



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Lebanon

Lebanon – LBN39137 – Jund al Sham – El
Baddawi camp – Ein el Hilweh camp

15 September 2011

1. Please provide information about Jund al Sham - leadership, method of operation, objectives, recruitment methods etc.

Sources indicate that Jund al-Sham (translated as Soldiers of the Levant or Soldiers of Greater Syria) is a fragmented and small Salafist militia group numbering between 25-50 fighters primarily located in Ain el Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon.¹ Jund al-Sham began as an offshoot of Usbat al-Ansar under the leadership of Abu Yousef Sharqieh (or Muhammad Sharqiyah), although reports differ as to when the group was formed – both 1989 and 2004 are referenced.² Jund al-Sham is made up of both native Lebanese members as well as Palestinians.³ Reports indicate that Jund al-Sham is ideologically aligned with al Qaeda.⁴

Bilal Saab explains the links between several Sunni extremist entities in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan that reportedly claim the name ‘Jund al-Sham’:

¹ Berti, Benedetta 2008, ‘Fighting in Lebanon’s Palestinian Refugee Camps Result of Increased Islamist Influence’, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.5, Issue.24, 24 June http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=5010&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=246&no_cache=1 – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>; Saab, Bilal 2009, ‘The Failure of Salafi-Jihadi Insurgent Movements in the Levant’, *CTC Sentinel*, September, Vol.2, Issue.9, pp.14-17 <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol2Iss9.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>; The Jamestown Foundation 2011, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, vol.IX, Issue.1, 6 January, pp.2-3 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4d26d2792&skip=0&query=jund%20al-Sham> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>; Saab, Bilal 2008, ‘The Failure of Salafi-Jihadi Insurgent Movements in the Levant’, *CTC Sentinel*, Brookings Institute website, November, Vol.1, Issue.12, pp.14-17 http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/articles/2008/11_lebanon_saab/11_lebanon_saab.pdf – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

² The Jamestown Foundation 2011, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.9, Issue.1, 6 January, pp.2-3 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4d26d2792&skip=0&query=jund%20al-Sham> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>; Abdel-Latif, Omayma 2008, ‘Lebanon’s Sunni Islamists – A growing force’, *Carnegie Endowment Papers*, No.6, January, p.18 http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CMEC6_abdellatif_lebanon_final.pdf – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

³ The Jamestown Foundation 2011, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.9, Issue.1, 6 January, p.3 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4d26d2792&skip=0&query=jund%20al-Sham> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

⁴ UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – Lebanon*, 10 June, p.22 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country...COUNTRYPOS.LBN.4562d8cf2.4a2fc31e2.0.html> – Accessed 12 September 2011 <Attachment>; Saab, Bilal 2009, ‘The Failure of Salafi-Jihadi Insurgent Movements in the Levant’, *CTC Sentinel*, September, Vol.2, Issue.9, pp.14 <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol2Iss9.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

Jund al-Sham is a title claimed by several Sunni Islamic extremist entities, all or none of which may be connected. These entities mostly operate in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, and their goals include the establishment of an Islamic caliphate throughout the Levant.⁵

Consequently, Saab characterises Jund al-Sham as a ‘movement’ and states that:

Jund al-Sham members have been described by terrorism analysts and Arab counterterrorism officials as jihadist freelancers who are only tied together by ideology and a desire to violently defend a radical Islamic order.⁶

Additionally, in 2008, Saab described Jund al-Sham ‘as a relatively small group of 25-50 freelance jihadists that has no coherent organizational structure or important terrorist potential’.⁷

Leadership

Lebanese Islamist Ghandi Sahmarani (aka Abu Ramiz) was Jund al-Sham commander from 2004 until his murder in late-December 2010.⁸ In January 2011, The Jamestown Foundation *Terrorism Monitor* indicated that Jund al-Sham leadership is weak, stating that ‘the new but largely powerless Jund al-Sham leadership will be under close scrutiny’ and that ‘many Jund al-Sham militants have fled to Europe, joined the jihad in Iraq, or returned to the ranks of Usbat al-Ansar’.⁹ No further information could be found on the current leadership of Jund al-Sham.

Method of operation

Jund al-Sham operates in Ain el Hilweh refugee camp as a militia, using small arms, bombs, rockets and other weapons in clashes with the Palestinian Fatah movement, the Lebanese Armed Forces and other militia groups operating in the camps.¹⁰ In the past, Jund al-Sham has operated

⁵ Saab, Bilal 2009, ‘The Failure of Salafi-Jihadi Insurgent Movements in the Levant’, *CTC Sentinel*, September, Vol.2, Issue.9, pp.14/6 <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol2Iss9.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

⁶ Saab, Bilal 2009, ‘The Failure of Salafi-Jihadi Insurgent Movements in the Levant’, *CTC Sentinel*, September, Vol.2, Issue.9, pp.15 <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol2Iss9.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

⁷ Saab, Bilal 2008, ‘Al-Qa’ida’s Presence and Influence in Lebanon’, *CTC Sentinel*, Brookings Institute website, November, Vol.1, Issue.12, p.6 http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/articles/2008/11_lebanon_saab/11_lebanon_saab.pdf – Accessed 14 September 2011

⁸ Gambill, Gary 2008, ‘Salafi-jihadism in Lebanon’, *Mideast Monitor*, Vol.3, No.1, January-March, footnote 23 http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0801/0801_1.htm – Accessed 14 September 2011; The Jamestown Foundation 2011, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.9, Issue.1, 6 January, pp.2-3 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4d26d2792&skip=0&query=jund%20al-Sham> – Accessed 14 September 2011

⁹ The Jamestown Foundation 2011, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.9, Issue.1, 6 January, pp.2-3 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4d26d2792&skip=0&query=jund%20al-Sham> – Accessed 14 September 2011

¹⁰ The Jamestown Foundation 2011, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.9, Issue.1, 6 January, pp.2-3 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4d26d2792&skip=0&query=jund%20al-Sham> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>; ‘Lebanon: One dead as Palestinians clash in Lebanon camp’ 2011, *Agence France Presse*, source: Reliefweb website, 6 August <http://reliefweb.int/node/439435> – Accessed 10 August 2011 <Attachment>; UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – Lebanon*, 10 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,COUNTRYPOS,LBN,4562d8cf2,4a2fc31e2,0.html> – Accessed 12 September 2011 <Attachment>

with other Salafist factions. For example, in 2007, Jund al-Sham fought with Fatah al-Islam against the Lebanese Armed Forces in Nahr al Bared refugee camp – this conflict later spread to Ain el Hilweh camp.¹¹ A November 2007 report from the Brookings Institution claimed that an influx of ‘loyal Lebanese fighters from Ein el Hilweh who belonged to Jund al Sham (a Salafist group) was forcibly changing the habits and traditions of Nahr al Bared, which ultimately caused the local populace to distance itself from Fatah al Islam and sometimes revolt against its leaders’.¹²

More recently, news outlets report that Jund al-Sham members have been involved in violence and armed clashes with Fatah forces in Ain el Hilweh.¹³

Outside of the refugee camps, Jund al-Sham militants have been accused of a number of violent acts in Lebanon and Syria, including the murder of Hizb Allah senior official Ghaleb Awali in July 2004, the attempted assassination of Hizb Allah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah in April 2006, and the bombing of the US embassy in Damascus in September 2006.¹⁴

Objectives

Haddad reports that the objective of Jund al-Sham is the creation of a Palestinian state.¹⁵ However, according to Saab and Ranstorp, Jund al-Sham’s ‘objective is to establish an Islamic caliphate in the greater Syrian region’.¹⁶

Recruitment

No information could be found on the recruitment methods of Jund al-Sham. Bilal indicates that many former Jund al-Sham members may now integrated into Fatah al-Islam:

Many Islamic fighters tied to Jund al-Sham in Lebanon merged with Fatah al-Islam during its rise and fall, while the rest went into hiding and took refuge in the Palestinian camp of Ain al-Hilwah.¹⁷

¹¹ The Jamestown Foundation 2011, *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.9, Issue.1, 6 January, pp.2-3 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4d26d2792&skip=0&query=jund%20al-Sham> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

¹² Saab, Bilal & Ranstorp, Magnus 2007, ‘Fatah al Islam: How an Ambitious Jihadist Project Went Awry’, Brookings Institution website, 28 November http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2007/1128_terrorism_saab.aspx – Accessed 25 August 2008 <Attachment>

¹³ ‘Lebanon: One dead as Palestinians clash in Lebanon camp’ 2011, *Agence France Presse*, source: Reliefweb website, 6 August <http://reliefweb.int/node/439435> – Accessed 10 August 2011 <Attachment>; Zaatari, Mohammed 2011, ‘Ain al-Hilweh refugees reeling after latest clashes’, *The Daily Star Lebanon*, 8 August <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2011/Aug-08/Ain-al-Hilweh-refugees-reeling-after-latest-clashes.ashx#axzz1UOwwVv00> – Accessed 10 August 2011 <Attachment>

¹⁴ Saab, Bilal 2008, ‘Al-Qa’ida’s Presence and Influence in Lebanon’, *CTC Sentinel*, Brookings Institute website, November, Vol.1, Issue.12, p.6 http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/articles/2008/11_lebanon_saab/11_lebanon_saab.pdf – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>; Saab, Bilal & Ranstorp, Magnus 2007, ‘Securing Lebanon from the Threat of Salafist Jihadism’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Swedish National Defence College website, no.30, p.841 <http://www.fhs.se/Documents/Externwebben/forskning/centrumbildningar/CATS/2007/securing-lebanon-from-the-threat.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

¹⁵ Haddad, Simon 2010, ‘Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon: Anatomy of a Terrorist Organization’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 13 May, Vol.33, Issue.6, p.551

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10576101003754677#preview> – Accessed 14 September 2011

¹⁶ Saab, Bilal & Ranstorp, Magnus 2007, ‘Securing Lebanon from the Threat of Salafist Jihadism’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Swedish National Defence College website, no.30, p.841 <http://www.fhs.se/Documents/Externwebben/forskning/centrumbildningar/CATS/2007/securing-lebanon-from-the-threat.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2011

2. Did Jund al Sham have a presence in Baddawi camp in 2009, and currently?

It is possible that members of Jund al-Sham were present in Baddawi camp in 2009, but if so, it is very likely that they were in very small numbers and maintained a low profile in order to escape the scrutiny of other refugees in the camp and Lebanese authorities hunting Islamic extremist organisations in all camps. Several sources indicate that since a crackdown on extremists which began in 2007, and continuing to the present, Baddawi camp authorities and Lebanese forces have installed mechanisms designed to prevent radical elements such as Jund al-Sham members from inciting violence and actively recruiting members in most camps. It is therefore unlikely that Jund al-Sham maintains any significant presence in Baddawi today.

In the summer of 2007 the Lebanese Army attacked the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp to destroy Fatah al-Islam (FAI) extremists. The ensuing violence generated over 30,000 refugees who fled mainly to the nearby Baddawi camp.¹⁸ Jund al-Sham members who had allied themselves with FAI were also hunted by the army and it is possible that some escaped unnoticed among other refugees fleeing to Baddawi. A September 2009 *Lebanese Press* article reported that 'the Fatah al-Islam militant group is trying to infiltrate several Palestinian refugee camps, especially the Baddawi camp ... in an attempt to form small cells capable of launching terrorist attacks against Palestinian and Lebanese officials as well as UNIFIL.'¹⁹ The same article also reported that this threat of infiltration was being countered with public awareness campaigns to report any suspicious individuals. Since total Jund al-Sham membership numbers are reported to be less than 50 people²⁰ their presence in Baddawi could only have been small.

No sources specifically reported that Jund al-Sham has maintained a presence in Baddawi, however, some suggested that FAI members have maintained a presence there²¹ and this could have included former Jund al-Sham members. FAI and other Islamic extremist members present in Baddawi would be under intense scrutiny and it is unlikely they could operate openly. Palestinian leaders in the camp have vigorously denied that there are any extremists in the camp and report that they cooperate with Lebanese authorities to prevent infiltration into the camp by extremists. There are, however, unsubstantiated reports of the possibility that extremist ' sleeper cells ' do exist in the camp²², or in the nearby areas of Nahr al-Bared camp²³. In 2010, the

¹⁷ Saab, Bilal 2009, 'The Failure of Salafi-Jihadi Insurgent Movements in the Levant', *CTC Sentinel*, September, Vol.2, Issue.9, p.15 <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol2Iss9.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

¹⁸ 'Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps Middle East Report N°84' International Crisis Group 2009, pp. 11-12 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/2107_1307444170_neu.pdf - Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

¹⁹ 'Fatah al-Islam plans terrorist attacks against Lebanon' 2009, iloubnan.info website, 22 September <http://www.iloubnan.info/health/actualite/id/38471/theme/33/titre/Fatah-al-Islam-plans-terrorist-attacks-against-Lebanon> - Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

²⁰ Jund al-Sham al-Sham' undated, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism University of Maryland website http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4503 - Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

²¹ Moor, Ahmed and Sharp, Deen 2010, 'Lebanese army encircling Baddawi refugee camp', *Electronic Lebanon*, 26 March <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11166.shtml> - Accessed 10 June 2010 <Attachment>

²² Moor, Ahmed and Sharp, Deen 2010, 'Lebanese army encircling Baddawi refugee camp', *Electronic Lebanon*, 26 March <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11166.shtml> - Accessed 10 June 2010 <Attachment>

²³ Elali, Nadine 2009, 'Nahr al-Bared: Security vs. standard of living', *Now Lebanon*, 2 October <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=117435> - Accessed 10 June 2010 <Attachment>

Lebanese Army erected a barrier around the camp as an additional preventative measure against any extremists developing a presence in Baddawi.²⁴

Most sources report Jund al-Sham presence only in two camps in Lebanon where it has been allied with FAI; Ain al-Helwa refugee camp in Sidon²⁵ and the aforementioned Nahr al-Bared camp.²⁶

3. Is there any information about consequences of undergoing training with this group, then leaving?

No information on the consequences of undergoing training with Jund al-Sham, and then leaving, could be located.

4. Please provide information about size, appearance, location and any particular features of Ein el Hilweh camp.

Known as the capital of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Ein el-Hilwah is now the biggest camp in the country, both in area size and population.²⁷ Although the official population of the camp is estimated at 45,000, actual figures are closer to 60,000, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).²⁸

Ein el-Hilwah is located on the southern outskirts of the port city of Sidon, 45km south of Beirut.²⁹ Sidon (also Saida or Sayida) is situated on the Mediterranean coast of Lebanon and is

²⁴ Moor, Ahmed and Sharp, Deen 2010, 'Lebanese army encircling Baddawi refugee camp', *Electronic Lebanon*, 26 March <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11166.shtml> - Accessed 10 June 2010 <Attachment>

²⁵ Abdel-Latif, O. 2008, Lebanon's Sunni Islamists-A Growing Force', Carnegie Endowment website, No. 6, January http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CMEC6_abdellatif_lebanon_final.pdf - Accessed 25 August 2008. <Attachment> & The Failure of Salafi-Jihadi Insurgent Movements in the Levant' 2009, Combatting Terrorism Center West Point website, 3 September <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-failure-of-salafi-jihadi-insurgent-movements-in-the-levant> - Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment>

²⁶ 'Lebanese clashes spread to second refugee camp' 2007, *The Guardian*, 4 June <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jun/04/syria.lebanon> - Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment> & 'Lebanon at Risk from Salafi-Jihadi Terrorist Cells' 2010, Combatting Terrorism Center West Point website, 3 September <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/lebanon-at-risk-from-salafi-jihadi-terrorist-cells> - Accessed 14 September 2011 <Attachment> & Berti, B. 2008, 'Fighting in Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps Result of Increased Islamist Influence', *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 5, Issue 24, Jamestown Foundation Global Terrorism Analysis website, 24 June <http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374261> - Accessed 27 August 2008 <Attachment> & Gambill, G. 2007, 'The Rise of Fatah al-Islam', *Mideast Monitor*, vol. 2, no. 1, June-July http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0705/0705_5.htm - Accessed 11 October 2007 <Attachment>

²⁷ UK Home Office 2006, *Country of Origin Report: The Lebanon*, July <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/456567564.pdf> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>; Gebara, Khalil 2005, 'Ain al-Hilweh: al-Qaeda's foothold in Lebanon', *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 2, Issue. 22, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=343&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=179&no_cache=1 - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

²⁸ UNRWA 2011, *Al-Shuraka: Regional update on Palestine refugees*, Issue 6: January – April <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/201105032849.pdf> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

²⁹ UK Home Office 2006, *Country of Origin Report: The Lebanon*, July <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/456567564.pdf> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>; Abedin, Mahan, 2010, 'Ein Al-Hilweh: A fruitless search for al-Qaeda', *Asia Times Online*, 7 January http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LA07Ak02.html - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

the administrative centre of al-Janub (South Lebanon). Sidon is a fishing, trade, and market centre for the agricultural hinterland.³⁰

Estimates of the size of Ein el-Hilweh vary between just 301,039 square meters³¹ and two square kilometres.³² A number of displaced refugees continue to live on the edge of the camp in extremely poor conditions, according to UNRWA.³³

UNRWA notes that Ein el-Hilweh is in an 'especially poor condition'. The ad hoc expansion of the camp has meant that shelters are small, close to each other and some still have metal sheet roofing. Many houses have been built with no regard for proper planning. As a result accommodation is very unsafe, unsanitary and at risk of collapse. Ein el-Hilweh's sewage and water system is in a poor state. Many of the water supply pipes are corroded, resulting in regular leakages in the network.³⁴

The Ein el-Hilweh camp features:

- Eight UNRWA schools, including one secondary school;
- Two UNRWA health centres.³⁵

UNRWA notes that all 12 official refugee camps, including Ein el-Hilweh, in Lebanon suffer from serious problems, such as:

- Overcrowding;
- Poor housing conditions;
- No proper infrastructure.³⁶

A 2005 article in *The Jamestown Foundation* provides detail about the layout and appearance of the camp. The article notes:

The Ain al-Hilweh camp has four entries and all of these are blocked by checkpoints manned by the Lebanese army. There are no fixed phone lines and residents steal electricity from the nearby neighborhoods of Sidon. The camp also lacks basic sanitation and clean water. The United Nations Relief

³⁰ 'Sidon' 2011, In *Encyclopædia Britannica* <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/543141/Sidon> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³¹ Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee 2011, *Ein el-Hilweh Camp*, undated <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/sections/sTopics.aspx?Type=3&ID=8&displang=en-us> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³² Macleod, Hugh undated, 'Remembering the right of return', *AlJazeera* http://english.aljazeera.net/photo_galleries/middleeast/201092792844223326.html - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³³ UNRWA, undated, *Ein el Hillweh refugee camp* <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=137> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³⁴ UNRWA 2011, *Al-Shuraka: Regional update on Palestine refugees*, Issue 6: January – April <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/201105032849.pdf> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>; UNRWA, undated, *Ein el Hillweh refugee camp* <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=137> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³⁵ UNRWA, undated, *Ein el Hillweh refugee camp* <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=137> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³⁶ UNRWA 2011, *Al-Shuraka: Regional update on Palestine refugees*, Issue 6: January – April <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/201105032849.pdf> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

and Work Agency (UNRWA) are responsible for providing basic housing, medication and education whereas security is in the hands of the different Palestinian militias. Most important of all the Lebanese authorities have no presence inside the camp.³⁷

Additionally, a 2010 article in the *Asia Times Online* by Mahan Abedin, described as a senior researcher in terrorism studies and a consultant to independent media in Iran, describes the appearance of the camp including certain features, such as main streets and the Dar Al-Koran mosque:

On entering the camp, one is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of humanity condensed into such a tiny space. **Walking through the market in Upper Street**, the sights, sounds and smells are simply overpowering.

Ein Al-Hilweh is effectively **divided into two sections; Upper and Lower streets**. These lead to a network of arterial alleyways which can only be described as the narrowest living spaces imaginable. The alleyways are dark and the houses which crowd them are darker still.

We cross into Lower Street which is regarded as the bastion of the radical Islamists in Ein Al-Hilweh. Lower Street is markedly different to Upper Street. Here there is less overcrowding and the street is noticeably cleaner. I meet Jamal Khatab in **the Dar Al-Koran mosque in the middle of Lower Street**.

On leaving the Dar Al-Koran mosque, we walk in a northerly direction towards the upper sections of Lower Street. Here the influence of Asbat Al-Ansar is everywhere. The group controls all the sandwich shops and even mans its own checkpoint - a mere stone's throw away from the Lebanese army checkpoint at the very top of Lower Street.³⁸

Whilst *The Jamestown Foundation* article noted above states there are four entries to the camp, the *Asia Times Online* article notes 'two main entrance gates', both of which 'are heavily-manned by the Lebanese army'.³⁹

There is an area situated on the outskirts of the camp, called Tawarek, in which Islamists are reportedly known to operate. According to a 2010 article from *NOW Lebanon*:

"Fatah al-Islam members have been living on the outskirts of the camp, in the Tawarek area", said Mohammad Issa, head of the Palestinian Armed Struggle in Ain al-Hilweh... The Tawarek area, at the edge of the camp near the Taamir quarter of Saida, is known as the bastion of radical Islamist groups such as Jund al-Sham and Osbat al-Ansar.⁴⁰

Ein el-Hilweh Camp

³⁷ Gebara, Khalil 2005, 'Ain al-Hilweh: al-Qaeda's foothold in Lebanon', *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 2, Issue. 22, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=343&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=179&no_cache=1 - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³⁸ Abedin, Mahan, 2010, 'Ein Al-Hilweh: A fruitless search for al-Qaeda', *Asia Times Online*, 7 January http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LA07Ak02.html - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

³⁹ Abedin, Mahan, 2010, 'Ein Al-Hilweh: A fruitless search for al-Qaeda', *Asia Times Online*, 7 January http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LA07Ak02.html - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

⁴⁰ Alami, Mona and Matt Nash 2010, 'What's next for Fatah al-Islam?', *Now Lebanon*, 27 August <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=197207> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>



Image 1: Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon⁴¹

An undated *Al Jazeera* article provides more photographs of the Ein el-Hilweh camp as does a 2007 article from *the Guardian*.⁴²

⁴¹ Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee 2011, *Ein el-Hilweh Camp*, undated
<http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/sections/sTopics.aspx?Type=3&ID=8&displang=en-us> - Accessed 15 September 2011
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⁴² Macleod, Hugh undated, 'Remembering the right of return', *AlJazeera*
http://english.aljazeera.net/photo_galleries/middleeast/201092792844223326.html - Accessed 15 September 2011
<Attachment>; 'Ain al-Hilweh: Lebanon's biggest refugee camp' 2007, *The Guardian*, 12 June
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/gallery/2007/jun/12/internationalnews.internationalnews#/?picture=330010706&index=12> - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>



Image 2: Palestinian camp locations in Lebanon⁴³

A *Google Earth* image showing the Ein-el Hilwah camp is linked to this advice.⁴⁴

⁴³ UNRWA 2007, *Palestine Camps in Lebanon*, http://www.unrwa-lebanon.org/nle/?page_id=48 - Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

⁴⁴ 'Ain al-Hilweh' 2011, *Google Earth*, Accessed 15 September 2011 <Attachment>

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