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SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi leadership calls for Muslim unity in Eid Al-Fitr address

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz congratulated Muslims and called on them to strengthen their unity in an October 11 Eid Al-Fitr address to the nation.

The King and Crown Prince noted that Ramadan and the subsequent Eid Al-Fitr holiday are characterized by love, brotherhood and generosity among Muslims across the globe. The Holy Month and the Eid celebrate Muslim unity and discourage division and dissension, they said.

In the address, the King and Crown Prince stressed that Saudi Arabia will continue to work towards achieving security, stability and prosperity in the Arab and Muslim worlds. They also offered prayers for the martyrs were killed in the line of duty while defending the Kingdom from terrorists.

In Washington, Saudi Ambassador to the US Adel A. Al-Jubeir hosted Eid prayer at the embassy October 12 to mark the end of Ramadan and the beginning of the Eid Al-Fitr. After the prayer the ambassador hosted a breakfast for the the Saudi community in Washington.

New bylaws issued for royal succession law

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz issued a royal decree October 8 detailing rules for implementing the Kingdom's new succession law.

The law, which was announced in October 2006, formalizes the royal succession and aims to ensure a smooth transfer of power. Previously, the King had the sole right to select the crown prince. Under the new system, the King established the Allegiance Commission, which will choose future kings and crown princes.

The new bylaws outline who can become a member of the Allegiance Commission. It also stipulates what should be done if a member of the Commission dies and how the crown prince should be selected.

In related news, the Kingdom recently approved an overhaul of Saudi Arabia's judiciary system. Changes include the establishment of a Supreme Court and labor and commercial tribunals.

Fourth suspect in murder of French nationals arrested

Saudi authorities have arrested a fourth suspect in the February 26 killings of four French nationals in southwestern Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Interior announced October 14.

Abdullah Al-Mohammadi, a Saudi citizen, was arrested near Madinah October 14 while carrying an automatic weapon. The arrest was a result of a security operation that began during Ramadan and continued through the Eid Al-Fitr.

Al-Mohammadi is the fourth and final suspect in the murder of the French expatriates, who were attacked when they stopped in a desert area en route to Madinah. The mastermind of the attack, Walid Al-Raddadi, was killed in a gunbattle with Saudi security forces near Madinah in April 2007. Two other suspects, Nasser Al-Balawi and Majed Al-Harbi, were arrested in May and July, respectively. Legal proceedings will now begin for those suspects who are in custody.

