

Regional Organized Crime Information Center  
**SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT**



# Jamaat ul-Fuqra

## *Gilani Followers Conducting Paramilitary Training in U.S.*

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*NOTICE: Although criminal acts have been committed by members of Jamaat ul-Fuqra, it is unknown if all members are involved in criminal activity. Information for this article was obtained from sources listed at the end of this report.*

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By ROCIC Publications Unit

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Over the past two decades, a terrorist group known as Jamaat ul-Fuqra, or “Community of the Impoverished,” has been linked to multiple murders, bombings, and various other felonies throughout the United States and Canada.

In 1980, a Pakistani cleric named Sheikh Mubarak Ali Gilani began preaching against Western culture at a Muslim mosque in Brooklyn, NY. He promoted Islam as the path to a better life and called for fighters to join his holy war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

With his new American recruits, Gilani established Islamberg, a 70-acre commune west of the Catskill Mountains near Hancock, NY.



*Sheikh Mubarak Ali Gilani*

Today, Jamaat ul-Fuqra has more than 35 suspected communes and more than 3,000 members spread across the United States, all in support of one goal: the purification of Islam through violence.

Seven of these communes are in the ROCIC region in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

## ***Ideology***

Gilani is now known as an international terrorist. In Khartoum, in December 1993, at a major jihadist gathering, or “terrorist roundtable,” Gilani and other terrorist leaders, such as Osama bin Laden, were caught on film by the Canadian Broadcasting Company chanting, “Down, down USA! Down, down CIA!” and “Death to the Jews!”

Gilani’s ideology begins with the idea that moderate Muslim leaders have lost the moral authority and vision to achieve “victory” and that he is the only true defender of Islam. He considers all those who do not follow the tenets of Islam (as laid out in the Koran) to be his enemies. This includes non-Muslims as well as Muslims he deems as heretics.



*Sign posted in front of Hancock, NY commune*

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During Jamaat ul-Fuqra’s formation, Gilani primarily targeted black American Muslim converts from the inner city, mostly those with criminal backgrounds. Gilani used their hostility and cynicism toward Western society to aid in their adoption of his extremist beliefs.

His followers call themselves the “Soldiers of Allah.” They believe Gilani can perform miracles and are unquestioningly obedient to his teachings. Members of Jamaat ul-Fuqra are known to be Islamist extremists with much hatred toward their enemies.

## ***Structure***

Although Gilani now resides in Lahore, Pakistan, most Jamaat ul-Fuqra members have purchased and settled communes on isolated properties in rural areas within North America. In a manner typical to a cult, individuals are selected to live on the communes and must abide by the law and the discipline of the Jamaat ul-Fuqra.

The Jamaat ul-Fuqra includes at least 35 of these communes, each of which is assigned a geographic

location in which to operate. The members of one commune do not know members of another, and the only communication between them is via telephone at pre-determined times. This method is typical of “classically structured terrorist cells.”

Several covert paramilitary training compounds exist within some of the communes. Law enforcement are aware of seven training facilities in the ROCIC region:

- ◆ Marion, Alabama
- ◆ Commerce, Georgia
- ◆ Macon, Georgia
- ◆ Talihina, Oklahoma
- ◆ York County, South Carolina
- ◆ Dover, Tennessee
- ◆ Red House, Virginia

Additionally, Jamaat ul-Fuqra members are known to travel to Pakistan and receive survivalist training under Gilani’s supervision.

### ***Links to Terrorism***

At least a dozen Jamaat ul-Fuqra members have been convicted for terrorist activities, including conspiracy to commit murder, firebombing, and gun smuggling. Jamaat ul-Fuqra members are also suspected in 10 unsolved assassinations and 17 bombings that have occurred since 1980.

Just a few examples of suspected Jamaat ul-Fuqra attacks:

**1982** – An attack on the Islamic Cultural Center in Tempe, Arizona

**1983** – A hotel owned by an Indian guru was firebombed in Portland, Oregon (pipe bombs were found in the room of a Jamaat ul-Fuqra member)

**1983** – A leader of the Muslim Ahmadiyya sect was shot to death in Canton, Michigan and the Ahmadiyya Center of Detroit was set on fire (a Jamaat ul-Fuqra member was identified as his killer, but was killed in the fire)

**1984** – The Integral Yoga Society, a Hindu

religious institution, and the Vendeta Society, a Sikh religious institution were bombed in Seattle, Washington

**1984** – A Hindu physician is kidnapped and presumed dead

**1985** – An Islamic mosque was bombed in Houston, Texas

***Terrorist activity*** means any activity that is unlawful under U.S. law or the laws of the place where it was committed and involves the threat, attempt, or conspiracy to commit any of the following activities:

- ◆ Hijacking or sabotage of an aircraft, vessel, vehicle, or other conveyance
- ◆ Hostage taking
- ◆ Violent attack on an internationally protected person
- ◆ Assassination
- ◆ Use of any biological agent, chemical agent, nuclear weapon or device, or explosive, firearm, or other weapon or dangerous device for uses other than mere personal gain and with intent to endanger, directly or indirectly, the safety of one or more individuals or to cause substantial damage to property.

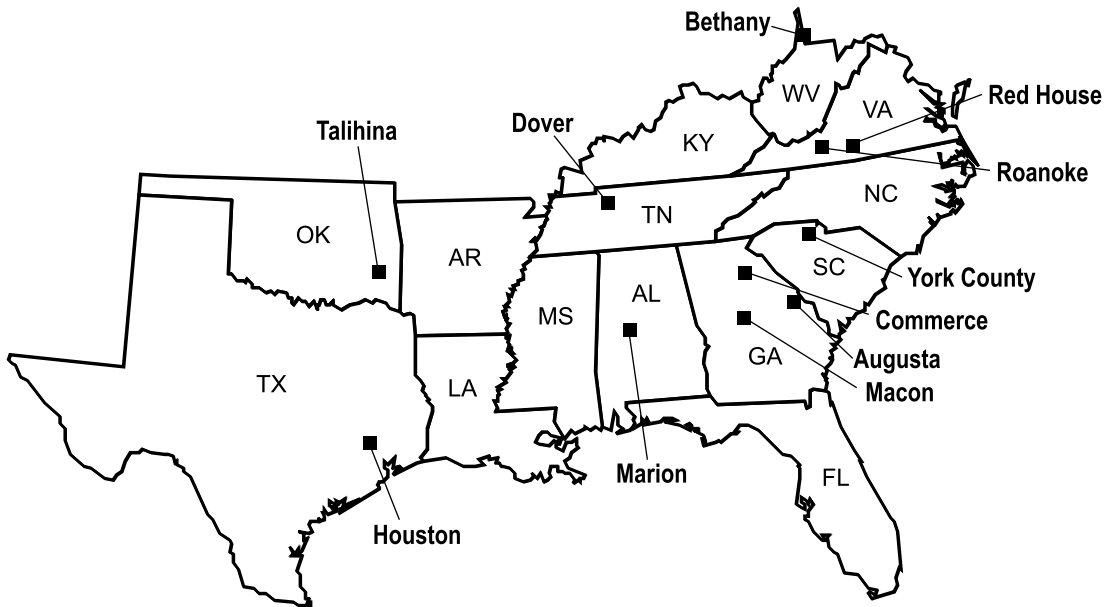
In 1989, a search warrant was issued on suspicion that illegal explosives were being stored in what appeared to be an abandoned storage unit in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The recovered contents of the unit were traced back to the Jamaat ul-Fuqra commune in the area.

Among the items recovered were handguns, semi-automatic weapons, explosives, pipe bombs, and bomb components. Blank birth certificates, Social Security cards, and several sets of Colorado driver’s licenses with identical photos but various names were also recovered.

Additionally, the storage unit contained packets on

*(Continued on Page 5)*

***Suspected Jamaat ul-Fuqra Activities:  
As of 2004***



STATE	LOCALITY	OPERATIONS
ALABAMA	Marion	Training Compound
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA		Activity
GEORGIA	Augusta	Activity, murder
	Commerce	Training Compound
	Macon	Training Compound
OKLAHOMA	Talihina	Training Compound
SOUTH CAROLINA	York County	Training Compound
TENNESSEE	Dover	Training Compound
TEXAS	Houston	Activity, bombing
VIRGINIA	Red House	Training Compound
	Roanoke	Activity
WEST VIRGINIA	Bethany	Activity, bombing, murder

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potential targets and victims, maps of oil and gas fields, electrical facilities, and cell phone towers. Shortly after the search, a moderate Muslim leader was assassinated in a manner which was laid out in one of these “target packets” and led to the arrest of two Jamaat ul-Fuqra members.

Military-style manuals entitled “Guerrilla Warfare,” “Counter Guerrilla Operations,” “Understanding Amateur Radio,” and “Basic Blueprint Reading” were also recovered.

Also, a detailed description of a firebombing attack was found. Law enforcement believes it was the plans for an attack on the Hare Krishna Temple in Denver that occurred five years prior. After investigating, law enforcement discovered the 1984



*Explosives found in storage unit*

attack on the Hare Krishna Temple in Philadelphia was firebombed in a similar way.

More examples of Jamaat ul-Fuqra attacks include the 1991 conviction of three Jamaat ul-Fuqra members for an attempt to bomb an Indian cinema and a Hindu temple near Toronto, Canada. Another suspect, also a Jamaat ul-Fuqra member, fled to Pakistan after his co-conspirators’ arrest and is still at large.

In 1993, two Jamaat ul-Fuqra members were convicted in connection with the first World Trade Center attack and for conspiring to bomb New York City tunnels and landmarks. New York Tri-State bridge and tunnel workers have attended numerous retreats hosted by the Jamaat ul-Fuqra at the Hancock, NY commune.

The convicted bomber who tried to kill American nationals at a U.S. embassy in Africa in 1998 and the convicted “shoe-bomber” who attempted to destroy a passenger airliner in December 2001,



*Daniel Pearl at the hand of his captor*

have been linked to Jamaat ul-Fuqra. District of Columbia sniper John Muhammad is also suspected of having a connection to Jamaat ul-Fuqra.

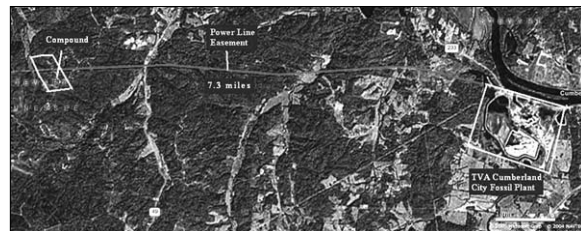
However, the most publicity Jamaat ul-Fuqra received in recent years was in 2002 after the abduction and killing of Daniel Pearl, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who was attempting to interview Gilani. Gilani and Jamaat ul-Fuqra members continue to deny any involvement in the death of Pearl or any of the other attacks.

### ***Locations in the ROCIC Region***

There are seven communes in the ROCIC region that are suspected training compounds. There has been activity in 12 ROCIC jurisdictions.

It is common for Jamaat ul-Fuqra communes to be located near significant infrastructure targets.

For example, the Jamaat ul-Fuqra property in Dover, Tenn. is located along a power easement seven miles west of the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Cumberland Fossil Plant, a plant that produces



*Google Earth view of Dover, TN commune*

***Known Organizations associated with Jamaat ul-Fuqra,  
1980 – present***

<b>Professional Security International (PSI)</b>	Headquartered in Colorado and headed by Jamaat ul-Fuqra member James D. Williams
<b>786 Security Firm, aka 786 Security Company</b>	Headquartered in New York and operated by Jamaat ul-Fuqra member Husain M. Abdallah, aka Eugene Clarence Spencer
<b>Dagger Investigative Services</b>	Associated with 786 Security Firm and located in New York
<b>Watchdog Securities</b>	Associated with 786 Security Firm and located in New York
<b>Mills Security</b>	Associated with 786 Security Firm and located in New York
<b>CCC Carpentry</b>	Operated by Jamaat ul-Fuqra member Chris Childs
<b>RDW Construction</b>	Operated by Jamaat ul-Fuqra member James Upshur
<b>Ray and Ken, subcontracting company</b>	Operated by Jamaat ul-Fuqra member James Upshur
<b>McClane’s Carpenter &amp; Home Builders</b>	Operated by Jamaat ul-Fuqra member James D. Williams
<b>CML Construction</b>	Associated with various Jamaat ul-Fuqra members
<b>R&amp;D Carpenters</b>	Associated with various Jamaat ul-Fuqra members
<b>Muslims of America</b>	Founded by Sheikh Gilani
<b>Quaranic Open University</b>	Founded by Sheikh Gilani

***Known White-Collar Crimes Jamaat ul-Fuqra has Committed  
To Fund Terrorist Activities***

<b>Identification fraud</b>	Created and used false birth certificates, Social Security cards, and driver’s licenses
<b>Money laundering</b>	Moved funds through front companies (e.g. PSI) and distributed into U.S. accounts and outside of the country
<b>Insurance fraud</b>	Filed fraudulent worker’s compensation claims and accident reports
<b>Investment fraud</b>	Collected funds for a fictitious investment
<b>Tax fraud</b>	Failed to report and pay taxes on income
<b>Wire fraud</b>	Communicated information concerning criminal activity by telephone and e-mail
<b>Information theft</b>	Used front security company (PSI) to gain access to secured property and private information for use in a white-collar crime, bombing, or murder scheme



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more power than any other plant in the TVA system. Twelve miles northeast is Fort Campbell, home of the Army's 101st Airborne Division.

## **Funding**

Terrorist activities are almost always funded by white-collar crimes, and Jamaat ul-Fuqra is no exception.

For example, during a follow-up investigation from the storage unit search in 1989, law enforcement sent Colorado's Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) a number of recovered worker's compensation claims. The CDLE cross-referenced 2,000 to 3,000 names associated with Jamaat ul-Fuqra with the names in the worker's compensation database, and produced a list of potential suspects.

**White-collar crimes** are classified into six major categories:

- ◆ Identification document fraud
- ◆ Financial fraud
- ◆ Credit card fraud
- ◆ Immigration fraud
- ◆ Mail and wire fraud
- ◆ Tax fraud

Among the many "red flags" was a claimant who was listed as a witness in another case. Another was the similarity in signatures among claimants with different names.

Throughout the 1990s, many Jamaat ul-Fuqra members were prosecuted for these Colorado worker's compensation schemes, which involved fraudulent insurance claims, identification fraud, money laundering, and tax evasion. These schemes produced more than \$350,000 in funding to Jamaat ul-Fuqra.

Another Jamaat ul-Fuqra link to white-collar crime was in January 2002 when law enforcement noticed that the Gateway charter school system in Fresno County, California was headed by the same

people who owned the Jamaat ul-Fuqra commune in the area.

During the investigation, it was noticed that Gateway used inflated attendance numbers to receive additional funding from the state of California. This fraudulent inflation produced an extra \$3 million in funding for Jamaat ul-Fuqra.



*Sign posted in front of the Red House, VA commune*

Three suspects have since been arrested. All have pled not guilty and are awaiting their trial, which is set for May 1, 2006.

Significant funds for the Jamaat ul-Fuqra come from two non-profit organizations – Muslims of the Americas, Inc. established by Gilani in 1990; and the Quranic Open University, also founded by Gilani. Because these organizations are not-for-profit, they face less scrutiny from the IRS (compared to corporations), and they are able to easily secure funding through government-sponsored grants.

When it opened, the Quranic Open University portrayed itself as a religious, educational institution dedicated to the study of the Koran. However, in 1991, law enforcement seized works written by Gilani which were published by the university. They instructed the university's students that their "foremost duty" was "to wage Jihad" against their enemies (oppressors of Muslims).

It is suspected that money has been laundered to Gilani in Pakistan through both the university and Muslims of the Americas, Inc.

According to the National White-Collar Crime Center, Jamaat ul-Fuqra also uses front companies,

such as Professional Securities International (PSI), to launder and transfer money and as a base for spreading information on terrorist activities.

By setting up a company such as PSI, Jamaat ul-Fuqra members are able to appear legitimate. Over the years, PSI has been able to negotiate security contracts with federal government centers and international airports.

Besides white-collar crimes, Jamaat ul-Fuqra has used other means, such as the trafficking of narcotics to fund their operations.

For example, in November 2003, two suspected



*Street sign near Red House, VA commune*

Fuqra members were arrested in Philadelphia for shipping 52 kilograms of cocaine from Oakland to Atlanta and Philadelphia. Investigators believe a portion of the trafficking operation's proceeds was being sent to Gilani in Pakistan.

### ***Tips for Law Enforcement***

Communicate through informal, personal relationships with other law enforcement personnel, internally and externally on the local, state, and federal levels. ROCIC can provide law enforcement the resources to accomplish this.

Utilize Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF). They are good mechanisms for building relationships with members from local, state, and federal law enforcement through interaction.

Terrorists always need to raise money, so money trails often lead to information about future plans and other important information.

Investigators need to understand how to follow money trails and how to develop analysis of the flow of funds that is accurate and admissible in court. Investigators should be aware of organizations that can provide technical and analytical support in a criminal case, such as ROCIC.

Since individuals engaged in terrorist activities usually do not have a criminal record, judgments and claims in civil court records could possibly hold evidence of fraud.

Governmental agencies outside law enforcement can aid in obtaining records of suspected terrorists.

- ◆ Names and aliases can be checked with JTTF and Immigration and Naturalization Services.
- ◆ Social Security numbers can be checked with the Department of Health and Human Resources.
- ◆ Information on aliens suspected of criminal activity or their status can be obtained from the Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) located in South Burlington, Vt. at (802) 872-6020.
- ◆ Building permits can be found with the county building department (responsible for ensuring public health, safety, and welfare associated with the design, construction, and utilization of public and private buildings).
- ◆ Personal property tax, commercial property tax, and machinery and tools tax records can be checked with the Commissioner of Revenue.
- ◆ Documents relating to land transfers, deeds, mortgages, births, deaths, wills, divorces, and other statistics can be found with the Circuit Court Clerk.
- ◆ Be observant during routine procedures and look for things that seem out of place or unusual, such as:
  - Training materials or other terrorism-related literature
  - Camouflage jacket
  - Guns, homemade weapons, or elements that could make up a weapon



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- Bumper stickers that indicate beliefs
- Arabic literature
- Financial instruments that look suspicious

Note: Law enforcement should take care not to make assumptions and generalizations. “Red flags” should be evaluated within the context of the surroundings and circumstances. It is possible that red flags relate to activities (legal or illegal) other than terrorism.

Any agency with information on Jamaat ul-Fuqra should contact ROCIC’s Criminal Intelligence Unit at (800) 238-7985, ext. 530.

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