

Press Releases: State Department Terrorist Designations of Muhammad al- Ghazali, Abukar Ali Adan, and Wanas al-Faqih

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
January 4, 2018

The Department of State has designated Muhammad al-Ghazali, Abukar Ali Adan, and Wanas al-Faqih as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) under Section 1(b) of Executive Order (E.O.) 13224. These designations impose strict sanctions on foreign persons determined to have committed, or pose a significant 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. Among the consequences of these designations, all of their 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 them.

As outlined further below, these three individuals are associated with al-Qa'ida affiliates al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Shabaab, and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), all of which have been designated by the United States as Foreign Terrorist Organizations pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as SDGT entities under E.O. 13224. Al-Ghazali is a senior member of AQAP who is involved in internal security and training of the group's operatives. Abukar Ali Adan is deputy leader of al-Shabaab. Wanas al-Faqih is an AQIM associate who planned the March 18, 2015 Bardo Museum attack in Tunis, Tunisia that killed at least 20 people.

Today's action notifies the U.S. public and the international community that Muhammad al-Ghazali, Wanas al-Faqih, and Abukar Ali Adan have committed 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:
<https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/index.htm>.

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Press Releases: On the Continuing Protests in Iran

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
January 4, 2018

We continue to monitor closely the protests and violence in Iran. The Iranian people have been expressing their desire for dignified treatment, an end to corruption, improved transparency, and increased economic opportunities. Protestors have also demanded that the regime stop diverting the nation's wealth to fund military adventurism abroad. Unfortunately, the government continues to imprison and kill those who are brave enough to venture into the street. It is limiting the flow of information into Iran, restricting free speech, and attempting to prevent the outside world from observing its own repression.

We support these legitimate aspirations of the Iranian people, and call on the government to allow the free exchange of ideas and information. All of us should be able to enjoy the same basic economic and political freedoms, including the right to peaceful demonstration. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the deaths to date and the arrests of at least one thousand Iranians. We have ample authorities to hold accountable those who commit violence against protestors, contribute to censorship, or steal from the people of Iran. To the regime's victims, we say: You will not be forgotten.

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Press Releases: Designations Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
January 4, 2018

In far too many places around the globe, people continue to be persecuted, unjustly prosecuted, or imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief. Today, a number of governments infringe upon individuals' ability to adopt, change, or renounce their religion or belief, worship in accordance with their religion or beliefs, or be free from coercion to practice a particular religion or belief.

In accordance with the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the Secretary of State annually designates governments that have engaged in or tolerated systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom as "Countries of Particular Concern". Today, the Department of State announces that the Secretary of State re-designated Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as Countries of Particular Concern on December 22, 2017. The Secretary also placed Pakistan on a Special Watch List for severe violations of religious freedom.

The protection of religious freedom is vital to peace, stability, and prosperity. These designations are aimed at improving the respect for religious freedom in these countries. We recognize that several designated countries are working to improve their respect for religious freedom; we welcome these initiatives and look forward to continued dialogue. The United States remains committed to working with governments, civil society

organizations, and religious leaders to advance religious freedom around the world.

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[Press Releases: Sports Envoy Dean Karnazes Travels to Peru](#)

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
January 3, 2018

Ultramarathon legend Dean Karnazes will travel to Peru, January 6–15, as a U.S. Department of State [Sports Envoy](#). Karnazes will engage Peruvian communities, including some of the country's top runners, senior sports and youth officials, blind athletes, and indigenous people.

In Lima, Karnazes will share his expertise with the Pan American Games committee as it plans to host athletes and visitors from throughout the Americas in Lima in 2019. He will also volunteer in the "I'm Your Eyes" program to empower blind athletes, and support a sports program that uses athletics to help rehabilitate female prison inmates.

Karnazes will then travel to the cities of Huancayo and Cusco to share best practices with top Peruvian runners, many of whom are from indigenous communities and who train in high-altitude regions. In Cusco, he will also join runners of the Chaki Wayra program, which encourages underserved youth to pursue positive life goals through running. Additionally, Karnazes will speak at the Binational Centers in Lima, Huancayo, and Cusco.

This is the second time Karnazes has traveled on behalf of the State Department. In 2016, he ran an ultramarathon of [525 kilometers](#) that traced

the ancient Silk Road through Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan to mark the 25th anniversary of these countries' independence from the Soviet Union.

For press inquiries in the United States, contact ECA-Press@state.gov. Follow the journey of Dean Karnazes on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with the hashtag #KarnazesEnPeru and live on Instagram Stories by following [@usembassyperu](#). On Facebook, visit [@Peru.usembassy](#), [@PeruRunners](#), and [@ultramathon](#). To learn more about the State Department's sports diplomacy programs, follow us on Twitter [@SportsDiplomacy](#).

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[Press Releases: Burmese \(Myanmar\) National Day](#)

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
January 2, 2018

On behalf of the United States of America, I offer congratulations to President Htin Kyaw and the people of Myanmar on the occasion of Myanmar's Independence Day on January 4, 2018.

For decades, the United States has stood with the people of Myanmar in their pursuit of peace, freedom, and justice. We remain committed to helping advance Myanmar's democratic transition, and continue to support the civilian government in efforts to end decades of conflict; strengthen respect for human rights, transparency, and rule of law; and foster inclusive economic development. At the same time, we urge authorities to take further steps to

ensure everyone has full and equal access to the opportunities and the benefits of a democratic society.

We wish all of Myanmar's people peace, security, and prosperity in the coming year.

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