



REGIONAL SECURITY

King Salman: Nation Is Committed to Regional Security and Economic Development

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COUNTERTERRORISM

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NOTABLE QUOTE

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Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Dec. 14, 2016

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King Salman emphasized that Saudi Arabia has traditionally played an active and effective role on the regional and global stage and plans to proceed with "firm steps" that maintain its active role around the world. He presented an optimistic outlook for both the nation's domestic and foreign policies. As part of Saudi Arabia's core foreign policies, King

Salman vowed to continue cooperation with the international community to combat extremism that threatens its borders and the larger region. Political solutions to international crises can safeguard values of tolerance and coexistence and pave the way for nations to ensure peace and development, he said.

King Salman stressed that the region's stability directly impacts Saudi Arabia's economic development. "Our domestic policy is based on pillars of maintaining security, stability and prosperity to achieve the development that meets the needs of the present and preserves the right of future generations," he said.

## COUNTERTERRORISM

### Security Forces Kill 2 Daesh Terrorists

Saudi security forces killed two terrorists affiliated with Daesh (ISIS) in a district north of Riyadh on Jan. 7.

"Wanted terrorist Taie bin Salem bin Yaslem Al-Saeiri was killed in a shootout with security forces after trying to escape with his companion, Talal bin Samran Al-Sa'edi," said Spokesman of the Interior Ministry Major General Mansour Al-Turki.

Security forces confirmed that Al-Saeiri was on the list of the most-dangerous terrorists wanted by Saudi authorities.

Linked to Daesh, Al-Saeiri had the expertise to make bombs and explosive belts; he was also wanted for involvement in a 2016 attack on an emergency-forces mosque in the Asir region of Saudi Arabia.

### Scholars Meet to Exchange Ideas on Countering Violent Extremism

King Khalid University organized the second International Conference on Media and Terrorism, Methods and Strategies in early December 2016.

Dr. Faleh bin Ra'allah Al-Sulami, university rector, opened the conference. He remarked on the

important role that universities have to play in developing media that engages with modern issues, including violent extremism, according to Arab News.

"It is time [that] these specialized departments prepare experts who are capable of bearing

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responsibility, especially since terrorism has become an international phenomenon with terrorists surfing many sites on the internet,” Al-Sulami said.

Al-Sulami emphasized that Saudi Arabia has been affected by the global phenomenon of terrorism, but under steadfast leadership and national unity has “become a role model for many countries around the world in standing up to terrorism.”

The conference featured more 80 research papers on the subject and engaged with more than 100

participants from inside and outside Saudi Arabia. Conference organizers received more than 1,200 applications to participate in the conference, reflecting the critical nature of the work.

“The world has, through the media, become a global village, and universities should exert greater efforts to study the phenomenon and make that study an integral part of their duty in serving the community,” Al-Sulaimi asserted.

## VISION 2030

### 2017 Budget Released, Major Deficit Reduction Projected

The Saudi government released its budget for 2017, outlining an 8 percent increase from 2016 and projected a 33 percent decrease in the country’s national deficit.

“We have sought through this budget and its programs to improve the efficiency of capital and operational expenditures in the state; strengthen the situation of public finances[and] enhance their sustainability; give priority to developmental and service projects and programs that serve citizens directly; and contribute to activating the role of the private sector and increasing its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP),” said King Salman.

Saudi Arabia’s revenue is projected to reach \$184.5 billion in the 2017 fiscal year; oil revenues are forecasted to increase by 46 percent.

Vision 2030, released in April 2016, seeks to further strengthen the Saudi economy. The budget reflects the government’s commitment to the reforms and initiatives laid out in the plan.

“The Kingdom’s fiscal policy aims to strengthen the general finance framework and boost efficiency in government spending to reach a balanced budget. This is in line with the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 and related programs,” the budget states.

### Businesses Visas to be Granted Within 24 Hours

A new mechanism has been put in place to encourage investment in Saudi Arabia: Foreign commercial businesses looking to set up shop in the country will be granted visas within 24 hours.

The application system for businesses was opened on Jan. 1, 2017. Encouraging foreign investment in the

Saudi Arabia is a key part of Vision 2030, and the effort to ease access to the Saudi market aims to advance this goal.

The new visa measure was introduced as a result of directives issued by Saudi Arabia’s Council of Economic and Development Affairs, which is charged

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with improving the investment environment and generating increased business activity in the private sector. The Saudi government is looking to increase

foreign direct investment from 3.8 percent to the international level of 5.7 percent of the country's GDP by 2030.

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## HUMANITARIAN AID

### King Salman Orders Relief Campaign for the Syrian People

On Dec. 26, 2016, King Salman ordered the execution of a relief campaign to ease the suffering of the Syrian people who have been displaced, especially those evacuated from Aleppo and other conflict areas, who face a particularly difficult situation.

King Salman dedicated \$27 million for the campaign. The campaign will be coordinated by the King Salman

Center for Relief and Humanitarian Works (KSRELIEF), which will set up collection centers throughout the Kingdom to collect monetary and in-kind donations.

King Salman kicked off the campaign by donating \$5.3 million, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif donated \$2.6 million, and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman donated \$2.1 million.



ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

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