



## Al-Qaeda Once Advocated Arson to Set Forest Fires; Now Calls Them “Allah’s Punishment”

As firefighters still battle to contain the devastating Camp Fire in northern California that has killed 77 people and destroyed more than 10,500 homes and the Woolsey Fire in southern California that killed three people and destroyed 1,452 structures, people from opposite sides of the political spectrum are debating the causes. The causes of both fires are under investigation.



Governor Jerry Brown has again blamed man-made global warming. President Trump, after issuing an emergency declaration providing federal funding for the fire-fighting effort, blamed forest mismanagement for the fires and warned California officials to correct their forest mismanagement or not receive federal funding.

While most people regard the death and devastation caused by these fires to be horrific, Al-Ansar Media, which disseminates al-Qaeda and ISIS propaganda, claimed that the deadly wildfires in northern and southern California are Allah’s retribution for U.S. coalition bombings in Syria.

“O america, This is the punishment of bombing Muslims in Syria,” said the article. “This is Allah’s punishment for you. And in shaa Allah, you will see more fires. Praise be to Allah.”

A report in PJ Media said that ISIS has not officially taken responsibility for the recent California fires, but the terrorist group has previously advocated both wildland and commercial or residential arson as a tactic to be used against the West.

While some might regard the latest comments made in media sympathetic to ISIS as harmless gloating, as far back as 2012 a magazine published by members of al Qaeda called on Western Muslims to wage war within the United States by engaging in individual attacks, including setting forest fires.

ABC News ran a story in May 2012 (“WATCH Terror Alert: Forest Fires as Al Qaeda Weapon?”) noting that two then-recent new issues of *Inspire* magazine — published by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula — had surfaced on jihadi forums, that promoted jihadi attacks on Western targets. They offered detailed advice on how to start huge forest fires in America with timed explosives and how to build remote-controlled bombs.

With this history of al-Qaeda specifically advocating arson to start forest fires, one wonders if the recent reports from Al-Ansar Media attributing the California fires to divine retribution may suggest that Allah had some human help in administering this retribution.

*Photo: AP Images*

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