

# **Press Releases: Secretary Tillerson's Meeting With Republic of Korea Special Envoy Hong Seok-hyun**

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 19, 2017

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The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:

On May 18, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met with Republic of Korea Ambassador Hong Seok-hyun, President Moon Jae-in's Special Envoy to the United States.

During the meeting, Secretary Tillerson congratulated the Moon administration on its recent election. The Secretary reaffirmed the United States' ironclad commitment to defend the Republic of Korea against threats from North Korea. The two also discussed the importance of our continued close coordination.

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# **Press Releases: United States and Djibouti Open Third Annual Binational Forum of Cooperation**

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

May 19, 2017

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On May 18, U.S. and Djiboutian officials met in Washington, D.C. on the occasion of the third annual U.S.-Djibouti Binational Forum.

Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon opened the strategic dialogue for the U.S. delegation. Bureau of African Affairs Acting Assistant Secretary Peter Barlerin and Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Whitaker led the U.S. delegation's discussions on areas of shared interests and opportunities for increased cooperation with Djibouti Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, Minister of Defense Ali Hassan Bahdon, Minister of Interior Hassan Omar Mohamed, Minister of Labor and Administrative Reform Hassan Idriss Samrieh, Chairman of Djibouti Ports and Free Zone Authority Aboubaker Omar Hadi, the President of the Chamber of Commerce Youssef Moussa Dawaleh, and Djiboutian Ambassador to the United States Mohamed Siad Doualeh.

The Binational Forum was created to enhance strategic cooperation and strengthen the U.S.-Djibouti bilateral relationship. The Djiboutian and U.S. delegations addressed a range of political, economic, development, and security issues. This year's forum was also notable with the Djiboutian delegation's announcement that Djibouti will join the Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Members of both the U.S. and Djiboutian delegations spoke of the positive "extraordinary moment" in bilateral relations following the recent visit by U.S. Secretary of Defense Mattis to Djibouti and discussed ways to further enhance the bilateral relationship and strategic cooperation.

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# Press Releases: State Department Terrorist Designations of Hashem Safieddine and Muhammad al-Isawi

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 19, 2017

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The Department of State has designated Hashem Safieddine and Muhammad al-Isawi as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT) under Section 1(b) of Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, which imposes sanctions on foreign persons who have committed, or pose a serious risk of committing, acts of terrorism that threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States. As a consequence of these designations, U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with Safieddine and al-Isawi, and all of Safieddine's and al-Isawi's property and interests in property subject to United States jurisdiction are blocked.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia joined the United States in designating Hashem Safieddine. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia designated Safieddine under its Law of Terrorism Crimes and Financing and Royal Decree A/44. As a result, any of his assets held in Saudi Arabia are frozen, and transfers through the Kingdom's financial sector, are prohibited.

Hashem Safieddine is a senior leader in Hizballah, a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and SDGT entity supported by Iran. Safieddine is a key member of Hizballah's executive council, which oversees Hizballah's political, organizational, social, and educational activities. Hizballah is responsible for such terrorist attacks as the suicide truck bombings of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut in 1984, and the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847.

Muhammad al-Isawi, more commonly known as Abu Usama al-Masri, has been ISIS' affiliate in the Sinai's leader since the death of Abu Du'a al-Ansari in August 2016. Prior to being selected as leader of ISIS' affiliate in the Sinai, he was the group's media spokesman. He also spent time in an Egyptian prison before escaping during the 2011 Egyptian revolution. ISIS' affiliate in the Sinai originally operated under the name Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, which was designated as an FTO in September 2014. The State Department amended the

group's FTO designation to include ISIS' affiliate in the Sinai on September 30, 2015.

Today's actions notify the U.S. public and the international community that Safieddine and al-Isawi pose a serious risk of committing acts of terrorism that threaten the national security and foreign policy of the United States. The action against Safieddine is the latest example of the strong partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia in combatting the financing of terrorism. The Safieddine designation is also consistent with the U.S. government's ongoing effort to expose and apply pressure against the actions of Hizballah, which is supported by the foremost State Sponsor of Terrorism, Iran. Designations of terrorist individuals and groups expose and isolate organizations and individuals and result in denial of access to the U.S. financial system. Moreover, designations can assist or complement the law enforcement actions of other U.S. agencies and other governments.

A list of State Department-designated FTOs and SDGTs is available [here](#).

#### **Identifiers:**

**Name:** Hashem Safieddine  
**AKA:** Hashem Safi al-Din  
**AKA:** Hashem Safi a-Din  
**AKA:** Hashim Safi al Din  
**AKA:** Hashim Safi Al-Din  
**AKA:** Hashim Safieddine  
**POB:** Lebanon  
**DOB:** Circa 1964  
**Location:** Lebanon

**Name:** Muhammad Ahmad 'Ali al-Isawi  
**AKA:** Abu Osama al-Masri  
**AKA:** Abu Usamah al-Masri  
**DOB:** Circa 1973  
**POB:** Sinai Province, Egypt  
**Location:** Egypt

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# [Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary Judith G. Garber To Travel to Germany](#)

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 19, 2017

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Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith G. Garber will travel to Berlin, Germany May 21-25 to lead the U.S. delegation to the Petersberg Climate Dialogue. During her visit, she also will meet with German and other European officials to discuss economic and environmental issues.

For additional information, contact Esther Bell ([BelLEF@state.gov](mailto:BelLEF@state.gov)).

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# [Press Releases: 2017 U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue](#)

Media Note  
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May 19, 2017

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The 21<sup>st</sup> session of the U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue will be held May 23 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Acting Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Virginia Bennett and Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General, Vu Anh Quang, will lead their respective delegations in the Dialogue.

The Dialogue will cover a wide range of human rights issues, including the importance of continued progress on legal reform efforts; rule of law; freedoms of expression, association, and assembly; religious freedom; labor rights; disability rights; anti-discrimination; and multilateral cooperation, as well as individual cases of concern.

The promotion of human rights is a crucial part of U.S. foreign policy and a key aspect of our ongoing dialogue within the U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership. Progress on these issues will enable our relationship to reach its fullest potential.

For more information, please contact [DRL-Press@state.gov](mailto:DRL-Press@state.gov).

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