

## Middle East Overview

*“Islam rejects all acts of terrorism and every terrorist. Moreover, an evil act is considered a contradiction of both Islamic Sharia (law) and human logic.”*

*Saudi Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz,  
10 September 2002*

Terrorism remained a fundamental feature of the Middle East political landscape in 2002. Terrorist groups and their state sponsors continued terrorist activities and planning throughout 2002. Usama Bin Ladin’s al-Qaida continued to be active in the region. Additionally, HAMAS, the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Hizballah, and other groups opposed to a comprehensive Middle East peace maintained their attacks on civilians. Most Middle Eastern countries—including some that sponsor terrorist groups and with which the United States has differences—showed significant cooperation with the US-led campaign against terrorism, however.

In many nations, Middle Eastern allies of the United States thwarted terrorist incidents targeted against US interests and citizens, disrupted terrorist planning and operations, and enhanced their counterterrorism relations with the United States. Many have continued to provide tangible support for Operation Enduring Freedom, including personnel, basing, and overflight privileges. Most Middle East governments froze al-Qaida financial assets pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 1373, 1267, 1390 and 1455. Notably, all Middle Eastern countries with an American diplomatic and/or military presence were responsive to US requests for enhanced security for personnel and facilities during periods of heightened alert. The Government of Saudi Arabia, for example, has begun enhanced direct cooperation and coordination with the United States to counter terrorist financing and operations.

The Government of Yemen has continued a broad counterterrorism campaign against al-Qaida and suspected al-Qaida members within its territory with several notable successes and provided

excellent cooperation with the United States. Jordan and Kuwait continued to counter suspected terrorists and provided superb security support to US facilities in the wake of the assassination of US diplomat Laurence Foley in Amman and the fatal shootings of US servicemen in Kuwait. The United Arab Emirates continued to buttress ongoing counterterrorism efforts in the Gulf.

Egypt’s solid record of counterterrorism cooperation included efforts at brokering a cease-fire among Palestinian rejectionist groups that would halt terrorist violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The Governments of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco all actively supported the global campaign against terrorism.

Syria cooperated with the US Government and its partners in investigating al-Qaida and some other organizations. Damascus has continued, however, to support Hizballah, HAMAS, the PIJ, and other Palestinian rejectionist groups that conduct terrorist operations in the region. The Syrians have continued to assert that the activities of these groups constitute legitimate resistance. They sometimes even condone Palestinian suicide bombings and other attacks against civilian targets within Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip.

The Gulf countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates played strong roles in the international Coalition against terrorism. These governments have continued to implement positive steps to halt the flow of terrorism financing and provide other assistance in the war on terrorism. In many instances, they did so despite popular disquiet over their governments’ military support for Operation Enduring Freedom and other counterterrorism activities. As in many other countries, US interests were often subject to terrorist threats. The Gulf governments as a whole were extremely responsive in providing appropriate and effective security measures.

Maghreb governments likewise gave strong support by searching for terrorist financing, providing increased security to US interests, and thwarting actual terrorist plots. For example, Morocco arrested and prosecuted Saudis and Moroccans who allegedly were planning to attack NATO ships in the Straits of Gibraltar and also developed comprehensive antiterrorism legislation.

Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, which have been designated as state sponsors of terrorism, are discussed in the state sponsorship section of this report.

## **Algeria**

President Bouteflika has publicly pledged his Government's full cooperation in the war against terror. As part of its effort, the Government of Algeria strengthened its information sharing with the United States and worked with European and other governments to eliminate terrorist-support networks linked to Algerian groups, most of which are in Europe. In 2002, Algeria hosted an international conference on crime and counterterrorism that was attended by almost 20 international delegations. The Government also hosted the Africa Union Summit on terrorism.

The Algerian Government enacted new laws combating violent extremism, most significantly a presidential decree allowing Government institutions to monitor accounts in private banks and creating a unit in the Ministry of Finance to fight money laundering. On the security front, Algerian authorities in late November announced that they had eliminated an al-Qaida operative who had been working with the country's domestic extremist groups.

Algeria is a party to 10 of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

Algeria itself has been ravaged by terrorism since the early 1990s. Terrorism within the country remained a serious problem in 2002, although the level of violence has declined markedly over the past decade as Government forces have steadily reduced the areas in which militants operate. Most violence occurred in areas outside the capital, although militants on occasion still attempt attacks in the Algiers region.

The Salafist Group for Call and Combat—the largest, most active terrorist organization operating in the country—maintained the capability to conduct operations. It collaborated with smugglers and Islamists in the south who supplied insurgents with weapons and communications equipment for attacks in the north.

## **Bahrain**

Bahrain, which hosts the US Naval Forces Central/Fifth Fleet Headquarters and provides basing and extensive overflight clearances for a multitude of US military aircraft, has been essential to the continued success of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Bahraini military assets have participated in OEF Coalition naval operations including terrorist interdiction efforts, and Bahrain offered a medical unit for OEF duty. The King, Crown Prince, and other senior Bahraini ministers have been outspoken public proponents of the war on terrorism. The Government of Bahrain cooperated closely and effectively on criminal investigations related to the campaign against terrorism. In September, for instance, Bahraini authorities were essential in the transfer to US custody of Mukhtar al-Bakri, a US citizen suspected of terrorist activity.

Equally important, the Bahrain Monetary Authority quickly implemented UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1267, 1390, and 1455, as well as 1373, ordering financial institutions to identify and freeze accounts of organizations associated with members of al-Qaida, Usama Bin Ladin, and members of the Taliban that the UNSCR 1267 Sanctions Committee has included on its consolidated list. To date, seven accounts have been identified and frozen. Bahrain has developed financial regulations to ensure that charitable contributions are not channeled to financing terrorists. The Government of Bahrain has been extraordinarily responsive to US Government requests for additional security measures in recent years and continued to give the highest priority to the protection of US lives and property in Bahrain.

Bahrain is a party to five of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

## Egypt

The Egyptian and US Governments continued their close cooperation on a broad range of counterterrorism issues in 2002. The relationship deepened in 2002 as the countries coordinated closely on law-enforcement issues and the freezing of assets, consistent with the requirements of UNSCRs 1373, 1267, 1390 and 1455. Egypt also cooperated with the United States in freezing the assets of individuals and organizations designated by the United States pursuant to Executive Order 13224. In law enforcement, the Egyptian Government deepened its information-sharing relationship in terrorist-related investigations. The Government provided immediate information, for example, in the investigation of the shootings on 4 July at Los Angeles airport, which involved an Egyptian national. Its response was critical in determining that the shooting was an individual act, not part of a terrorist conspiracy. The Egyptian Government also provided the name and full identification (numerical identifiers and photo) of a terrorist believed to be in the United States.



*His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia; His Excellency Ahmed Maher Al-Sayyed, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt; His Excellency Marwan Jamil Al-Muasher, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; and Secretary of State Colin Powell speak to reporters after their meeting at the State Department, July 2002.*

The Government of Egypt has continued to be committed to searching and freezing terrorist funds in Egyptian banks. In 2002, the Egyptian parliament passed an anti-money-laundering law that strengthens banking regulations and permits the Government more latitude in its campaign to staunch the flow of terrorist funds. The Egyptian Government, both secular and clerical, continued to make public statements supportive of US efforts and indicative of its commitment to the worldwide campaign against terrorism.

In addition to combating global terrorism, Cairo continued to place a high priority on the protection of US citizens and facilities in Egypt. It increased security for US citizens and facilities and for US forces, both stationed in Egypt and transiting the country to the Gulf, by air or through the Suez Canal. Egypt has strengthened its airport security, agreed to stricter aviation-security measures, and granted extensive overflight and canal transit clearances.

Egypt was for many years itself a victim of terrorism. President Mubarak first called for an international conference to combat terrorism in 1986. With US assistance and training, Egypt has effectively combated the internal terrorist/extremist threat. There were no acts of terrorism in Egypt in 2002, either against US citizens, Egyptians, or other nationals. The Government continued a “zero tolerance” policy toward suspected terrorists and extremists.

During 2002, the Government prosecuted 94 members (seven of whom were tried in absentia) of a group dubbed “al-Wa’ad” (the Promise), accused of having supplied arms and financial support to Chechen rebels and HAMAS. On 9 September, the military tribunal sentenced 51 defendants to terms ranging from two to 15 years while acquitting 43. On 20 October, the Government brought 26 members of the Islamic Liberation Party to trial in the supreme state security court. The defendants, who include three Britons, stand accused of joining a banned group, attempting to recruit members for that group, and spreading extremist ideology. The group was banned in Egypt in 1974, following an attempt to overthrow the Government and establish an Islamic caliphate.

The United States deported a member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad in 2002 for trial in connection with the assassination of President Anwar Sadat. Several other members of Egyptian terrorist organizations were returned to Egypt from abroad. During the summer, the Egyptian Government announced plans to release from prison a large group of al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya (IG) leaders and members, sentenced in the early 1980s. In 1997, the group’s leadership in prison declared a cease-fire and halt to all armed operations and acts of violence. In 1999, IG leadership abroad declared their support for the initiative. This year, the IG leadership in prison in Egypt published four pamphlets on the religious basis and legitimacy for ending all violence and armed operations. In the fall, the Government

began releasing IG members and leaders who they believe have transformed their ideology and religious beliefs while in prison.

Egypt is a party to nine of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

## **Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip**

Israel maintained staunch support for US-led counterterrorist operations as terrorist activity in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip continued at a heightened level in 2002. HAMAS, the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, all of which the United States has designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and has designated pursuant to Executive Order 13224, were responsible for most of the attacks, which included suicide bombings, shootings, and mortar firings against civilian and military targets. Terrorists killed more than 370 persons—including at least 10 US citizens—compared to fewer than 200 persons killed in 2001.

Israel is a party to eight of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

Israeli authorities arrested individuals claiming allegiance to al-Qaida, although the group does not appear to have an operational presence in Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Palestinian terrorist groups in these areas publicly distanced themselves from Usama Bin Ladin and appear focused on attacking Israel, versus joining in a fight against the West.

Israel responded to Palestinian terrorism with large-scale military operations. Israeli forces launched incursions into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, conducted targeted killings of suspected Palestinian terrorists, destroyed the homes of families of suicide bombers, and imposed closures and curfews in Palestinian areas. Israel expelled two family members of Palestinian

terrorists from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip in September. Two of Israeli's most extensive operations—Defensive Shield, launched in March, and Determined Path, launched in June—reduced the frequency of Palestinian attacks; continuing attacks, however, show the groups remained potent.

HAMAS was particularly active, carrying out over 50 attacks, including shootings, suicide bombings, and standoff mortar-and-rocket attacks against civilian and military targets. The group was responsible for the most deadly Palestinian terrorist attack of the year—the suicide bombing of a Passover gathering at a Netanya hotel that killed 29 Israelis, including one dual US-Israeli citizen. HAMAS's bombing of a cafeteria on the Hebrew University campus, which killed nine, including five US citizens, demonstrated its willingness to stage operations in areas frequented by Westerners, including US citizens.

The PIJ increased its number of lethal attacks in 2002, staging a car bombing in June that killed 17 Israelis near Megiddo. It carried out similar attacks in or near Afula, Haifa, and Hadera. PIJ terrorists conducted deadly shooting attacks in 2002 as well, including a two-stage ambush in Hebron in late November that killed at least 12 persons, including several security personnel who responded to the initial attack. Syrian officials declined to act on a US request in November to close the PIJ's offices in Damascus.

In March, the US Department of State officially designated the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (al-Aqsa), which emerged in 2000, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), and designated it pursuant to Executive Order 13224. Al-Aqsa-linked attacks have killed at least five US citizens. The group conducted numerous shooting attacks and suicide bombings in 2002, some of which employed new techniques. On 27 January, an al-Aqsa suicide bombing that killed one person and injured 50 used a female suicide bomber for the first time. The group claimed responsibility for a shooting attack that killed six Israelis waiting to vote in the Israeli Likud party elections in November. Documents

seized by the Israelis and information gleaned from the interrogation of arrested al-Aqsa members indicate that Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah members, including Chairman Yasir Arafat, made payments to al-Aqsa members known to have been involved in violence against Israelis.

Payments by Iraq to the families of Palestinian "martyrs" in 2002 were intended to encourage attacks against Israeli targets and garner more support for Iraq among Palestinians. In October, the West Bank leader of the Iraqi-backed Arab Liberation Front admitted under Israeli interrogation to having overseen the transfer and distribution of up to \$15 million in Iraqi money to martyrs' families, confirming Palestinian and other press accounts of such transfers.

Jewish extremists raised their profile in 2002. Several Jewish extremists, some with ties to Kach, a designated FTO, were arrested in April and May for plotting to blow up a Palestinian school for girls or a Palestinian hospital in Jerusalem. Jewish extremists were also arrested for inciting a violent clash between Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces in October; extremists also attacked and injured Palestinian agricultural workers, and some US citizens were also the victims in these attacks.

The Palestinian Authority's efforts to thwart terrorist operations were minimal in 2002. Israeli military operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip degraded a PA security apparatus that was already hobbled by corruption, infighting, and poor leadership. Some personnel in the security services, including several senior officers, have continued to assist terrorist operations. Incidents such as the seizure in January of the *Karine-A*, a ship carrying weapons that Iran planned to deliver to the PA, further called into question the PA's ability and desire to help prevent terrorist operations. President Bush expressed "disappointment" in Arafat, indicating the intercepted shipment would encourage terrorism. In June, President Bush called for a new Palestinian leadership "not compromised by terror."



## Jordan

The Jordanian Government continued to strongly support global counterterrorist efforts while remaining vigilant against the threat of terrorism at home. Jordan was highly responsive to the security needs of US citizens in country and played a critical role in thwarting attempts to exploit Jordanian territory for attacks in Israel.

Jordan aggressively pursued suspected terrorists and successfully prosecuted and convicted many involved in plots against US or Israeli interests. Jordanian authorities, in mid-January 2003, convicted 10 Jordanians of weapons charges but acquitted them of participating in a plot to target US interests in Jordan. Jordan is working closely with US officials to investigate the murder in late October of USAID officer Laurence Foley. In December, Jordanian authorities arrested two men, a Libyan and a Jordanian, who later admitted to carrying out the assassination after receiving money from al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The two have been charged with the murder and remain in Jordanian custody awaiting trial.

Suspected terrorists continued attempts to exploit Jordanian territory to transit weapons to and from groups in neighboring states, or to use Jordanian territory to facilitate terrorist attacks. Jordanian authorities have successfully intercepted such



*Jordan's King Abdullah and Queen Rania offer condolences to the wife of assassinated US senior diplomat Laurence Foley at her home in Amman, 29 October 2002.*

transiting weapons and personnel on virtually all of its borders. In June, Jordan rendered to Lebanese security authorities three Lebanese Hizballah members arrested after allegedly trying to smuggle weapons destined for the West Bank into Jordan. Jordanian authorities in June also reportedly arrested three Jordanian youths suspected of planning to infiltrate into Israel to conduct terrorist attacks. In July, four Syrians were sentenced to prison terms for illegally possessing explosives they intended to transport to the West Bank. In October, Jordan's State Security Court sentenced four individuals to prison terms ranging from five to eight years after convicting them of possessing and attempting to transport machineguns and missiles into the West Bank.

In May, Jordan's State Security Court indicted six unnamed suspects in connection with a bombing in late February of a Jordanian counterterrorism official's vehicle, killing two passersby.

Jordan is a party to seven of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.



*Jordanian Islamists hold banners showing names of Palestinian suicide bombers during a pro-Palestinian rally in Amman, 21 August 2002.*

## Kuwait

Kuwait has continued to support and cooperate with all actions and requests for assistance in the war on terrorism, particularly in the aftermath of the 8 October attack on Failaka Island in which one US Marine was killed and another wounded, and the attack on 21 November that took place on a Kuwaiti highway in which two US soldiers were wounded. These were the only confirmed terrorist incidents among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations in 2002. The attacks strengthened the Government's concerns about the activities of extremists within Kuwait. In the immediate aftermath of the October incident, the Government of Kuwait rapidly located and arrested individuals involved (the two shooters were killed during the attack) and continued to respond favorably to all US Government requests in connection with the ongoing investigation and other security threats. Kuwaiti authorities completed their investigations of the 26 persons suspected of involvement in the attack. Twenty-one were released, and five were referred to the public prosecutor. Trials had begun by year's end. A policeman suspected of carrying out the November shooting was arrested immediately after the attack and remains in Kuwaiti custody.

Cooperation has been strong in the area of terrorist financing as well. Following a review of Kuwaiti laws by the Financial Services Assessment Team, the United States is preparing a technical-assistance program for Kuwait. The Government remains eager to receive formal proposals for training and has indicated a willingness to support such efforts. The Government of Kuwait also established a new entity within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to monitor Islamic charities.

Kuwait is a party to seven of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.



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*Marines and their families bow their heads during the benediction for Lance Cpl. Antonio J. Sledd, who was gunned down by terrorists during a military exercise in Kuwait, 8 October 2002.*

## Lebanon

Despite its counterterrorism efforts in 2002, Lebanon experienced an increase in terrorist attacks by Sunni extremist and terrorist groups. Explosions at several US-franchise restaurants and a spike of cross-border attacks into Israel in March and April indicated worsening security conditions. Large demonstrations at the US Embassy during April against US policy in the Middle East

highlighted rising public anger. The murder of a US missionary in Sidon on 21 November may not have been entirely politically motivated, but it clearly demonstrated the danger US citizens face in Lebanon. Prime Minister Hariri condemned the murder, and Lebanese law-enforcement officials launched a full investigation of the crime.

In 2002, the Lebanese Government demonstrated greater efforts against Sunni terrorist groups such as Asbat al-Ansar, which was outlawed. The United States has designated Asbat al-Ansar a Foreign Terrorist Organization and has designated it pursuant to Executive Order 13224. A July confrontation at the Ayn al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp—the center of Asbat’s activities—resulted in the surrender of a Sunni extremist who had fled into the camp after killing three Lebanese military personnel in Sidon. The Lebanese Armed Forces, however, did not itself enter the camp, and Palestinian refugee camps, much of the Beka’a Valley, southern Beirut, and the southern border area remain effectively outside the Government’s control. In October, the judiciary arrested three men (two Lebanese and one Saudi) and indicted 18 others *in absentia* on charges of preparing to carry out terrorist attacks and forging documents and passports. The detainees, because of their al-Qaida connections, will be tried in a military tribunal.

Lebanese efforts against Sunni extremists, including al-Qaida, stand in contrast to its continuing unwillingness to condemn as terrorists several organizations that maintain a presence in Lebanon: Hizballah, the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), the Abu Nidal organization (ANO), and the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS). The Lebanese Government has long considered these organizations that target Israel to be legitimate resistance groups and has permitted them to establish offices in Beirut. The Government refused to freeze the assets of Hizballah or close down the offices of rejectionist Palestinian organizations. It also continued to reject the US Government’s

position that Hizballah has a global reach, instead concentrating on its political wing and asserting it to be a local, indigenous organization integral to Lebanese society and politics. Syrian and Iranian support for Hizballah activities in the south, as well as training and assistance to Palestinian rejectionist groups in Lebanon, help permit terrorist elements to flourish. On 12 March, infiltrators from Lebanon killed six Israelis in Shelomi, Israel, and Hizballah-Palestinian rejectionist groups carried out several cross-border attacks—including firing Katyusha rockets—into Israel.

The Lebanese Government acknowledges the UN list of terrorist groups designated pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 1267 and 1390. It does not, however, acknowledge the terrorist groups designated only by the US Government and will take no action against these groups. Constitutional provisions prohibit the extradition of any Lebanese national to a third country. Lebanese authorities maintain that the Government’s provision of amnesty to Lebanese involved in acts of violence during the civil war prevents them from prosecuting many cases of interest to the United States, including the 1985 hijacking of TWA 847 and the murder associated with it, and the abduction, torture, and murder of US hostages from 1984 to 1991. US courts have brought indictments against Hizballah operatives responsible for a number of those crimes, and some of these defendants remain prominent in the organization.

The Lebanese Government has insisted that Imad Mugniyah—wanted in connection with the TWA hijacking and other terrorist acts, and placed on the FBI’s list of most-wanted terrorists in 2001—is no longer present in Lebanon. The Government’s legal system has also failed to hold a hearing on the prosecutor’s appeal in the case of Tawfiz Muhammad Farroukh, who, despite the evidence against him, had been found not guilty of murder for his role in the killings of US Ambassador Francis Meloy and two others in 1976.



The Financial Action Task Force recognized Lebanon's amendments to its penal code and administrative efforts against money laundering in June when it dropped Lebanon from the list of countries deemed uncooperative. The Government of Lebanon also offered cooperation with the US Government on the investigation of September 11 hijacker Ziad Jarrah, a Lebanese national.

Lebanon is a party to 10 of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

## **Morocco**

The Moroccan Government has been quite helpful in the war on terror. King Muhammad VI has unambiguously condemned those who espouse or conduct terrorism and has worked to keep Rabat firmly on the side of the United States against extremists. Morocco is a party to 10 of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

Domestically, the Moroccan Government's solid record of vigilance against terrorist activity and intolerance for the perpetrators of terrorism remained uninterrupted in 2002. In order to fight terrorism better, the Government began to draft new, stronger laws in the financial and law-enforcement sectors. In addition, Moroccan authorities in 2002 detained several individuals suspected of belonging to an al-Qaida cell. Moroccan authorities say the individuals—some Saudi, some Moroccan—were involved in a plot to attack Western shipping interests in the Straits of Gibraltar. The Moroccan Government put the suspected terrorists on trial.

## **Oman**

Oman continued to provide public and private statements of support for the war on terrorism in 2002 and has been responsive to all Coalition requests for military and/or civilian support. Omani financial authorities have worked closely with the

Coalition to prevent financing of terrorism and have shown keen interest in pursuing cases of particular interest to US law enforcement. In 2002, Oman became a party to the 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection, making it a party to nine of 12 antiterrorism treaties. It is reviewing the three remaining conventions. There were no incidents of terrorist activity in Oman in 2002.

## **Qatar**

Qatar's support for the United States after the attacks of September 11, 2001 continued throughout 2002. Qatar provides substantial ongoing support for Operation Enduring Freedom. It publicly and repeatedly condemned terrorism, most recently on the occasion of the attack in Bali. The Government took steps to improve border security and has supported US and international efforts to combat terrorist financing. It independently strengthened laws and regulations to prevent money laundering. Both in coordination with the United States and at its own initiative, Qatari law-enforcement authorities detained and investigated individuals suspected of supporting terrorist networks. The Government of Qatar also provided additional security for US installations in response to threat warnings, as requested.

Qatar is a party to five of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

## **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia over the past year has continued to provide support for the war on terror. Riyadh has supported Operation Enduring Freedom, has contributed to the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan through significant donations and has worked as one of the co-chairs of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Steering Committee, and has worked to enhance security at US installations to

match the heightened threat level throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Many within the Government of Saudi Arabia view the events of September 11 as a direct attack against the Kingdom and US-Saudi relations.

Riyadh has expanded its cooperation in the war on terror in some areas, such as sharing threat information and details of ongoing investigations. As a first step in dealing with terrorism financing, the Saudi Government has undertaken a review of its charitable organizations and measures to regulate their operations better, including the adoption of new financial-control mechanisms. In September, the Saudi Interior Minister announced the establishment of the Saudi Higher Authority for Religion and Charity Work to ensure that humanitarian assistance was channeled to appropriate persons and purposes. In October, the Crown Prince brought together the heads of Saudi Arabia's major charities and called for greater responsibility and transparency in their work. The Government is currently in the process of implementing these reforms. It is too soon to tell whether these reforms are preventing terrorists from exploiting these funds.

There were no major successful terrorist attacks in the Kingdom in 2002. Saudi authorities arrested a Sudanese and five Saudis for firing a missile at a US military aircraft taking off from a Saudi airbase, and they continued to investigate the incident. Riyadh was investigating a string of recent car bombings in the Kingdom but maintained that no firm ties to terrorism had been established. In late June, a British national died in a car-bomb explosion in Riyadh. Nine days later, Saudi police removed an explosive device from the car of a US resident in Riyadh. In September, a German national died in another similar car explosion in Riyadh. In addition to investigations of recent incidents, Saudi authorities continued to investigate past terrorist attacks, including the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in which 19 US servicemen died.

Saudi Arabia is a party to six of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

## Tunisia

The Tunisian Government has supported the international Coalition against terrorism and has responded to requests from the US Government for assistance in blocking financial assets and providing information on extremists. In October, the United States blocked the assets of the Tunisian Combatant Group under Executive Order 13224, at the same time France proposed adding the group to the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 Sanctions Committee's consolidated list. Tunisian President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali has forcefully condemned terrorist activities and reiterated his country's determination to combat violence and extremism. Tunisia is now a full party to 11 of the 12 existing UN antiterrorism conventions; it has yet to accede to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material agreed to in October 1979.

The Tunisian Government's active stance against terrorism was reinforced by the bombing attack against the El-Ghriba synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba on 11 April, which claimed more than 20 lives. In the wake of this attack, the Tunisian Government continued to bring judicial, law-enforcement, and military resources to bear against terrorist suspects. Tunisian authorities have detained an individual in connection with the attack; the suspect is awaiting trial. Earlier in 2002, Tunisian authorities convicted 34 persons—31 *in absentia*—of belonging to Al-Jamaa wal Sunnah, a terrorist organization linked to al-Qaida. The Government says the accused were involved in recruiting European-based Tunisians to fight in Chechnya, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. The Tunisian Government also continued to play a role in countering threats in the region. After signing a



*Bomb damage to a Jewish synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, after terrorists exploded a tanker truck containing cooking gas outside the synagogue, killing 17 persons, 11 April 2002.*

2001 agreement with the Algerian Government to strengthen border security, Tunisia continued to respond quickly to counter possible border incursions from Islamic militants in Algeria.

Tunisia is a party to 10 of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

## **United Arab Emirates**

In 2002, the United Arab Emirates continued to provide considerable assistance and cooperation in the war on terrorism. In November, UAE authorities arrested and subsequently turned over

to US authorities Abdul Raheem Al-Nashiri, the head of al-Qaida operations in the Arabian Gulf and the mastermind of the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen. UAE authorities, in the course of their investigation into Al-Nashiri's activities, discovered that he had been planning terrorist operations against major economic targets in the UAE that would have resulted in massive civilian casualties.

In suppressing terrorist financing, the UAE played a critical role in the continuing investigation into the September 11 attacks and provided literally thousands of pages of financial documents pertaining to the movement of terrorist funds. The UAE has created a stronger legal and regulatory framework to deter abuse of UAE financial markets through the passage in January of a comprehensive law criminalizing money laundering, including terrorist money laundering and tightened reporting requirements and oversight. Cooperation across the board—from the financial realm through to security and intelligence—has been strong and sustained.

The UAE in 2002 indicated its commitment to ratifying the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism to which it is not yet a party and is working toward that goal. (In early 2003, the UAE became a party to the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents.) The UAE is now a party to six of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism. The Government is in the process of drafting domestic legislation to bring the UAE's counterterrorism legislation fully into compliance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. In June 2002, the United States sponsored the UAE's financial-intelligence unit (FIU) for membership in the prestigious Egmont Group, an informal association founded in 1995 to provide support for the FIUs of different nations. The UAE thus became the first Middle Eastern country to join this organization.

The UAE in May hosted a groundbreaking international conference to draw attention to the need for concerted action on the *hawala* informal money-transfer system—a remittance system handling billions of dollars annually but whose informal nature and lack of reporting requirements renders it vulnerable to abuse by terrorists. In November, the UAE began implementing oversight regulations for the local *hawala* market.

## Yemen

The Government of Yemen has continued a broad counterterrorism campaign against al-Qaida and cooperated with the United States in eliminating Abu Ali al-Harithi, al-Qaida's senior leader in Yemen, as cited by President Bush in his State of the Union Address. The Yemeni Government continued to express public support for the international fight against terror throughout 2002. During the year, Yemen enhanced intelligence, military, and law-enforcement cooperation with the United States and, during Vice President Cheney's visit to Sanaa in March, President Salih underscored Yemen's determination to be an active counterterrorism partner. Senior US officials acknowledged that their Yemeni counterparts face challenges in the counterterrorism arena and welcomed President Salih's commitment but made clear that any counterterrorism cooperation will be judged on its continuing results.

There was very close and productive law-enforcement cooperation between Yemeni and US law-enforcement authorities throughout the year. In cooperation with the US Government, Yemen has been actively preparing trials for the majority of those accused of the 12 October 2000 attack on the USS Cole. In addition, Yemeni counterparts cooperated with US law-enforcement elements in several investigations, including that of an explosion in an al-Qaida safehouse in Sanaa on 9 August, analysis of evidence after a raid on 21 September by Yemeni security forces of another al-Qaida location in a northern suburb of Sanaa, joint investigation with Yemeni and French law-enforcement agents of the terrorist attack on

6 October against the French oil tanker Limburg near the Yemeni port of Mukalla, and investigation of suspected al-Qaida involvement in a shooting on 3 November at a Yemen Hunt helicopter shortly after takeoff from Sanaa airport.

As in 2001, the Yemeni Government arrested suspected terrorists and pledged to neutralize key al-Qaida nodes in the country. Political will against terrorism has also been augmented by President Salih's public campaign against terrorism that includes speeches, meetings with local political leaders, and articles in national newspapers. Since September 11, 2001, Yemen has enhanced previously lax security at its borders, tightened its visa procedures, installed the Terrorist Interdiction Program at most border crossings, and prevented potential terrorists from traveling to Afghanistan. Authorities have continued to carefully monitor travelers returning from abroad and have cracked down on foreigners who were residing in the country illegally or were suspected of engaging in terrorist activities. The Government integrated formerly autonomous private religious schools—many of which were propagating extremism—into the national educational system and tightened requirements for visiting foreign students.

Numerous threats against US personnel and facilities in Yemen were reported in 2002. Yemeni security services, however, provided extensive security protection for official US diplomatic and business interests in the country. The Yemeni Government's attitude has been that an attack against US interests would also be an attack against Yemen's interests.

Several terrorist organizations maintained a presence in Yemen throughout 2002. HAMAS and the Palestine Islamic Jihad continued to be recognized as legal organizations and maintained offices in Yemen but did not engage in terrorist activities there. Other international terrorist groups that had an illegal presence in Yemen included the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya,

## US Missionaries Killed in Yemen



*Kathy Gariety*



*Bill Koehn*



*Dr. Martha Myers*

They all called Yemen home. They hailed from Alabama, Kansas, and Wisconsin. Their paths crossed at a Baptist hospital that provided free health care and friendship to the local community in Jibla, a poor town in the rugged hills of southern Yemen. Their lives ended on 30 December 2002, when a lone man walked into the hospital, a Kalashnikov rifle cradled like a baby under his jacket, and gunned down Kathleen Gariety, William Koehn, and Martha Myers. He gained access to the facility by pretending to bring a child to his targets—the hospital workers—for treatment. Before fleeing, the gunman also shot and wounded the hospital pharmacist, Donald Caswell. All four shooting victims were US citizens.

For the three hospital workers who died, Yemen was not a temporary assignment. William Koehn, 60, who worked as the hospital's administrator, had lived with his wife in Yemen for 27 years and planned to retire the following October. Kathleen Gariety, 53, a purchasing agent for the hospital, had been in Yemen for almost a decade. Martha Myers, 54, a physician, had called Yemen home for the past 24 years. The people of Jibla expressed shock and dismay at the murders; many gathered outside the hospital to mourn the day after the attack. They also attended the funerals of the two victims who were buried in Yemen.

President Ali Abdallah Salih sent his condolences to President Bush and, in an official release by the Saba news agency, stated, "The authors of this hateful crime will not escape punishment and will be punished by justice so they can serve as examples to others. We are in the same trench in fighting terrorism and drying up its resources because it is a scourge that threatens peace and security in the world."

and al-Qaida. Similarly, members of indigenous terrorist groups such as the Aden Abuyan Islamic Army may continue to be active in Yemen.

Yemen is a party to eight of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.