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Saudi King Vows to Fight Extremists with an “Iron Fist”

On July 5, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz recommitted the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to “strike with an iron fist” the terror groups that seek to recruit youths to “extremism and violence,” and pledged efforts to “distance them from masterminds of misleading ideas.”

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FEATURED NEWS

Saudi Arabia Arrests 19 Conspirators in Triple Bombings

On July 7, the Ministry of Interior announced that investigations have led to the arrest of 19 persons who were involved in the recent terrorist attacks in Madinah, Qatif and Jeddah, including seven Saudi citizens and 12 Pakistani nationals. Those investigations are ongoing.

Saudi General: Kingdom is a Terror Target

During a briefing on June 8, the Ministry of Interior’s security spokesman, Major General Mansour Al-Turki said the Kingdom has been a major target of terrorist organizations, but is determined to defeat it and prevent terrorists from using any resources from Saudi Arabia.

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“Over the last 15 years, the Saudis have become among our best counterterrorism partners.”

John O. Brennan

Director, Central Intelligence Agency
June 11, 2016



Saudi King Vows to Fight Extremists with an “Iron Fist”

On July 5, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz recommitted the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to “strike with an iron fist” the terror groups that seek to recruit youths to “extremism and violence,” and pledged efforts to “distance them from masterminds of misleading ideas.”

In a message to the people of Saudi Arabia and all the world’s Muslims on the occasion of the Eid Al-Fitr, King Salman urged Muslims to unite and condemned terrorism and extremism, stressing their contradiction to Islam.

“The sedition witnessed in the Islamic world today requires all of us to exert the utmost effort to unify our voice, close ranks and work together to solve the problems of the Islamic nation, and achieve victory for its issues,” said King Salman. “However, the biggest challenge facing our Islamic nation is how to keep our youth, the real wealth and hope of the future, away from the dangers facing them – particularly extremism and violence – and distance them from masterminds of misleading ideas that force them to behave in extraordinary ways that contradict the principles of our Islamic religion and the pillars and values of our Islamic societies.”

King Salman vowed to spare no effort to crush extremists that use misleading messages to entice impressionable young people to join them.

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is determined, God willing, to strike with an iron fist those who target the minds and attitudes of our youth,” he said.

Saudi General: Kingdom is a Terror Target

During a briefing on June 8, the Ministry of Interior’s security spokesman, Major General Mansour Al-Turki said the Kingdom has been a major target of terrorist organizations, but is determined to defeat it and prevent terrorists from using any resources from Saudi Arabia.

“We have faced more than 63 terrorist attacks by Al-Qaeda and ISIL, 26 of them just in the last two years,” said Gen. Al-Turki. “More than 200 citizens and policemen were killed in terrorist attacks. More than 2,800 suspects have been arrested since 2015.”

In order to crush terrorism and cut off terror financing, Gen. Al-Turki said the Kingdom has enforced laws to criminalize all terrorist-related activities; including joining, supporting, or recruiting for extremist groups.

LEADER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DAESH (ISIL)

“The Saudi government took a zero-tolerance stance on ISIL, condemning its activities and participating in coalition military action to defeat the group in Syria and Iraq. Its external military action against ISIL in Syria as a part of the U.S.-led coalition was complemented by an aggressive campaign by both official clerics and King Salman to discredit the group and condemn its activities as acts of terrorism.”

U.S. Department of State

Country Reports on Terrorism 2015

June 2, 2016

The Kingdom has established a money intelligence department to monitor and investigate any suspected financial transactions. Investigations are typically done in coordination with the Saudi Monetary Agency and the Saudi banks.

“This has led to convicting more than 226 persons of terrorism financing activities, prosecuting more than 240 suspects, freezing and investigating more than 117 suspected bank accounts, closing all unlicensed charity collection locations,” said Gen. Al-Turki.

Saudi Arabia Shares Bank Records with Department of Justice

As cited in the U.S. State Department’s Country Reports on Terrorism issued on June 2, Saudi Arabia produced certified bank records in response to a mutual legal assistance request of the United States “based on reciprocity and increased cooperation on identification of foreign terrorist fighters traveling to

Syria and Iraq.” The move is yet another enhancement in U.S.-Saudi cooperation to combat terrorism.

Saudi Arabia is working with its allies to deploy new and effective methods to prevent travel and support for foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). Just as airlines hold valuable data about their passengers, banks can reveal considerable intelligence with regards to the whereabouts, activities and intentions of their account and card holders. It is hoped that this enhanced cooperation between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia will help identify and capture foreign fighters.

According to the International Center for Counterterrorism (October 2015), it is estimated that there are 30,000 FTFs in Syria and Iraq with Daesh (ISIL).

Vice-Governor of SAMA Declares Terror Financing “A Graver Crime”

The Eighth Forum on Compliance and Combating Money Laundering was held in Riyadh on May 9. During

Saudi Arabia’s Achievements in Combating Terror-Financing

- Earned observer status in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2015; aiming for full membership in 2018.
- Established money laundering units in SAMA and in all local banks to ensure the banking system is not exploited through money laundering operations and to report any dubious transactions to competent authorities.
- Closed down unlicensed money-exchange or money-transfer centers.
- Issued new rules and regulations for combating money laundering and terror financing.
- Implemented Know-Your-Customer rules in financial and non-financial institutions.
- Established a permanent intergovernmental agency committee to oversee all issues pertaining to terror financing.
- Circulated lists issued by the UN to freeze financial assets of suspected terrorist individuals or groups.
- Established a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

the event, which focused on best practices in accordance with international standards, Vice Governor Abdulaziz Saleh Al Furaih noted, “We cannot discuss compliance and combating money laundering apart from terrorist financing. If money laundering is a crime, terrorist financing is a much graver crime.”

The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) forum on combating money laundering and terror-financing has gained prominence in recent years for its rigorous conference work to promote the advancement of efforts to implement international compliance standards. The latest of these standards to be put into practice by Saudi Arabia include FATF standards on interaction between correspondent banks and money transfer services; FATF customer due diligence; and FATF standards on money transfers, particularly in developing controls in order to prevent the risks of illegal transactions.

MOI Announces That Fundraising without Permit is Against the Law

The Ministry of Interior announced on June 11 that all charity fundraising without a permit represents a violation of the Kingdom’s laws.

The Ministry stressed that anyone who calls for or collects donations without a license will be arrested and subjected to the laws of the Kingdom. Furthermore, bank accounts for collecting donations announced on social media and SMS messages will be frozen.

The new regulation follows a decree issued in February 2016 that all citizens and NGOs that wish to establish a charitable project in another country must receive permission from the Saudi Ministry of the Interior before setting up operations in that country.

Installation of Surveillance Cameras in All Mosques Underway

On June 9, Saudi Arabia announced that it would install surveillance cameras inside and outside all mosques throughout the country. The long-term plan, announced by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, includes setting up an operations room with links to 95,000 mosques.



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