



THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA COUNTERTERRORISM UPDATE

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TOP NEWS

Crown Prince Brings Counterterrorism Message to United Nations

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, told the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on Sept. 21 that defeating terrorism is a priority for Saudi Arabia, which “has been among the primary victims of terrorism” going back many years.

Prince Mohammad said that the Kingdom has been the target of more than 100 terrorist operations since 1992, “including 18 carried out by elements with links to ‘a regional country.’”

The Crown Prince said that the Kingdom has “exerted strenuous efforts...to bring about peace and lay the foundations for security and stability since joining the organization, not just in our region, but also all over the world.”

— Read more on page 2

Saudi Religious Scholars Defy Threats, Denounce Terrorism

Several prominent Saudi religious scholars recently drew the public’s attention to the critical importance of the role played by scholars in disseminating factual information and revealing the unethical tactics of terrorists in trying to lure people away from the rightful path of Islam.

— Read more on page 2

Saudi Authorities Arrest 17 in Raids on Daesh Terror Cells

The Ministry of Interior announced on Sept. 19 the arrest of 17 suspects in three terror cells who were involved in past terror attacks and were plotting future attacks in Saudi Arabia. The cells constituted a terror network linked to Daesh (ISIL), and the individuals were arrested in an operation that included a series of raids conducted over several months.

— Read more on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Crown Prince Brings Counterterrorism Message to United Nations	2
Saudi Religious Scholars Defy Threats, Denounce Terrorism ISIL-Related Terror Attacks	2
Saudi Authorities Arrest 17 in Raids on Daesh Terror Cells	3
CIA Director John Brennan Praises Saudi Counterterrorism on “Face the Nation”	3
Saudi Special Forces Secure Pilgrims During Hajj	3
Saudi Arabia Fights Extremism, Promotes Coexistence With Multimedia Campaign	4

NOTABLE QUOTE

“Today we are sparing no effort, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud, to secure peace, security and stability – not only in our region, but all over the world. Combatting terrorism is major part of that effort.”

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif
United Nations General Assembly,
September 21, 2016

Crown Prince Brings Counterterrorism Message to United Nations

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, told the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on Sept. 21 that defeating terrorism is a priority for Saudi Arabia, which “has been among the primary victims of terrorism” going back many years.

Prince Mohammad said that the Kingdom has been the target of more than 100 terrorist operations since 1992, “including 18 carried out by elements with links to ‘a regional country.’”

The Crown Prince said that the Kingdom has “exerted strenuous efforts...to bring about peace and lay the foundations for security and stability since joining the organization, not just in our region, but also all over the world.”

“Saudi security apparatuses have also managed to detect 268 terrorist operations, and thwarted them before they took place,” he said.

Prince Mohammad cited the laws, regulations and other measures the Kingdom has enacted to criminalize the support and financing of acts of terrorism and the fact that it has “signed on to more than 12 international [counter terrorism] agreements.”

Prince Mohammad highlighted the Kingdom’s role in the formation of the multi-country Islamic Military Alliance to combat terrorism as well as the agreement Saudi Arabia signed with the U.N. to launch the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center and the Kingdom’s pledge of \$110 million to the center to help build the Center’s capabilities and effectiveness in helping countries combat terrorism.

Saudi Religious Scholars Defy Threats, Denounce Terrorism

Several prominent Saudi religious scholars recently drew the public’s attention to the critical importance of the role played by scholars in disseminating factual information and revealing the unethical tactics of terrorists in trying to lure people away from the rightful path of Islam.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Sulaiman Al-Manea, Member of the Council and Adviser to the Royal Court, highlighted the role of the authorities at the Ministry of Interior in protecting and ensuring the safety of Saudi Arabia in light of this trend. “We are proud of these distinguished soldiers who bravely protect this country and its people, and they are trusted and appreciated by our leadership. We are proud to be secure, protected and stable so long as we continue to leave and please God,” Sheikh Abdullah said.

Council Member and Royal Court Adviser Sheikh Dr. Al Turki said that the Kingdom was established based on cooperation between princes and scholars, and this approach has continued through various stages of the country’s history. Sheikh Dr. Al Turki stressed the complementary relationship that exists between the Kingdom’s leaders and scholars; in the face of increasing terror attacks in the region and throughout the world, scholars actively disseminate the important message about upholding the religion’s true principles and staying away from conflict.

Scholars are targeted by terrorists because of their role in revealing the truth behind the terrorists’ sinful actions, said Council Member and member of the Standing Committee for Fatwas Sheikh Dr. Saleh bin Fozan Al-Fozan. He added that scholars play a vital role in promoting awareness among the community about terrorists’ tactics.

Saudi Authorities Arrest 17 in Raids on Daesh Terror Cells

The Ministry of Interior announced on Sept. 19 the arrest of 17 suspects in three terror cells who were involved in past terror attacks and were plotting future attacks in Saudi Arabia. The cells constituted a terror network linked to Daesh (ISIL), and the individuals were arrested in an operation that included a series of raids conducted over several months.

Saudi authorities seized pipe bombs, weapons, ammunition, suicide vests and bomb-making materials in the raids. In a press conference, Ministry of Interior spokesman Major General Mansour Al-Turki said the terrorist cells had a list of targets that included civilians, religious scholars and security officers as well as the locations of military installations and economic targets. He said the suspects were found to have provided Daesh with media and electronic support.

CIA Director John Brennan Praises Saudi Counterterrorism on “Face the Nation”

CIA Director John Brennan recently praised Saudi Arabia for its close partnership with the United States on counterterrorism. On the September 11 broadcast of the CBS News program *Face the Nation*, host John Dickerson asked: “There’s a bill that has been through the House and Senate about allowing suing of Saudi Arabia with respect to 9/11. How does that affect the work you do with Saudi Arabia and intelligence?”

Brennan responded: “Saudi Arabia is one of our closest partners on counterterrorism. I have worked very closely, especially [with] Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, over the last 15 years. And they are truly a good example of how foreign intelligence services can work against these terrorist organizations. And Saudi Arabia faces a very serious threat from terrorism.”

Saudi Special Forces Secure Pilgrims During Hajj

As Saudi Arabia prepared to receive approximately 1.5 million pilgrims from all over the world for the annual Hajj, the Kingdom worked to secure the annual religious observance. Every year, the Kingdom puts a security plan in place that engages a number of highly equipped government agencies in order to maintain safety and security. One of the most important measures taken this year was the deployment of the Saudi special-forces unit known as the “Black Leopards.”

The Black Leopards are a highly qualified and well-equipped force who have been trained in rapid-

intervention operations. This special unit was established in 2012 and was deployed to operate in Hajj this year.

Black Leopards were positioned in Security Control Centers, specifically at the entrances of Holy Sites. They are trained and equipped to respond to emergency events and were given the authority to deal directly with any terrorist attacks or other event that may put the pilgrims’ safety at risk. They are supervised by special security agencies and report directly to the Head of General Directorate of Public Security at the Ministry of Interior.

Saudi Arabia Fights Extremism, Promotes Coexistence with Multimedia Campaign

At a conference earlier this year of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz made a series of remarks about the widespread phenomenon of terrorist recruitment and incitement on the Internet. He called on Saudi youth to take the initiative to counter extremists' online activity with their own responses by arguing against strident interpretations of Islam and advancing their own, tolerant understanding of the religion in its stead. He also called on people of good conscience throughout the world — including state and non-state elements — to play their part in fighting extremism on the Internet and social media.

Saudi Arabia has been fighting deviant extremist ideologies and terrorist recruiting online for many years. For example, a public service announcement produced and broadcast in Saudi Arabia was recently hailed in the *Huffington Post* as an example of efforts to curb online extremism. This public service announcement, released by the King Adulaziz Center for National Dialogue in June 2015, generated more than 150,000 views in the first 48 hours after its release.

The text of the Saudi PSA:

What is the greatest destroyer of nations and peoples? Disease? Natural disasters? Famine? Perhaps. But there is a hidden killer worse than all of them. A killer many of us don't know, but who has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives — children, women, the elderly. And it doesn't stop at killing people. It destroys states. It bleeds their resources, wrecks economies, and stifles knowledge. It brings states back to zero — to less than zero.

Shall I surprise you some more? The killer lives among us. Right now, at this very moment, he walks around free and loose. He might be near you, in the same building. He might be right beside you. He might be your dearest friend, or your closest relative. Shall I shock you even more? The hidden killer might be ... YOU. You think you are innocent? Think again. Go over your convictions and ideas. Think back on the grudges you bear. Lots of people like you thought they were innocent, but became wild animals. They ruined their own states, destroying them with enormity. Hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded.

This killer, sleeping inside you, wakes up the moment you give up on the value of coexistence. You transform into a killer, because the fire of hate has been ignited. Dividing people into categories. Insularity. When you fail to live together with people who are different than you, you grow wild. The result? A devastating war. Its soldiers are you and thousands like you, all from a single country. Then come years of conflict. No one wins except for death. The country falls behind the rest of the world. Resources are wasted that could have been invested for everyone to make a better life, to build a solid economy, to strengthen security, to support teaching and knowledge. It might have been possible for everyone together to avoid this disaster if everyone thought about coexistence and rowed on both sides of the lifeboat, rather than vanish into a whirlpool.

On your way to work, or when you enter your home and are among your family, always ask yourself — is a dispute worth losing all of this?

Coexistence. Let's talk to each other, let's live together.