

# What Does Islamic State's Wilayat al-Hind & Wilayat Pakistan Mean?

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Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism

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On 29th April 2019, Islamic State's (IS) chief Abu Bakr Baghdadi made his first video appearance in almost five years since first appearing in a 2014 video from Mosul, Iraq, vowing to continue the jihadist battle against the U.S. and Coalition countries in the propaganda footage titled "In the Hospitality of the Emir of the Believers" released by the official media wing of IS the al-Furqan Media.

In the 18-minute video, Baghdadi, who appeared fully recovered from the alleged injuries sustained in a 2015 airstrike, repeatedly praised the "steadfastness" of his fighters and said that even though Islamic State has lost territory, "jihad is ongoing until the day of judgment." He continued to praise the attackers in Sri Lanka who killed more than 250 on [Easter Sunday](#) and rejoiced that Americans and Europeans were among the dead. In the video, he also recognised the terror group's [defeat in the Syrian town of Baghuz](#) and said that the Sri Lanka attacks were in response to that.



Screenshot from the video shows Baghdadi in good health



A photo of Baghdadi from 2004

The footage showed a 47-year-old Baghdadi seated next to an AK-47 assault rifle – a pose reminiscent of images of slain Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.



In the same video, ISIS chief was also seen examining “monthly reports” about the group’s activities in different countries, including Yemen, Sudan, and even Turkey. A booklet titled "Wilayat Turkiye" was seen in the hands of Baghdadi, which was the first hint that IS has stopped officially announcing the formation of Wilayats and has taken a more casual approach. This was the first instance when the term "Wilayat Turkiye" was seen being used in an IS propaganda publication.



Baghdadi reading a report titled "Wilayat Turkiye", the first time this term being used by IS

## Wilayat al-Hind

Then on 10th May 2019, Islamic State released a statement claiming early morning clashes that occurred on the same day in India-controlled Jammu Kashmir, that killed a local IS commander named Abu Nader al-Kashmiri aka Ishfaq Sofi. In the statement claiming the clashes, IS casually announced the formation of Wilayat al-Hind in India, which was the first such official use of this term since the establishment of IS in Middle East.



Islamic State statement for the 10th May clashes in India-controlled Kashmir

Previously, Islamic State referred to its franchise in Jammu Kashmir as ‘Islamic State in Jammu Kashmir’ or ISJK in short, but for the first time IS casually announced a province in India dubbed Wilayat al-Hind.

On early morning Friday, 10th May, Indian security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Shopian area of Jammu Kashmir following heavy exchange of firing with suspected militants. During the operation, Indian security forces killed a local IS commander named Abu Nader al-Kashmiri in Amishpora area of Shopian. He was originally a resident of Sopore area of Kashmir.



Photo of Abu Nader al-Kashmiri



An old photo of Abu Nader al-Kashmiri from 2018



Another photo of Abu Nader al-Kashmiri from Kashmir

Following the announcement of Wilayat al-Hind, pro-IS Telegram channels released multiple posters celebrating the establishment of the new province in India and the "martyrdom" of Abu Nader al-Kashmiri.



Poster released by ISKP affiliated Nida-e-Haq Media



Poster released by IS groups

Photos released by local journalists showed large presence of people participating in the funeral of Abu Nader al-Kashmiri in Kashmir.



## Wilayat Pakistan

Then on 15th May, Islamic State released multiple statements claiming two separate attacks in Balochistan province of Pakistan. In the statements, Islamic State casually announced a “province” in Pakistan, dubbed Wilayat Pakistan.

- IS claimed a gun attack in Quetta, Balochistan near Eastern Bypass, carried out on the night of 14th May 2019, which targeted a gathering of men allegedly linked to Afghan Taliban (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan). At least one person was killed in the attack. The deceased was identified as 22-year-old man named Janan (alleged Afghan national) while the other three injured were identified as Hafiz Hameed, 30 years; Najeeb Ullah, 35 years; Zain Ullah, 28 years.
- IS claimed the 12th May 2019 gun attack in Mastung, Balochistan, in which a traffic policeman was shot dead.



IS claim for the gun attack in Quetta, Balochistan near Eastern Bypass, carried out on the night of 15th May 2019, which allegedly targeted a gathering of Afghan Taliban affiliated men – Pakistan



IS claim for the 12th May 2019 gun attack in Mastung, Balochistan, in which a traffic policeman was shot dead – Pakistan

CCTV footage of the 12th May gun attack in Mastung from two different angles appeared on the internet.

**ITCT Video No 1:** [CCTV footage \(1\) of the 12th May assassination of a cop in Mastung, Balochistan, Pakistan](#)

**ITCT Video: No 2:** [CCTV footage \(2\) of the 12th May assassination of a cop in Mastung, Balochistan, Pakistan](#)

Previously Islamic State's franchises in India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan fell under the Afghanistan-based “Khorasan Province” or ISKP in short. Following the announcement of two new "provinces" in India and Pakistan, ISKP has now been restricted to operations in Afghanistan.

While Pakistani government maintains there is no “organized” presence of IS in the country, IS announcement of Wilayat Pakistan is significant and comes at the heels of the announcement of Wilayat Hind.

One day after the announcement of Wilayat Pakistan, on 16th May, Pakistani security forces carried out an hours-long operation near the city of Quetta in the southwestern Balochistan Province where repeated militant attacks occurred has occurred. A total of nine militants allegedly belonging to Islamic State were killed in the operation. Four Pakistani troops were also wounded in the operation, carried out in a mountainous area called Qabu Koh-e-Mehran in the Mastung district, 47 kilometers from Quetta.

"Nine bodies (of Islamic State militants) have been brought to hospital from Mastung," said Waseem Baig, a spokesman for a Quetta hospital, while talking to media.

Gruesome photos of the dead bodies of the nine slain militants appeared on the internet.



Nine slain militants allegedly to IS in Pakistan, killed in an operation in Balochistan province of Pakistan on 16th May

## Conclusion

Earlier in May 2019, the United Nations officially sanctioned Islamic State's Khorasan Province (ISKP) as a terrorist organisation. The UN's description of the group included few details, other than that the organization was formed on Jan. 10, 2015 by a “former Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)” commander and “former Taliban faction commanders who swore an oath of allegiance” to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The US State Department designated the Islamic State's Wilayat Khorasan as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in Jan. 2016. However, the newly announced Wilayat al-Hind and Wilayat Pakistan remain unsanctioned by UN and US.



In a 2016 propaganda video release, IS said it had 35 wilayat, but this went down to just a dozen in 2018

Islamic State, in an attempt to prop up its presence outside of the Middle East following loss of territory in that region, has resorted to post-colonial terms for its two new Wilayat in Asia. Previously, Wilayat Khorasan, which is a pre-colonial historical term, covered IS operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and surrounding region, including Iran and India-controlled Jammu Kashmir. This localized strategy by IS is new and is somewhat more in line with the strategy of its rival terror group, Al-Qaeda.

This also means that IS has most likely already designated respective emirs and commanders for its new Wilayat in India and Pakistan.

This new IS strategy should not just be ignored as a propaganda stunt as it shows that IS is looking to expand its footprint outside of Middle East at any cost. The recent IS attacks in Sri Lanka are also another good example of the new expansion strategy of IS. With this new strategy, IS also seeks to boost the morale of its local members and supporters, many of who were initially disillusioned after seeing visuals of surrendering IS fighters and their families in the Middle East.

This new IS strategy brings unique challenges but also an opportunity for both India and Pakistan, as both countries see IS as a sworn enemy and therefore could consider collaborating in their fight against the terror group. Even though both South Asian countries are rivals and have fought multiple wars, the new localized strategy of IS may see the intelligence services of both countries finding some common ground in this fight.