

A CNN team spent months going through 90,000 pages of documents, most of them in French, that included a trove of interrogations, investigative findings and data pulled from cell phones offering insight into the external operations wing of ISIS known as the Amn al-Kharji.

The documents show:

- a fuller portrait of the suspected terrorists' extensive use of social media platforms such as Viber, Telegram and WhatsApp, many encrypted for secure communication. One app let them pick their own phone number, allowing them to disguise who was calling them and from where.
- how ISIS handlers protect their missions by: giving operatives only as much information and money as they need to reach the next phase; contacting them on each leg of their journey; and insisting on pseudonyms, even within teams.