

# Fifteen Years After the Djerba Synagogue Bombing

By Aaron Y. Zelin

**Fifteen years ago this month, a Tunisian operative named Nizar Nawar detonated a truck bomb outside the el-Ghriba synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, killing 19, including 16 German and French tourists. Orchestrated by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, it was al-Qa`ida's first successful international attack after 9/11, but it has received far less attention than other attacks launched by the group. Court documents, case files, and primary sources shed significant new light on the attack and al-Qa`ida's then modus operandi for international attack planning, which has both similarities and differences with recent international terrorist plots carried out by the Islamic State. In retrospect, the Djerba attack should have been a warning sign of the international threat posed by Tunisian foreign fighters, who are now one of the most dangerous cohorts within the Islamic State.**

**O**n April 11, 2002, a Tunisian al-Qa`ida operative named Nizar Bin Muhammad Nasar Nawar (Sayf al-Din al-Tunisi) ignored security officers' orders to stop and drove a truck filled with liquid propane into the wall of el-Ghriba Synagogue, one of Africa's oldest Jewish synagogues, in Djerba, Tunisia.<sup>1</sup> Masterminded by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM),<sup>a</sup> the attack killed 14 Germans, three Tunisians, and two Frenchmen and left 30 others injured. Although it was al-Qa`ida's first successful external operation following the 9/11 attacks, little has been written about how the attack materialized. It is one of the only large-scale, post-9/11 attacks or plots that has not been given a full retrospective treatment based on information that has been gleaned since its execution.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, in light of the current Islamic State external operation campaign, it is worth examining how the Djerba bombing compares to more recent terrorist attacks in order to shed light on the evolution of terrorist attack planning.

This article draws on court documents, media reports, Guanta-

a French and Spanish court documents on the Djerba attack obtained by the author show that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was the mastermind behind the attack.

namo Bay prisoner review files, and Arabic primary sources from the jihadi movement to tell the story of the attack. While there is much contradictory information, the author has attempted to piece together what really happened by cross-referencing sources and weighing their credibility. While many scholars and general observers were surprised at the number of Tunisians who became involved with jihadism following the country's revolution, this study of the network behind the Djerba attack makes clear that Tunisians have, in fact, played a significant role in the global jihadi movement for decades. Equally relevant to understanding the contemporary threat picture, this article sheds light on the longstanding importance of entrepreneurial individuals who link different nodes of networks together.<sup>3</sup>

## The Planning of the Attack

The central figure in the Djerba attack was Nizar Nawar, who was born in 1978.<sup>4</sup> His family was originally from Ben Gardane, a town west of Tunisia's border with Libya that has since become infamous as a recruitment hub for sending foreign fighters to Iraq, Syria, and Libya. Little is known about Nawar prior to his involvement within al-Qa`ida, beyond the fact that he was a poor student, which led him to drop out at the age of 16 and become a small-time salesman. Nawar is known to have traveled to Libya to buy cheap goods and sell them back in the local markets in Ben Gardane.<sup>5</sup> When interviewed about Nawar following the attack, family members and friends, did not seem to know fully about his activities after he dropped out of school. Many stated they had not observed any outward signs of militancy.<sup>6</sup>

According to the autobiography of Fadl 'Abd Allah Muhammad (better known as Fadl Harun), then head of al-Qa`ida in East Africa who spent time in Afghanistan with Usama bin Ladin in the late 1990s, Nawar had been planning the attack since he first returned to Tunisia from Afghanistan in late 1999.<sup>7</sup> Between his original return home in late 1999 and the attack in April 2002, Nawar would travel back and forth between Tunisia and Afghanistan for additional guidance. The Saudi al-Qa`ida member Hasan Muhammad 'Ali Bin Atash, for example, noted that he saw Nawar at the al-Matar Airport Complex in Kandahar in October 2000.<sup>8</sup>

Fadl Harun's autobiography also commends Nawar for his training capabilities and independence. Nawar had trained in explosives at the al-Qa`ida-affiliated Khalden camp in Paktia province while in Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup> According to French court documents on the Djerba attack, this is where Nawar met the Polish-German convert Christian Ganczarski (Abu Muhammad al-Almani).<sup>10</sup> Ganczarski befriended Nawar at Khalden and provided support and guidance to him for the synagogue bombing. In 2009, Ganczarski was convicted in a French court for his role in the Djerba attack.<sup>11</sup>

Further evidence from the trial uncovered that Ganczarski and Nawar had many simultaneous travel patterns in the year or two prior to the Djerba attack, suggesting they worked in tandem.<sup>12</sup>

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Ganczarski allegedly became a mentor to Nawar, possibly due to Ganczarski's high stature and position within al-Qa`ida.<sup>13</sup> According to testimony by Shadi `Abd Allah, the leader of a German Jama`at Tawhid wa-l-Jihad cell, who was arrested in April 2002 in connection with Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi's Turkish network, Ganczarski was very close to top al-Qa`ida leaders Saif al-`Adl, Abu Hafis al-Masri, and bin Ladin.<sup>14 b</sup> According to evidence from the French prosecution, Ganczarski was often seen at al-`Adl's logistics base in Afghanistan and was one of the individuals in charge of al-Qa`ida's information technology, including radio links and al-Qa`ida's internet activities and passing messages between bin Ladin and KSM.<sup>15</sup> Ganczarski can also be seen in a January 2000 video sitting near Muhammad Atta, Ramzi Bin al-Shibah, and `Abd al-Ra'uf Jiday (Faruq al-Tunisi) as bin Ladin gives a sermon at Tarnak Farms.<sup>16 c</sup>

It is certainly possible that Ganczarski was Nawar's handler for the plot. In fact, the French prosecution noted that just prior to the suicide attack in Djerba, Nawar phoned two individuals: Ganczarski and KSM (twice). According to Germany's domestic intelligence agency, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which was wiretapping Ganczarski's phone, Nawar asked Ganczarski for his *du`at* (blessings) ahead of the operation, to which Ganczarski replied, "go in peace, God's mercy and blessing be with you."<sup>17</sup> The French were able to determine from wiretapping that Nawar was in constant contact with KSM in the two months leading up to the attack, likely receiving instructions and advice on final plans.<sup>18</sup> For these conversations to take place, Nawar relied on a supportive logistical network in Spain and France; KSM had a direct hand in the former, specifically connecting individuals from different parts of the broader Djerba attack network.<sup>19</sup> These networks also helped provide the necessary financial resources, which were funneled through Spain, for the planning and execution of the attack, which ended up costing €19,326 (about \$17,000) at the time.<sup>20</sup>

Nawar last left Afghanistan on September 4, 2001, and returned to Tunisia via Switzerland on September 5. He may have had a meeting during his layover with one of KSM and Ganczarski's European associates, a Swiss-German named Daniel `Yusuf Morgeneegg, who had originally met Ganczarski in Germany in late 1992.<sup>21</sup> Morgeneegg was likely overseeing the logistics of KSM's Djerba attack network in Europe, which besides himself, included operatives in France and Spain.<sup>22</sup> Once back in Tunisia, Nawar created a front

import-export business in Djerba. Final preparations for the attack began in January 2002 when Nawar purchased a used truck and his uncle Biljakim Nawar, a sheet metalworker,<sup>23</sup> welded a large steel tank inside it, which Nawar said he planned to use to transport olive oil. In reality, Nawar filled it with liquid propane for his attack.<sup>24</sup> Also in January, Nawar dispatched Tariq Hidiyya (Tahar), one of his associates in his hometown of Ben Gardane, to France, with money to purchase a satellite phone through his brother Walid Nawar.<sup>25</sup> Hidiyya and Walid met in Saint-Priest near Lyon where Hidiyya presented Walid with an envelope containing €1,800. The money was used by Walid to buy a phone (as well as a modem) in Paris for his brother Nizar, the Djerba attacker.<sup>26</sup> This allowed Nizar to speak with KSM and others more conveniently since Nizar had previously been using pay phones to remain in contact with the network.<sup>27</sup>

According to Spanish court documents, in early March 2002, in order to arrange additional funds for Nawar's activities, KSM associate Isa Isma`il Muhammad, a Canadian-Pakistani based in Karachi, faxed a message to Enrique Cerda Ibanez (Kiké), CEO of the Valencia-based business Hispania de Calcomanias. In the fax, he stated that a man named `Abd Allah Jafir would be calling Ibanez and that "Isa Karachi has a gift of €5,720."<sup>28</sup> The Spanish investigation found that `Abd Allah Jafir was a pseudonym that KSM gave Nawar to use when contacting Ibanez.<sup>29</sup> Isa Isma`il Muhammad and Ibanez had business dealings for years, suggesting that transfers between the two men were one way that money was being sent from the Afghanistan/Pakistan region to operatives and cells in Europe.<sup>30</sup>

KSM also gave Nawar the business phone number of Ibanez, which Nawar used to contact Ibanez via his new satellite phone. Apparently, there were issues with Ibanez, however. Morgeneegg, the network's Swiss-German logistical coordinator, called KSM saying that the "wedding" (a code-term used by al-Qa`ida for an attack) would happen soon, but that those based in Europe and Tunisia were waiting for Ibanez to "arrive" (i.e. provide the money).<sup>31</sup> Morgeneegg then ordered Walid Nawar to follow through on KSM's orders to contact Ibanez. Walid called Ibanez on March 16, and Morgeneegg then followed up with KSM, Nizar, and Nizar's uncle Biljakim about the status of the payment. On the same day, the Pakistan-based Isa Isma`il Muhammad sent another fax to Ibanez, reprimanding him for not yet transferring the funds.<sup>32</sup>

The reprimand appears to have worked because Ibanez finally made the transfers two days later. He deposited €9,500 into a shared Bancaja bank account with Ahmad Rukhsar, a Logrono-based owner of New Lagpal, a business in Spain that was used for *hawala* transfers, among other things.<sup>33</sup> There was also another deposit of €6,000 on April 10, the day before the attack.<sup>34</sup> Given at least one phone call took place between Nawar and Rukhsar, it is likely that Nawar was the final recipient of these funds.<sup>35</sup> With the money and equipment in place, the attack was imminent. As with other deceptions, on the day of the attack, Nawar told his family he was traveling to Libya.<sup>36</sup> According to French court documents, he also had a specific message for his uncle Biljakim, telling him that after he conducted the attack, Biljakim should contact KSM.<sup>37</sup>

The bomb Nawar prepared for the attack was a smaller version of the one used in the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing in Tanzania,<sup>38</sup> illustrating how tradecraft was replicated over time. Additionally, similar to the 1998 embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania, a statement of responsibility was released by Jaysh al-Islami Li-Tahrir al-Muqadisat (JITM, or the Islamic Army for the Liberation of the Holy Sites, a front name for al-Qa`ida) via fax to the Arabic news-

b Shadi `Abd Allah himself met Ganczarski in Afghanistan in early 2000. Jama`at Tawhid wa-l-Jihad was the name of the group that Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi led before it became a part of al-Qa`ida in October 2004 (and subsequently the Islamic State). Guido W. Steinberg, *German Jihad: On the Internationalization of Islamist Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), pp. 44-48; French prosecution charging/indictment document on the Djerba bombings, November 8, 2006, pp. 81-83.

c Jiday was a Tunisian-Canadian among the 29 candidates for the 9/11 attacks and later assigned to what KSM dubbed the "second wave" of 9/11-style attacks. He even prepared a martyrdom video tape for the operation. According to Nasir al-Bahri, bin Ladin's bodyguard at the time, in the summer of 2001 in Karachi, he (al-Bahri) stayed at the house where KSM, Muhammad Atta, Ramzi bin al-Shibah, and Jiday were also staying and remembers the latter three individuals playing a flight simulator game on a PlayStation in preparation. Sometime between the summer of 2001 and the 9/11 attack, it is believed that Jiday dropped out and returned to Canada. Jiday remains on the FBI's Most Wanted List for further questioning. Nasser al-Bahri, *Guarding Bin Laden: My Life in al-Qaeda* (London: Thin Man Press, 2013), pp. 88-89.



*El-Ghriba synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, in May 2016 (Yassine Gaidi/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images)*

papers *Al-Hayat* and *Al-Quds al-Arabi* on April 16, 2002.<sup>39</sup> It stated that “Nizar Bin Muhammad Nawar Sayf al-Din al-Tunisi carried out the attack, which was commissioned by JITM,” that the “martyr” Nawar was a model for the *ummah*, and that Nawar carried the attack out in the name of Palestine against the Jews. Attached to the statement was a martyrdom will from Nawar dated July 5, 2000, which highlighted the plot’s long gestation period. In the will, Nawar reminds the reader to “not be fooled ... I’m a martyr in the cause of God.”<sup>40</sup> Months later, in late June 2002, al-Qa`ida’s spokesperson at the time, Sulayman Abu Ghayth, officially claimed responsibility, stating that the attack was carried out by a “man of the al-Qa`ida organization.”<sup>41</sup>

### **A Canadian Interlude?**

Questions remain about whether Nawar traveled to Canada as part of the planning for the attack. The details that came forth in jihadi primary sources and the court cases in France and Spain would suggest otherwise, but following the Djerba bombing, his family made a number of claims about Nawar’s whereabouts between 1999 and 2002. It should be remembered that Nawar’s brother and uncle took part in the attack planning and would eventually be arrested for providing material support for the attack. Therefore, it is plausible that some family members were attempting to cover up what they knew by spinning an alternative history or only repeating what Nawar told them.

The first claim was that Nawar traveled to South Korea in early 1999 to work at a restaurant and returned nine months later after

not making any money.<sup>42</sup> This time frame tracks with Nawar’s first trip to Afghanistan, suggesting talk of work in South Korea was a deception Nawar concocted to conceal his ulterior motives. The second claim by family members was that Nawar traveled to Montreal shortly after his late 1999 return to Tunisia in order to study at a travel agency.<sup>43</sup> While the alleged study trip seems far-fetched, it is possible that Nawar traveled to Montreal for other reasons—specifically, guidance or support in preparation for the attack. Yet, according to Canadian travel records, there is no evidence that Nawar traveled to the country.<sup>44</sup> That said, Canadian officials believe that many of the Tunisians who entered the country in 1999 and 2000 used fraudulent student visas, which they were unable to monitor.<sup>45</sup>

It is possible Nawar traveled to Montreal by exploiting connections in his network, though definitive proof remains elusive. One person he may have come into contact with was Ra’uf Hanashi, a Tunisian who acquired Canadian citizenship in 1986. Hanashi first became involved in the jihadi milieu during the Bosnian war when he fought for Katibat al-Mujahidin.<sup>46</sup> After that, he was a key part of the jihadi recruitment network in Montreal in the mid-to late 1990s that connected recruits to the Khalden safe houses in Pakistan and Afghanistan run by Zayn al-‘Abidin Muhammad Husayn, better known as Abu Zubaydah. (The Khalden safe house network should not be confused with the Khalden camp in Afghanistan’s Paktia province.) After Hanashi returned from training at Khalden in Paktia in the summer of 1997, he became the *mu’azin* (the one who leads the call to prayer) and later imam at al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah Mosque in Montreal.<sup>47</sup> The mosque was established

in 1993 and was frequented by many Afghan and Bosnian jihad returnees.<sup>48</sup> There is even evidence to suggest that videos promoting jihad and committing martyrdom were distributed at the mosque at that time.<sup>49</sup>

It was through Hanashi's stories of jihad that the Algerian Ahmad Ressay, who illegally immigrated to Montreal in 1994, was first inspired to go to Afghanistan to train.<sup>50</sup> Hanashi facilitated Ressay's contact with Abu Zubaydah and the Khalden network in Afghanistan, where he (Ressay) allegedly joined a 60-man group made up of mostly Tunisian veterans of the Bosnian jihad.<sup>51</sup> One of the earlier (and largest) plots that the Khalden network's Abu Zubaydah planned was the thwarted 2000 millennium plot that sought to bomb four tourist sites in Jordan, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), the USS The Sullivans, and the hijack of Indian Airlines Flight 814.<sup>52</sup> Ressay played a role in planning the LAX component of the plot.<sup>53</sup> After training at the Khalden camp in Paktia from March 1998 through February 1999, Ressay traveled back to Canada and was arrested on December 14, 1999, while attempting to cross the U.S.-Canadian border in Vancouver en route to Los Angeles to conduct the attack.<sup>54</sup> Nawar's training at Khalden and the Tunisian connection with Abu Zubaydah is a plausible way Hanashi and Nawar could have come into contact.

Another possible contact Nawar might have exploited to reach Montreal was a Mauritanian jihadi well known to Nawar's mentor Ganczarski,<sup>55</sup> Muhammadu 'Uld Slahi (Muhammad al-Muritani). Slahi trained at al-Faruq in Afghanistan in the early 1990s, fought in Bosnia, and then helped recruit al-Qa`ida operatives in Europe, including three of the 9/11 hijackers (Muhammad Atta, Marwan al-Shihi, and Ziyad Jarrah).<sup>56</sup> He then based himself in Duisburg, Germany, where he ran an alleged import-export business. It was in Duisburg that Slahi met Ganczarski in the mid-1990s.<sup>57</sup> In 1995, the two founded al-Taqwa Mosque.<sup>58</sup>

The reason Slahi may have played a role in helping Nawar get to Canada is around the same time that Nawar's family claims that Nawar went to Montreal, Slahi himself moved to Montreal.<sup>59</sup> Further, Karim Mihdi, one of the individuals Slahi recruited and who attended his mosque in Duisburg, moved to Montreal with Slahi, illustrating further the interconnectedness of these various networks.<sup>60</sup> Relatedly, according to Tunisian Combatant Group member 'Abd al-Bin Muhammad Bin Abis Awrji, Slahi was also a close associate of the Tunisian-Canadian cleric Hanashi and took over the pulpit of Hanashi's mosque starting in November 26, 1999, during Ramadan while Hanashi was in Saudi Arabia.<sup>61</sup> Awrji also claimed that Slahi helped Hanashi with Ressay's LAX plot.<sup>62</sup> Although the Canadian government never charged Slahi with involvement in the plot,<sup>63</sup> it is possible that Slahi provided spiritual guidance to Ressay ahead of his arrest. Slahi left Canada on January 21, 2000, after being interrogated by Canadian authorities.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, if Nawar did, in fact, travel to Montreal in late 1999 as his family alleged, it is possible that Slahi and Nawar met through Ganczarski.

It is clear from the above information that there is only circumstantial evidence that Nawar traveled to Montreal. But based on what is known about the case and Nawar's prior lie about traveling to South Korea, it is most likely that instead of going to Montreal, Nawar simply traveled to Afghanistan and fabricated another aspect of his travel plans to deceive members of his family.

## Evolution of International Terrorism Since Djerba

Much has changed since the Djerba attack—in particular, the cre-

ation of a global, cooperative counterterrorism architecture and advancements in communications technologies. The former has benefited the nations fighting al-Qa`ida and the Islamic State, while the latter has benefited jihadi groups. One consistent factor, however, has been that terrorism training matters. As Thomas Hegghammer has noted, those who have been involved in foreign fighting and training have been far more effective and lethal in perpetrating attacks than those who have not.<sup>65</sup> For example, the 2015 mass casualty attacks at the Bardo Museum and Sousse beach in Tunisia were carried out by individuals who had previously trained with the Islamic State in Sabratha, Libya.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, when comparing the multi-pronged Islamic State attacks in Paris in November 2015, which killed 130 and injured another 368,<sup>67</sup> and the Islamic State-inspired, multi-pronged attack in San Bernardino in early December 2015 that killed 14 and injured 22, one can see the difference that foreign fighting, training, and guidance have in conducting attacks.

Another consistent factor in major international plots has been the role of a coordinator. Coordination was evident in the Djerba synagogue attack and a series of plots in 2015-2016 by the Paris-Brussels attack network. Nawar traveled back and forth between Tunisia and Afghanistan, but he also remained in close contact via satellite phone with KSM and Ganczarski until right before the attack. Similarly, Abdelhamid Abaaoud coordinated a plot by a group of operatives hiding in a safe house in Verviers, eastern Belgium. And in the Paris attacks, Abaaoud was so involved, he was even in the vicinity of the Bataclan attack and likely giving direct orders in real-time.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, Boubaker al-Hakim, a French-Tunisian Islamic State external operations leader based in al-Raqqah who was killed in a drone strike in November 2016, helped enable the Bardo and Sousse attacks through an intermediary in Libya.<sup>69 d</sup>

There has also been consistency in target selection. Global jihadis have retained a focus on Jewish-related entities. Nawar chose to attack a Jewish synagogue in Tunisia, while more recently, Mehdi Nemmouche attacked the Jewish Museum of Belgium in Brussels.<sup>70</sup> Part of this trend is due to the continuing resonance of the Palestinian plight within the broader Muslim world, which jihadi groups co-opt to gain legitimacy, support, and new recruits.

Another constant is the reliance on support networks in various locations to facilitate attacks. There were a number of support nodes that helped the Djerba attack materialize, spanning Afghanistan, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, and possibly Canada. Similarly, the Tunisian Islamic State supporter and Berlin attacker Anis Amri had an attack and support network that spanned France, Germany, Italy, Libya, and the Netherlands.<sup>71</sup> Such support systems underscore the fact that gaps in information sharing and cooperation between nations still exist.

On the other hand, due to the larger tracking architecture and sharing system for worldwide counterterrorism operations, decep-

d Prior to joining up with the Islamic State in Syria, al-Hakim had spent time in mid- to late 2013 (and possibly early 2014) in Libya, helping traffic weapons and train individuals for attacks in Tunisia, which were set into motion in Sousse and Monastir but ultimately failed due to the attacker's bomb malfunctioning in Monastir and the attacker's inability to kill anyone else in Sousse. Maria Abi-Habib, "Young Tunisians Embrace Jihad, Raise Tension at Home," *Wall Street Journal*, December 17, 2013; Carlotta Gall, "Worry in Tunisia Over Youths Who Turn to Jihad," *New York Times*, December 18, 2013.

tion is more necessary than ever for the new generation of international attack plotters. Unlike Nawar, who was able to travel back and forth between Afghanistan and Tunisia, the Paris attackers used the refugee flows to return to Europe from Syria, which shielded those who were already on watch lists.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, plots in the Islamic State era generally entail a shorter time period between inception and execution. Recent Islamic State plots, including the Paris attacks, have seen a quicker “flash to bang” than some of al-Qa`ida’s conspiracies a generation ago. As outlined above, Nawar had begun planning the April 2002 Djerba attack after he first returned to Tunisia from Afghanistan in late 1999, a time span of almost two and a half years.

One advantage contemporary international plotters have is access to encryption technology, which has been used in many recent cases, including the attacks in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Istanbul, and the United States.<sup>73</sup> And yet, while the methods of communication may differ, then—as now—there has consistently been an ability for the leader of the plot to communicate whenever necessary with the individual executing the attack.

Finally, there are major differences in methodology for claiming attacks. In the case of al-Qa`ida and the Djerba attack, Nawar sent a written will and statement of responsibility to major Arabic newspapers, and Sulayman Abu Ghayth’s video claiming responsibility was played on Al-Jazeera. This is in contrast to the Islamic State, which has adherents that will pledge *bay`a* to the group’s leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, either through a video message, which the Islamic State then releases through its own news agency, Amaq, or through a private message, which the Islamic State then uses to claim responsibility via an Amaq graphic. In many ways, these differences reflect changes in jihadi media capabilities over the past 15 years. Previously, al-Qa`ida was reliant on the mainstream media to push out its message, whereas today, individual jihadis and jihadi groups, whether the Islamic State or al-Qa`ida, have the ca-

pability to bypass the gatekeepers, disseminate information directly through their own media systems, and therefore, exert greater control over their narrative.<sup>74</sup>

In the aftermath of the Djerba synagogue bombing, the Tunisian government was initially dismissive of any ties to terrorism, suggesting the attack was only an accident.<sup>75</sup> A sense of denial about the threat contributed to a fundamental lack of understanding within Tunisia’s political establishment of jihadism, of how many people were involved in Tunisia, and of the plotters themselves. Part of this misunderstanding stemmed from many in the government viewing the threat as a homegrown issue rather than one with regional or even international components.<sup>76 e</sup>

Thus, Tunisia’s political leadership was surprised when in December 2006/January 2007, a Tunisian al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb front group called Jund Asad Bin al-Furat (JABF) carried out a series of attacks in the country.<sup>77</sup> There were no other large-scale incidents until after the Tunisian uprising four years later.

As the Djerba attack illustrated, Tunisians have long been involved in international terrorism plots, attacks, and foreign fighting. This trend is likely to continue, especially as so many Tunisians have gone to train in Libya, Iraq, and Syria over the past six years. The Nizar Nawars of today are finding a melting pot of contacts and networks they can tap into, just as Nawar himself did more than 15 years ago. Given the fact that Tunisia has had one of the largest foreign fighter mobilization to Libya, Iraq, and Syria and that hundreds of Tunisian foreign fighters have returned home or to Europe,<sup>78</sup> the world is likely to continue to see Tunisians play a significant role within the jihadi movement in the years to come. **CTC**

e This was even though Tunisians had been foreign fighters since the 1980s and were, at the time of the JABF attacks, one of the highest per capita groups of foreign nationals that had become foreign fighters in Iraq between 2003-2009.

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