

## **Abstract “Jihad Gone Bad: Radical Scholars against Illegitimate Violence”**

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This paper shows that criticism of illegitimate violence does not necessarily come from opponents of jihad or former radicals. Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a prominent Jordanian Islamist ideologue, has been a staunch critic of jihadi practices over the past two decades but continues to support jihad and its practitioners. His criticism is aimed at “protecting” jihad from practices that he considers illegitimate and holds up examples of jihadi groups who only engage in legitimate violence, partly to guide other jihad fighters.

Al-Maqdisi’s “protection” of jihad seems to have been taken to the next level in his creation of a Shari‘a Council, which has answered hundreds of questions from all over the world in the past year. Since this council also supports jihad in principle but warns against its excesses, it may have an important impact on future trends within jihad: its members have retained their credibility as radical scholars by refraining from revising their views and have an easily accessible platform to advise people from all over the world. This makes the Shari‘a Council a phenomenon that not only academics studying jihad but also policy-makers should keep an eye on.