

# Press Releases: Supporting Saudi Arabia's Defense Needs

Fact Sheet  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 20, 2017

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Today, in a significant expansion of the more than seven-decade long security relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the President and Secretary Tillerson attended a signing ceremony for almost \$110 billion worth of defense capabilities to be conveyed via Foreign Military Sales Letters of Offer and Acceptance and a Memorandum of Intent to support Saudi Arabia's defense needs.

This package of defense equipment and services supports the long-term security of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region in the face of malign Iranian influence and Iranian related threats. Additionally, it bolsters the Kingdom's ability to provide for its own security and continue contributing to counterterrorism operations across the region, reducing the burden on U.S. military forces.

This package demonstrates the United States' commitment to our partnership with Saudi Arabia, while also expanding opportunities for American companies in the region, potentially supporting tens of thousands of new jobs in the United States.

The intended sales fall broadly into five categories: border security and counterterrorism, maritime and coastal security, air force modernization, air and missile defense, and cybersecurity and communications upgrades. Included are offers of extensive training and support to strengthen our partnership and the Saudi armed forces.

Collectively, they present the opportunity to significantly augment the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's capabilities to help deter regional threats and enhance its ability to protect its borders and contribute to coalition counterterrorism operations.

**Border Security and Counter Terrorism:** Capabilities such as aerostats, tanks, artillery, counter-mortar radars, armored personnel carriers, helicopters, and associated training that will enable Saudi Arabia to secure its borders against terrorist and other threats.

**Maritime and Coastal Security:** Capabilities that will enable Saudi Arabia to defend freedom of navigation and to deter and defend against maritime attacks or incursions. Systems include Multi-Mission Surface Combatant ships, helicopters, patrol boats, and associated weapons systems.

**Air Force Modernization:** Systems, sustainment, and training that will enable Saudi Arabia to maintain airborne surveillance, secure its airspace, and provide close air support with improved precision targeting capabilities and processes. Systems include transport, light close air support, intelligence-gathering aircraft, and continuing support for its existing platforms.

**Air and Missile Defense:** Systems such as Patriot and THAAD that will help Saudi Arabia protect itself and the region from missile or other airborne attacks.

**Cybersecurity and Communications:** Equipment that will modernize Saudi Arabia's command and control networks across its military to improve its overall cohesion and operational effectiveness.

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## [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 Youssouf 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:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Hashem Safieddine</b>
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](#)

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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 ([BelleEF@state.gov](mailto:BelleEF@state.gov)).

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