

Journal

Studies in Conflict & Terrorism >

Volume 43, 2020 - Issue 2

971 | 3

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Original Articles

Boko Haram's Conquest for the Caliphate: How Al Qaeda Helped Islamic State Acquire Territory

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Pages 89-122 | Received 27 Nov 2017, Accepted 11 Feb 2018, Accepted author version posted online: 20 Feb 2018, Published online: 13 Mar 2018

 Download citation  <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1442141> Full Article Figures & data Citations Metrics Reprints & Permissions

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ABSTRACT

This article explains how Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)-trained Nigerian militants split from Boko Haram and formed a new group called Ansaru in 2011 after consulting with AQIM. Ansaru leaders, however, reintegrated with Boko Haram and transferred their specialized skills in kidnappings, suicide bombings, and media to Boko Haram and contributed to the group's conquest of territory in 2013. Al Qaeda did not benefit from these conquests because Ansaru leaders switched loyalties and

helped arrange Boko Haram's pledge to Islamic State in 2015. This article exploits primary source documents from AOIM, Islamic State, and Boko Haram and contributes

to the literature on splits and mergers and knowledge transfer between terrorist groups and Al Qaeda–Islamic State competition.

Additional information

Notes

1. The group's self-given name is Jamaat Ahl as-Sunnah Liddawah wal-Jihad in Arabic, which literally means the “[Sunni Muslim] Group for Preaching and Jihad.”

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4. Jama'atu Ansaril Muslimina Fibiladis Sudan means “Supporters of Muslims in the Lands of Black Africa” in Arabic.

5. Northeastern Nigeria in this article refers to the states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa.

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