

SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

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TERRORISM

SAUDI COMMANDOS END TERRORIST SIEGE IN AL-KHOBAR

Saudi special forces evacuated 201 people and rescued 41 hostages from the Oasis Residential Resort in Al-Khobar in the Eastern Province following a 25-hour standoff with wanted militants over Saturday and Sunday May 29 and 30.

The standoff began after the militants opened fire randomly at two office blocks, passing cars, and a residential complex during morning rush hour traffic, and subsequently held a number of foreign residents hostage.

King Fahd said terrorism will only strengthen the country's resolve to combat this scourge in all its forms. He reiterated that Saudi Arabia will staunchly confront anyone who tries to undermine the country's peace and security and urged all citizens to cooperate by reporting information on the deviant group, saying: "Each citizen, male and female, is recruited to serve the country in combating this evil."

Crown Prince Abdullah declared that the perpetrators desire only to wreak havoc and destabilize security, saying: "This group wants to prevent foreigners from coming to our country, and wants to destabilize our economy. It is the terrorists who are our enemies . . . our country will prevail, in spite of them."

Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan called the attack "a cowardly and despicable act of murder" and vowed: "Hatred and extremism will not prevail over our people's desire for peace, security and progress."

U.S. President George W. Bush was among the many who extended condolences, and praised the actions of the Saudi security forces.

KINGDOM CONDEMNS ATTACK ON MOSQUE IN IRAQ

On May 26, the Kingdom condemned the firing of missiles at a mosque in Iraq, stressing that in Islam all mosques and graveyards have sanctity and should be respected and not harmed.

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