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ISIS teaching recruits how to use AI 'responsibly'

British experts warn the Islamist group's use of AI should alarm lawmakers.

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The terror group's tips come after the British government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, Jonathan Hall, warned AI is a "coming wave" which will supercharge terror propaganda and aid preparation of attacks. | Javed Tanveer/AFP via Getty Images

This article is also available in: <u>*French*</u>

EXCLUSIVE

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BY MASON BOYCOTT-OWEN

LONDON — ISIS recruits are being encouraged to use artificial intelligence and chatbots to aid their terror campaigns.

The two most recent editions of Voice of Khorasan — the English language magazine of the Afghanistan branch of Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K) — contain pages devoted to explaining how supporters of the group can use AI to be a "responsible mujahid."

IS-K has been linked to attacks in Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the foiled attack on Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna in 2024. The EU added the magazine's publisher, the Al Azaim Media Foundation, <u>to its sanctions list</u> last year.

The latest edition of the magazine — in a section topped with the quote "AI is like fire. You can use it to light a home, or to burn it down" — gives advice on "responsible ways to use AI chatbots." It gives examples of how the tools can be used to assist in religious campaigns and preaching.

"AI is everywhere. Learn it before it learns too much about you. Raise children and students to be cyber-conscious and spiritually grounded," the magazine adds.

It also highlights how AI is useful for anonymous private research that avoids "sharing sensitive information" and "exposing ourselves to unnecessary risks."

It adds that chatbots should not be used for sharing personal information "that can trace back to us," uploading confidential files, political or security-sensitive queries, or for religious rulings.

The previous edition compares AI models from OpenAI, Anthropic, Meta, Microsoft and DeepSeek. It includes warnings against models for suggested "involvement in Israeli Defense Forces AI infrastructure." It recommends privacy-focused tool Brave Leo for "sensitive queries."

The terror group's tips come after the British government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, Jonathan Hall, warned AI is a "coming wave" which will supercharge terror propaganda and aid preparation of attacks.

Shown the latest advice from IS-K, Hall told POLITICO: "The developments in AI and agentic AI are accelerating fast, and more and more of these capabilities are available off the shelf to terrorist groups.

"LLMs are lowering the barriers to creating sophisticated and tailored propaganda, which is a problem as terrorist groups increasingly seek to exploit local grievances in local languages.

"I would not be surprised if chatbot radicalisation starts to take off: If you can create a terrorist website, why would you refrain from creating a terrorist chatbot? If government officials are not watching a ticker-tape of AI developments, they really should be."

IS-K has been linked to attacks in Russia, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. | Anthony Pizzoferrato/Middle East Images/AFP via Getty Images

A previous Voice of Khorasan issue declares that artificial intelligence literacy is a "fard al-ayn" — an individual religious obligation which every Muslim must perform like prayer, fasting and pilgrimage.

One notes: "AI is no longer optional, it's your shield and compass in a digital world wired with hidden threats."

Avi Jager, senior director of the Severe Harms Intelligence Department at AI security company Alice said the documents appeared to offer not just "tactical guidance" but mark "an ideological shift with significant long-term implications."

"For years, groups like ISIS, and jihadist movements more broadly, have been wary of emerging technologies like AI. In earlier literature, there were even arguments that using such tools might be un-Islamic, or that reliance on them contradicted the purity of divine guidance," he said.

Jager added: "That's what makes this moment so noteworthy: ISIS-K is no longer just tolerating artificial intelligence, it is explicitly endorsing its use under certain conditions."

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