistan government arrested approximately 7000 people in relation to the incident, with the vast majority being HT members (Yakin 2005, 79). This led it to underestimate the necessary response against IMU, enabling the organization to plan and organize its retaliatory response in August 1999 (Stein 2013; Cucciolla 2014). This is particularly damning because the IMU has leadership with plenty of military experience and training from the Tajikistan Civil War, which enables it to organize an insurgency with relatively few material capabilities.

Note quote: Central Asia: Islam and the State ICG Asia Report N°59, 10 July 2003, 4 "The appearance of Islamist groups challenging the secular nature of the state shocked the largely secular, Soviet-era elite, who had little concept of how to deal with political Islam."

Note: 1999 attacks - never attribute - evid of private info problem and why attacks don't necessarily signal resolve. Some scholars wonder if Karimov's government staged the February attacks as a pretext to consolidate power and get rid of Islamist groups in the country. If so, then this strategy backfired.

#### Alternate Explanations

- *Shock to Capabilities?* There is no evidence of a shock to IMU's capabilities or the government's capabilities in this period.
- *Window of opportunity?* One could argue the 1999 attacks are a "window," but there is a delay between the initial attacks and the August ransoms. Further, the "start" of the insurgency in August 1999 is in response to government CT/COIN efforts.

### **Part 3. Proposed Changes**

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1998

Group End (Outcome): 2012 (Active)

#### **IV. Al-Qa'ida**

Min. Group Date: 1989

Max. Group Date: 2012

Onset: NA

Aliases: Al-Qa'ida, Al Qaeda, Al Qaida, Al-Qa`Ida, Al-Qaeda, Qaidat Al-Jihad, Qa'idat Al-Jihad, The Base

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### **Part 2. Narrative**

#### **Group Formation**

Al-Qaida was founded by Osama Bin Laden in 1988 (Mackenzie Institute 2016). The group's initial goals were to completely remove Western influence/ideas and to abolish the United States and Israel (BAAD 2015). They conducted their first attacks against the US embassy in Africa in 1998 (BAAD 2015; Global Security N.D). Al-Qaida first came to global attention after 9/11 but was active prior to that in its region (FAS 2005). The group has a radical sunni muslim ideology (CFR 2012; Global Security N.D).

#### **Geography**

Al-Qaida operated mainly within Peshawar, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (CFR 2012; PBS N.D). The group hid within cities and hills with particularly mountainous terrain in the Tora Bora mountains of Afghanistan (as shepherd or farmers) (FAS 2005). The group's leader Bin Laden has had a base of operations in Sudan from 1991-1998 (Mackenzie Institute 2016)

### **Organizational Structure**

Al-Qaida was headed by Osama Bin Laden until his assassination in 2011 (although rumors exist that he died earlier or didn't die at all) (CFR 2012). He was originally from Saudi Arabia and had helped fight the Soviets in the Afghanistan war (Crenshaw 2015) He was later replaced by Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2011 after bin Laden was killed by an American raid (Crenshaw 2015; CFR 2012) The group used a complex system in which members reported to couriers who reported to other couriers eventually making their way up to the head who was initially Bin Laden (RAND 2008). This is what we call a decentralized or cell-based organizational structure. Funding for the organization came from many places, including donations (FTO 2005). The group had different councils to deal with different aspects. For example, they had a "military committee" to deal with "military" matters, and a "consultation council" to plan out terrorist attacks and deal with financial matters (PBS N.D). They have no formal political wing (BAAD 2015). Al-Qaida can be considered an umbrella group that consists of many other terrorist groups within (ibid; Global Security N.D). The organization had an estimated 75 members when it was first formed and up to 18,000 at its peak in 2004 (Crenshaw 2015). Today, it is thought to have less than 1000 members, but these estimates vary (Crenshaw 2015; BAAD 2015).

### **External Ties**

Saudi Arabia allegedly gave some funding to AQ through drug trafficking and diamonds, but these were never proven true (Crenshaw 2015). Iran also allegedly trained and supported AQ members in the early 1990s (ibid; BAAD 2015). Afghanistan and Pakistan allow Al-Qaeda to operate training camps within their borders (ibid). The group has ties to several other terrorist organizations including Egyptian Islamic Jihad, The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Armed Islamic Group in Algeria, the Abu Sayyaf Group, and Jemaah Islamiya (CFR 2012; PBS N.D).

### **Group Outcome**

The US launched Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 to find and destroy the Taliban and Al-Qaeda elements operating in Afghanistan (BAAD 2015). The

group's first leader Osama bin Laden was killed during a raid in 2011 (CFR 2012; BAAD 2015). The group is still active today although it has lost much support to ISIS.

### **Part 3. Basic Coding**

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1988 (Mackenzie Institute 2016)

Group End (Outcome): 2016 (active) (Crenshaw 2015)

## **V. Hizb Ut-Tahrir**

Min. Group Date: 1953

Max. Group Date: 2006

Onset:

Aliases: Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami (HT), Hezb-E Tahrir, Hizb Ut Tahrir al-Islami, HT

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## **Part 2. Narrative**

### **Group Formation**

HT was founded in 1953 by a Muslim judge, Taiqiuddin an-Nabhani, with a goal to establish an Islamic state and overthrow the Karimov regime (Karagiannis 2006, 264; ICG 2002). The group was originally organized as a peaceful political party and does not publicly advocate violence, but it has still been tied to several violent incidents starting as late as 2004 (GTD 2017). One scholar described the group as a “conveyor belt for terrorists” (Counter Extremism n.d.). Its ideology is not as jihadist or extremist as IMU (ICG 2002). It is unknown when the group first came to Uzbekistan, but likely happened in the early 1990s when Jordanian missionaries established the first cells (Karagiannis 2006).

### **Geography**

HT is a pan-Islamist group, which originally started in Jordan and Israel, before moving to other Muslim-majority countries. Today, HT operates in 40 countries, including Uzbekistan (Counter Extremism n.d.). In contrast to the IMU, HT had large transnational operations during the 1990s. By the early 2000s, when the IMU moved into Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan, both were transnational (ICG Crisis 2002). In Uzbekistan, the group has been implicated in incidents in Tashkent and the Ferghana Valley (Schwartz 2004; ICG Crisis 2003).

### **Organizational Structure**

HT is currently led by Ata Abu Rashata (Counter Extremism n.d.). A leader of HT said it “wants a peaceful jihad that will be spread by explanation...but ultimately there will be war because the repression of the central states is so strong” (ICG 2002, 9). It has also been known to promote violence against U.S. troops in Iraq and the region, raising concern that it is not serious about non-violence (Yakin 2005). There is evidence of internal leadership divisions most noticeable in 1997 when an Uzbek faction splintered (ICG 2002).

HT has a hierarchical structure with chapters in several different countries including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, as well as in

China's traditionally Muslim Xinjiang Province, and throughout Europe (Counter Extremism n.d.). After a short training period, individuals are assigned to cells called "halka" in their local area (ICG Asia 2002). HT recruits both men and women although they are tasked with carrying out operations separately (ICG Asia 2002; Counter Extremism n.d.). There are approximately 20,000-100,000 members of HT in Central Asia, including 8,000 members in Uzbekistan (Counter Extremism n.d.). Most members are ethnic Uzbek, in their early 20s, and unemployed (ICG Asia 2002; Counter Extremism n.d.). One of its most famous members from Europe was "Jihadi John" before he joined ISIS (Counter Extremism n.d.).

The group is funded by donations (Counter Extremism n.d.). Uzbekistan claims the group is also funded by drug trafficking, but this may not be credible (Karagiannis 2006).

### **External Ties**

HT saw itself as a non-violent alternative to IMU in the late 1990s and denied involvement in violent activities (Karagiannis 2006). It has also allegedly been blamed for "clandestinely funding and providing logistical support to a wide range of terrorist operations in Central Asia" (Global Security n.d.). Uzbekistan claims HT used Kazakhstan as a military base of operations for training, but Kazakhstan denied it (Schwartz 2004). After the massive crackdown in 1999, the group moved its headquarters to Kyrgyzstan (Karagiannis 2006).

### **Group Outcome**

In 1998, the Uzbekistan government announced a mosque registration rule. Many mosques were forced to shut down in 1998 following their failure to comply with the government order (ICG Central Asia 2003). In 1999, the Uzbekistan government banned individuals from staying in mosques past prayers to avoid communication (ICG Central Asia 2003). The reason is because the Islamic Renaissance Party in Tajikistan started off as a mosque group in 1977 (ICG Central Asia 2003).

In the 1999 Tashkent bombing, Uzbekistan suspected HT was behind the attack (Yakin 2005):

*Karimov blamed the Islamic extremists for attacks and arrested thousands of people.<sup>457</sup> He also announced that: "Virtually all of those arrested have undergone training in sabotage in Chechnya, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. They all belong to various terrorist and extremist religious groups such as Hizbollah and Hezb-e Tahrir or are supporters of the Wahhabi sect." (Yakin 2005, 76).*

It responded accordingly with mass arrests that disproportionately affected HT members (c.f. IMU). "Uzbekistan has consistently taken the hardest line, and its

security services have often drawn little distinction between the IMU and the Hizb-utTahrir when conducting arrests and torture of those suspected of extremism.” (ICG 2002, 9).

In 2004, another bombing occurred in Uzbekistan. Although HT claimed credit for the incident, Uzbekistan blamed IMU and targeted them (Counter Extremism n.d.; Schwartz 2004). HT is still active today.

### **Part 3. Proposed Changes**

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1953

Group End (Outcome): 2016 (Active)

Note: post-hindsight  
ICG Asia Briefing 2003

Far more to date has been written about the IMU<sup>1</sup>, which U.S. President George Bush cited as a terrorist organisation of particular concern following September 11, 2001. *This was likely done, at least in part, to help secure Uzbekistan’s cooperation in the military campaign in Afghanistan.* But the IMU has received much greater scrutiny also because of its military activities, including cross border incursions into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan during the last three years, and allegations by the government of Uzbekistan that it was behind bombings in Tashkent in February 1999.