

Press Releases: State Department Terrorist Designation of al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB)

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

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The Department of State has designated al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB) – an Iran-backed terrorist group in Bahrain – as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Department has also designated AAB as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under section 1(b) of Executive Order (E.O.) 13224. The Department also designated two AAB-affiliated individuals ([Ahmad Hasan Yusuf and Alsayed Murtadha Majeed Ramadhan Alawi, AKA Mortada Majid Al-Sanadi](#)) as SDGTs in March 2017.

Today's designations seek to deny AAB the resources to plan and carry out terrorist attacks. Among other consequences, all of its property and interests in property subject to U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in any transactions with this organization. In addition, it is a crime to knowingly provide, or attempt or conspire to provide, material support or resources to the organization. These designations support a larger campaign to deter Iran's malign behavior and stop its support for terrorists around the world.

In announcing these designations, Coordinator for Counterterrorism Nathan A. Sales emphasized that, "From Africa, Europe, North America, Asia, and the Gulf, Iran is using terrorist proxies to extend its malevolent influence and upend international peace and stability. Al-Ashtar is yet another in a long line of Iranian sponsored terrorists who kill on behalf of a corrupt regime. Today's designation serves notice that the United States sees plainly what Iran is trying to do to Bahrain through its proxy, the terrorist group Al-Ashtar."

Established in 2013, AAB is an Iran-backed terrorist organization aimed at overthrowing the Bahraini government. AAB has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist attacks against police and security targets in Bahrain. In March 2014, AAB conducted a bomb attack that killed two local police officers and an officer from the United Arab Emirates. In January 2017, AAB shot and

killed a local police officer. AAB has also called for violence against the Bahraini, British, Saudi Arabian, and U.S. governments on social media.

In January 2018, AAB formally adopted Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) branding and reaffirmed its loyalty to Tehran to reflect its role in an Iranian network of state and non-state actors that operates against the United States and its allies in the region. Additionally, AAB members have received weapons and explosives from Iran, training at IRGC-funded camps in Iraq, and senior AAB members have taken refuge in Iran to evade prosecution by Bahraini authorities.

Today's action notifies the U.S. public and the international community that AAB is a terrorist organization and has committed or poses a significant risk of committing acts of terrorism. Terrorism designations expose and isolate organizations and individuals, and deny them access to the U.S. financial system. Moreover, designations can assist the law enforcement activities of U.S. agencies and other governments. A list of State Department-designated FTOs and SDGTs is available here: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/index.htm>.

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