

Al-Qaida Online Digest Translated Into Russian

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An al-Qaida online magazine has been translated into Russian in what analysts said Wednesday was an attempt to strengthen ties with North Caucasus insurgents.

The English-language web journal, Inspire, launched by al-Qaida's Yemeni wing last year to reach out to Muslims living in the West, stoked U.S. and European concerns with articles such as one titled "Make a Bomb in Your Mother's Kitchen."

The appearance of the Russian translation of the magazine shows the potential that the global jihadist organization sees in the North Caucasus, where gun and bomb attacks are a near daily occurrence.

With a cover photo looking down the barrel of a gun, the flashy online journal illustrated with color photographs boasts an article on seizing the property of unbelievers. The magazine is published in slide-show format on the jihadist Internet site Ansar al Mujahideen's Russian-language forum.

Analysts say popular revolts in North Africa and the Middle East have undercut some support for al-Qaida's calls for violent jihad in the Arab world. In turn, the group is turning its focus to peripheral conflicts, like the North Caucasus, where it can capitalize on local grievances to win new recruits.

"I believe that now with al-Qaida feeling that they are losing ground in the Arab world with the popular movements, the focus on 'peripheries,' including the North Caucasus, will increase," said Murad Batal al-Shishani, an independent London-based analyst on Islamist insurgencies.

The Russian-language forum hosting Inspire was originally founded by the wing of the Islamist Caucasus Emirate active in the North Caucasus regions of Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachayevo-Cherkessia, according to Gordon Hahn, a senior researcher at U.S. Monterey Institute for International Studies.

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