



## SAUDI ARABIA

and

# COUNTERTERRORISM

**SUMMARY: COUNTERTERRORISM WHITE PAPER**

APRIL 2017

Saudi Arabia takes a multifaceted approach to fighting terrorism that relies on hunting down the men, cutting off the money and changing the mindset that terror organizations create and rely on. The Kingdom is committed to working in close collaboration with the U.S. and its other international partners in this fight against the scourge of terrorism.

## Combatting the Men

**Over the past decade, the Saudi government has fundamentally restructured its operations to address national security threats and to prevent terrorist attacks. This includes finding and eliminating terrorists within the Kingdom.**

- Saudi Arabia has successfully dismantled Al-Qaeda's organizational presence in the Kingdom.
  - Saudi Special Forces continue to aggressively pursue counterterrorism operations against Al-Qaeda in Yemen, where it has reorganized as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).
- Saudi security forces maintain rigorous security standards and are continuously training on the best practices for combating terrorist threats.
- Saudi forces recently dismantled several terrorist cells and arrested dozens of individuals connected to terrorism, effectively preventing a number of terrorist attacks.
  - In early January 2017, the Ministry of Interior announced that Saudi Security Forces had arrested more than 300 foreign nationals from nine nations over the past two years for involvement with Daesh.
  - In 2016, Saudi Special Forces thwarted planned and imminent terrorist attacks at the Prophet's Mosque during Pilgrimage season, the U.S. consulate during Ramadan, an international football match at the al Jawahara Stadium in Jeddah, a checkpoint in Damman, tourist areas on Tarout Island on the Arabian Gulf. They also prevented seven suicide attacks targeting mosques in the Eastern Province.



### **Saudi Arabia works closely with the U.S. and allies to combat terrorism around the world.**

- In February 2017, CIA Director Mike Pompeo honored Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif with the George Tenet Medal to recognize his significant contributions in the fight against terrorism, demonstrating the close cooperation between the CIA and Saudi Ministry of Interior.
- The U.S. National Security Agency collaborates with the Kingdom's Ministry of Defense, focusing on internal security and terrorist activity in the Arabian Peninsula.
- The Kingdom hosts the United States Military Training Mission as a special Security Assistance and Security Cooperation organization, strengthening collaboration between the two nations.
  - Saudi-U.S. counterterrorism cooperation has resulted in the prevention of a number of terrorist plots on U.S. soil, including critical intelligence sharing that foiled a cargo plane-bombing plot by AQAP in 2010.

### **Saudi Arabia regularly coordinates with international organizations in fighting terrorism.**

- In 2011, Saudi Arabia signed an agreement with the United Nations to create the United Nations Centre for Counter Terrorism, donating an initial \$10 million for its establishment. The Kingdom donated an additional \$100 million in 2014 to enhance its capabilities.
  - UNCCT has initiated more than 30 non-military counterterrorism projects around the world at the global, regional and national levels.
- In 2016, Saudi Arabia announced plans to link internal sections of its databases to the General Secretariat of Interpol to ensure a more effective method of investigation.

## **Cutting off the Money**

### **In order to combat terrorist financing, Saudi Arabia has enacted one of the strictest financial control systems in the world.**

- The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), established in 2003, requires that all financial institutions within the Kingdom's jurisdiction implement all recommendations for combatting money laundering and terrorist financing issued by the Financial Action Task Force.
- The Saudi government implemented a number of rules and regulations that prevent the exploitation of charities, including by prohibiting the transfer of charitable funds abroad.



**Saudi Arabia works in close alignment with its international partners on stemming illicit funding.**

- Saudi Arabia currently has Financial Action Task Force Observer status, and is on track in implementing compliance standards and mutual assessment procedures to achieve full membership in 2018.
- Saudi Arabia has ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, along with a number of UN resolutions related to combating terrorist financing.
- Saudi Arabia works with its international partners to place sanctions on entities that assist in terror financing, working particularly closely with the U.S. Treasury Department and cooperating with U.S. requests for certified bank records.
- Saudi Arabia serves as co-chair of the Counter-ISIL Finance Group alongside the U.S. and Italy.

## **Ending the Mindset**

**Saudi Arabia is carrying out a multifaceted campaign that attacks extremism and its ideological roots as a critical component of its strategy to defeat terrorism.**

- To combat radical ideology, Saudi government officials have adopted a series of counterterrorism education measures aimed at undermining extremist views and disrupting those that promote violent extremism.
- The Ministry of Education has revised its school textbooks to ensure that they do not include intolerant language, and regularly audits these textbooks and curricula to ensure that teachers do not espouse intolerance or extremism.
- The government is working to monitor extremist communications online and through social media channels, applying cyber-security technologies to track radicalized messaging throughout the region.

**Saudi government and religious leaders have routinely condemned terrorism and extremism.**

- The Kingdom's religious establishment is fully engaged with the Saudi government in countering the mindset sustaining radical extremism. The Grand Mufti and the Council of Senior Scholars have issued a number of statements and fatwas condemning terrorism and extremism.
- Imams who preach intolerance or hate toward others are dismissed, punished or retrained.



## Fighting and Defeating Daesh

**As the birthplace of Islam and home to the Two Holy Mosques, Saudi Arabia is the main target of Daesh and other terror groups.**

- Daesh has carried out deadly attacks in the Kingdom and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has declared his intention to destroy the Saudi state. Given this, all exercises and training of Saudi non-conventional forces have focused on countering non-state insurgents in recent years.
  - Saudi Arabia has enthusiastically joined the U.S.-led fight against Daesh, carrying out 341 airstrikes in support of coalition strikes in Syria. Further, the Saudi government has said that the Kingdom is willing to participate with its own forces if the U.S.-led coalition is prepared to engage in ground operations.
- Saudi forces have arrested hundreds of alleged Daesh supporters.
- In December 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the establishment of the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism, which has grown to include 41 nations.
- Saudi Arabia has enthusiastically joined the U.S.-led fight against Daesh. The Saudi government has said that the Kingdom is willing to participate with its own forces if the U.S.-led coalition is prepared to engage in ground operations.



# SAUDI VISION 2030

AN AMBITIOUS NATION: EFFECTIVELY  
GOVERNED AND RESPONSIBLY ENABLED



The roles and requirements of government have grown significantly since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's founding. Government — any government — needs to evolve and improve continuously, if only to keep pace with rising expectations and challenges. This requires us to meet high standards of transparency and accountability. We are committed to managing our finances efficiently and effectively, creating agile public organizations, and tracking both their own performance and that of the government overall.

## SAUDI VISION 2030 GOALS

### Effectively Governed

- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking on the E-Government Survey Index to among the Top 5 nations from its current ranking of 36th
- Increase non-oil government revenue from SAR 163 billion to SAR 1 trillion
- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking in the Government Effectiveness Index from 80th to 20th

### Responsibly Enabled

- Raise the non-profit sector's contribution from less than 1 percent of GDP to 5 percent of GDP
- Rally 1 million volunteers per year, compared to 11,000 volunteers now
- Increase household savings from 6 percent to 10 percent of total household income

## SAUDI VISION 2030 COMMITMENTS

### Effectively Governed

- **Qawam: Increasing Spending Efficiency**

Saudi Arabia is committed to making public spending radically more efficient, using our resources more effectively, and limiting waste. The Kingdom will launch the "Qawam" program as a reflection of the Qur'anic verse that calls for moderation in spending between excess and parsimony.

This program will comprehensively review financial regulations in all government agencies. The program is intended to move away from a narrow reliance on process auditing, and move towards a more integrated approach with effective and efficient spending controls. Government agencies will reward a culture of efficient spending throughout all administrative levels. Specialized training for employees and other key stakeholders will be provided as required, boosting the performance of finance departments and internal auditing.

- **Effective E-Government**

Saudi Arabia has made remarkable progress in e-government. The scope of online services has already been expanded over the last decade to include employment programs, online job searches, e-learning services, traffic, passports and civil affairs, online payment services, and online issuance of commercial registers. This has improved Saudi Arabia's ranking on several global indicators. In the UN E-Government Index, for instance, Saudi Arabia ranked 36th in 2014, up from 90th in 2004.

Saudi Arabia will expand the scope of current online services further to include areas such as geographic information, health care and education. Quality will be improved by streamlining processes, and diversifying communication channels. The Kingdom will also support the wider use of online applications

in government agencies, such as cloud applications, data sharing platforms and HR management systems.

- **Shared services to our government agencies**

Saudi Arabia is working towards shared services across government agencies. Shared services in our government will also aim to increase quality, cut costs, unify our efforts, and provide a suitable work environment for all parties at the lowest cost. Shared services can be applied globally and locally in many sectors.

The Kingdom will examine the status of support services in government sectors, set the scope of work and develop comprehensive priorities and implementation plans. We will follow best practices in employing shared services, with a robust set of performance indicators that will measure quality, workflow improvement, cost reduction and knowledge transfer.

- **King Salman Program for Human Capital Development**

By 2020, the Kingdom aims to have trained 500,000 government employees through distance learning. All ministries and government institutions will be required to adopt best practices in human capital development. The King Salman Program for Human Capital Development will establish HR centers of excellence in every government agency, and provide training.

Saudi Arabia will continue to hire individuals according to merit and work towards building a broad talent base, so they may become leaders of the future. The Kingdom will raise the productivity of employees to the highest levels possible, by implementing proper performance management standards, providing continuous training for professional development, and sharing knowledge. Targeted policies will identify and empower future leaders, and will furnish a stimulating environment that provides equal opportunities and rewards for excellence.

## Responsibly Enabled

- **More Impactful Non-profit Sector**

Today, Saudi Arabia has fewer than 1,000 non-profit and charitable foundations and associations. They contribute just 0.3 percent of our GDP, much less than the global average of 6 percent. Currently, just 7 percent of projects are focused on generating social impact or are aligned with the long-term national priorities. By 2020, more than one-third of Saudi non-profit organizations' projects should have measurable social impact.

Saudi Arabia will accelerate this shift by supporting projects and programs with high social impact. The Kingdom will facilitate the establishment of non-profit organizations by high net worth families, which will promote rapid growth of the non-profit sector. It will create a supportive and cooperate environment in which the sector's institutions and government agencies can collaborate. At the same time, Saudi Arabia will encourage the non-profit sector to apply proper governance standards, facilitate high quality training to staff and promote a culture of volunteering and full-time careers in the sector.

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.



## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## THE YEMEN CONFLICT

### **FACT SHEET: MILITARY TARGETING AND THE REDUCTION OF CIVILIAN CAUSALITIES**

MAY 2017

### **Target Selection**

Saudi Arabia has taken several steps to create a more thorough vetting process for target selection and validation for the Saudi-led Coalition's operations in Yemen. This process is meant to ensure that the Coalition:

- Adheres to the Law of Armed Conflict;
- Expands the 'No Strike List' now at over 33,000 targets;
- Enhances target criteria such as Damage Assessment and Collateral Damage Estimates;
- Observes the implementation of stricter Rules of Engagement.

The Coalition has implemented additional vetting criteria for time-sensitive targets. These criteria place extra responsibilities on Coalition pilots before conducting a mission.

The Coalition adheres to a no-strike list that includes over 33,000 targets, as referenced above. This list includes locations provided by U.N. and other humanitarian organizations on the ground in Yemen, in addition to locations collected by the Coalition. Furthermore, the Coalition is constantly updating this list and adding locations to it.

Currently, the Coalition seeks to align its targeting practices and personnel training with NATO standards, and only personnel that meet these rigorous standards are involved in target selection.



## U.S. Cooperation

Additionally, the Coalition is in regular consultation with the United States government regarding U.S. assistance in the vetting process. Saudi Arabia and the Coalition welcome the opportunity to grant access to U.S. personnel to the Air Operations Center, and any other facilities where targeting is approved, to observe the decision-making process implementation of such procedures.

The Coalition believes that increased U.S. support for coalition operations, including assistance in vetting targets, will increase the effectiveness of operations, and more importantly reduce mistakes.

Investigations: The Coalition has implemented recommendations of the Joint Incident Assessment Team (JIAT), which is responsible for investigating any incidents where it is alleged that Coalition operations have targeted civilians. The JIAT's findings have been made public. The aforementioned steps were largely instituted based on JIAT recommendations.

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*



## ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA FACT SHEET

---

### **Operational Developments In Yemen**

Saudi Arabia is committed to advancing reconstruction, relief, and political stabilization efforts to assist the Yemeni people. The Saudi government has mobilized significant financial resources and emergency material support through the King Salman Center Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), which has provided health, nutrition and sanitation aid and relief to 17 million people impacted by the conflict in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has committed \$8.2 billion for humanitarian and developmental assistance to Yemen since April 2015. Saudi Arabia remains the single-largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

#### *Recent Quotes of Saudi and International Officials*

"Saudi Arabia is being attacked by Houthi rebels across its Southern border with Yemen. It's had its towns and villages shelled by the Houthis...Saudi Arabia is fully entitled to defend itself, and it's fully entitled to call on its friends in so doing."

—*UK Defense Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, BBC Radio 4, May 11, 2017*

"Saudi Arabia and the World Bank agreed on Wednesday to commit \$300 million toward an aid package that would address Yemen's immediate food security needs including rice and wheat."

—*Source from the Saudi-led Coalition, Reuters, May 10, 2017*

"We have no choice but dialogue... We are ready to go to Riyadh, Khamis Mushait, Muscat or elsewhere to start dialogue and to reach an understanding,"

—*Former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh, AFP, May 10, 2017*

*May 2017*

"I think the Saudi armed forces accomplished great achievements. When the operations began, legitimate powers' control over Yemeni territory was almost 0 percent. Today, legitimate powers control 80 percent or 85 percent of Yemeni lands."

—*Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Al Arabiya TV, May 3, 2017*

"Our programs have been reaching all regions of Yemen, I want to emphasize all regions, irrespective of who controls it... If you look at what we do as a humanitarian agency, I think it's way beyond any damage that is caused by any attacks."

—*Supervisor General of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Reuters, April 27, 2017*

"The conflict is evidence that the militias did not want to see the will of the Yemeni people. They violated their decision by going against the government democratically elected by the Yemeni people. They also violated international law and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative. Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries are trying to provide food, development and safety to Yemen."

—*Supervisor General of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Arab News, April 23, 2017*

"We'll have to overcome Iran's efforts to destabilize yet another country [Yemen] and create another militia in their image of Lebanese Hezbollah. But the bottom line is we're on the right path forward."

—*U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis, en route to Riyadh, April 19, 2017*

"Within six months, the [legitimate Yemeni] government regained 45 percent of Yemeni territory,"

—*Spokesman for the Arab coalition General Ahmed Asiri, Al Arabiya, April 16, 2017*

May 2017

“We made 70 agreements with Yemen’s Houthis and ex-president Saleh. They did not implement a single one.”

—*Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, Press Conference, Feb. 12, 2017*

“I was very encouraged today to see the [KSRelief] centre developing its activities, with a strong commitment to humanitarian principles, not only in Syria and Yemen, but in so many countries around the world.”

—*United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, Feb. 12, 2017*

“Its [KSRelief] generosity has made a real impact in Yemen and elsewhere.”

—*United Nations Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien, Oct. 5, 2016*



Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
Information Office  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.saudiembassy.net](http://www.saudiembassy.net)

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*

May 2017

# SAUDI VISION 2030

A THRIVING ECONOMY: OPEN FOR BUSINESS, INVESTING FOR THE LONG-TERM BY REWARDING OPPORTUNITIES AND LEVERAGING ITS UNIQUE POSITION



Diversifying our economy is vital for sustainability. Although oil and gas are essential pillars of our economy, Saudi Arabia has begun expanding investments into additional sectors. There are complicated challenges ahead, but the Kingdom has long-term plans to overcome them. In the past 25 years, the Saudi economy has grown by an annual average rate of more than 4 percent, contributing to the creation of millions of new jobs. Although Saudi Arabia is already among the 20 largest economies in the world, our ambitions are even greater. We aspire to have an even higher ranking by 2030, despite the headwinds of the global economic slowdown and the expected impact of our structural economic reforms. This requires us to invest all our resources in order to diversify the economy, unleash the capabilities of our promising economic sectors and privatize some government services.

## SAUDI VISION 2030 GOALS

### Open For Business

- Increase private sector contributions to Gross Domestic Product from 40 percent to 65 percent
- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking on the Global Competitiveness Index from 25th to among the Top 10 nations
- Increase foreign-direct investment from 3.8 percent of GDP to the international average of 5.7 percent of GDP

### Investing for the Long Term

- Rank Saudi Arabia among the Top 15 largest economies in the world from its current position of 19th
- Increase the assets of the Public Investment Fund from SAR 600 billion to over SAR 7 trillion (\$160 billion to over \$2 trillion)
- Increase localization of oil and gas sectors from 40 percent to 75 percent

### Rewarding Opportunities

- Increase women's participation in the workforce from 22 percent to 30 percent
- Lower rate of unemployment from 11.6 percent to 7 percent
- Increase contributions of small and medium enterprises from 20 percent to 35 percent of GDP

### Leveraging its Unique Position

- Increase share of non-oil exports from 16 percent to 50 percent of non-oil GDP
- Raise Saudi Arabia's global ranking in the Logistics Performance Index from 49th to 25th place



# SAUDI VISION 2030 COMMITMENTS

## Open for Business

- **Developed Digital Infrastructure**

A sophisticated digital infrastructure is integral to today's advanced industrial activities. It attracts investors and enhances the fundamental competitiveness of the Saudi economy. We will partner with the private sector to develop telecommunications and information technology infrastructure, especially high-speed broadband, expanding its coverage and capacity within and around cities and improving its quality. Our specific goal is to exceed 90 percent housing coverage in densely populated cities and 66 percent in other urban zones.

- **Flourishing Retail Sector**

The Kingdom aims to provide job opportunities for an additional 1 million Saudis by 2020 in a growing retail sector that attracts modern, local, regional, and international brands across all regions of the country. We also aim to increase the contribution of modern trade and e-commerce to 80 percent of the retail sector by 2020. This will be achieved by attracting both regional and international retail investors and by easing restrictions on ownership and foreign investment. To this end, we will facilitate local and regional flow of goods, and develop necessary sectoral regulations. We will also increase financing of small retail enterprises to stimulate their growth and development.

- **Restructured King Abdullah Financial District**

The Kingdom will seek to transform the district into a special zone that has competitive regulations and procedures, visa exemptions, and direct connections to the King Khaled International Airport. We will also seek to repurpose some of the built-up areas and change the real estate mix, increasing the allocation for residential accommodation, services and hospitality areas. We will seek to build and create an integrated and attractive living and working environment. The district will be the headquarters of the Public Investment Fund, the largest sovereign wealth fund, which will contribute to creating an environment attractive to financial services and other corporations.

## Investing for the Long-Term

- **Renewable Energy**

Saudi Arabia possesses an impressive natural potential for solar and wind power, and local energy consumption will increase threefold by 2030. The Kingdom has set an initial target of generating 9.5 gigawatts of renewable energy. We will seek to localize a significant portion of the renewable energy value chain in the Saudi economy, including research & development, and manufacturing. From inputs such as silica and petrochemicals, to the extensive expertise of our leading Saudi companies in the production of different forms of energy, the Kingdom has all the raw ingredients for success. We will put this into practice with the forthcoming launch of the King Salman Renewable Energy Initiative. We will review the legal and regulatory framework that allows the private sector to buy and invest in the renewable energy sector.

- **Mining**

Saudi Arabia has been blessed with rich mineral resources such as aluminum, phosphate, gold, copper, uranium, and other raw materials. Although the mining sector has already undergone improvements to cater to the needs of our industries, its contribution to GDP has yet to meet expectations. As such, we are determined to ensure it reaches SAR 97 billion by 2020, creating 90,000 job opportunities in the process. We are planning a number of structural reforms, which include stimulating private sector investments by intensifying exploration, building a comprehensive database of the Kingdom's resources, reviewing the licensing procedures for extraction, investing in infrastructure, developing funding methods and establishing centers of excellence. We will also form strategic international partnerships and raise the competitiveness and productivity of our national companies.

- **Localized Defense Industries**

Although the Kingdom is the world's third biggest military spender, only 2 percent of this spending is within our Kingdom. The national defense industrial sector is limited to only seven companies and two research centers. Our aim is to localize over 50 percent of military equipment spending by 2030. We have already begun developing less complex industries such as those providing spare parts, armored vehicles, and basic ammunition. We will expand this initiative to higher value and more complex equipment such as military aircraft. We will build an integrated national network of services and supporting industries that will improve our self-sufficiency and strengthen our defense exports, both regionally and internationally. Localization will be achieved through direct investments and strategic partnerships with leading companies in this sector. These moves will transfer knowledge and technology, and build national expertise in the fields of manufacturing, maintenance, repair, research and development.

## Rewarding Opportunities

- **Bigger role for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contribute only 20 percent of Saudi GDP. In other nations, this contribution can reach up to 70 percent. The Kingdom will facilitate enhanced access to funding and encourage Saudi financial institutions to allocate up to 20 percent of overall funding to SMEs by 2030. The recently established SME Authority plans to review laws and regulations, remove obstacles, facilitate access to funding, and enable youth and entrepreneurs to market their ideas and products. At the same time, we will establish additional new business incubators, specialized training institutions, and venture capital funds. These will aid entrepreneurs in developing their skills and networks. We will also support SMEs in marketing and help export their products and services, by leveraging e-commerce and collaborating with international stakeholders.

- **Education that Contributes to Economic Growth**

Saudi Arabia will close the gap between the outputs of higher education and the requirements of the job market. By the year 2030, the Kingdom intends to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in international rankings. We shall help our students achieve results above international averages in global education indicators. To this end, we will prepare a modern curriculum focused on rigorous standards in literacy, numeracy, and character development. We will track progress and publish a sophisticated range of education outcomes, showing year-on-year improvements. We will work closely with the private sector to ensure higher education outcomes are in line with the requirements of the job market. We will invest in strategic partnerships with apprenticeship providers, new skills councils from industry, and large private companies. We will also work towards developing the job specifications of every education field. Furthermore, we will build a centralized student database tracking students from early childhood through to K-12 and beyond into tertiary education (higher and vocational) in order to improve education planning, monitoring, evaluation, and outcomes.

## Leveraging its Unique Position

- **Building a Unique Regional Logistical Hub**

Saudi Arabia has already invested heavily in the construction of ports, railways, roads and airports. To take full advantage of these investments, we plan to work with the private sector and enter into a new series of international partnerships to complete, improve and link our infrastructure internally and across borders. We will also unlock our "hard" infrastructure with systems that can drive higher performance, including more rigorous governance, leaner processes and a more efficient customs system. We will improve and implement existing laws and regulations. Air, maritime, and other transport operators will be encouraged to make the most of their capacity: achieving durable links between existing trade hubs, as well as opening new trade routes. This will reinforce our position as a distinctive logistical gateway to three continents.

- **Integrating Regionally and Internationally**

With a GDP of SAR 2.4 trillion, our economy is already the largest in the Middle East. We enjoy close economic ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council and other Arab countries, as well as constructive relations with Islamic and foreign countries. We will seek to establish new business partnerships and facilitate a smoother flow of goods, people and capital. Among our top priorities is to fortify and extend our interconnectivity and economic integration with other Gulf Cooperation Council countries. We will strive to complete the process of implementing the GCC common market, unifying customs, economic and legal policies, and constructing shared road and railway networks. We will seek to effectively link with other countries in the region, through enhanced logistics services and new cross-border infrastructure projects, including land transport projects with Africa through Egypt. Logistical and trade exchanges will be streamlined, further cementing our pre-eminent position as a major trade hub.

- **Supporting National Companies**

Rather than competing generically across the board, Saudi Arabia will concentrate on our comparative advantages, national strengths, and the areas that will assure leadership status. Initially, our priority will be to fully support major national companies, which have already gained a leading market share, by promoting their products and services regionally and globally, especially in the fields of oil, petrochemicals, banking, telecommunications, food, health care, and retail. We will also seek to support Saudi companies with promising growth opportunities so they develop into new regional and global leaders. Finally, we will fully support our national industries, assisting them to market themselves abroad and to export their products.

This is distributed by Corvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

# SAUDI VISION 2030

A VIBRANT SOCIETY WITH STRONG  
ROOTS, FULFILLING LIVES AND  
STRONG FOUNDATIONS



Saudi Arabia has enormous untapped opportunities and a rich blend of natural resources, but our real wealth lies in our people and our society. We take pride in what makes our nation exceptional: our Islamic faith and our national unity. The Kingdom is the core of the Arab and Islamic worlds and represents the heart of Islam. We are confident that — God willing — we will build a brighter future, one based on the bedrock of Islamic principles. Saudi Arabia will continue to excel in performing our duties towards pilgrims to the fullest extent and promote our deep-rooted national identity. Furthermore, the happiness and fulfillment of citizens and residents are important to us. This can only be achieved through promoting physical, psychological, and social well-being. At the heart of our vision is a society in which all enjoy a good quality of life, a healthy lifestyle, and an attractive living environment. Our goal is to promote and reinvigorate social development in order to build a strong a productive society.

## SAUDI VISION 2030 GOALS

### Strong Roots

- More than double the number of Saudi heritage sites registered with UNESCO
- Increase capacity to welcome Umrah visitors from 8 million to 30 million per year

### Fulfilling Lives

- Increase household spending on cultural and entertainment activities from 2.9 percent to 6 percent
- Increase the share of individuals exercising at least once a week from 13 percent to 40 percent
- Have three Saudi cities be recognized among the Top 100 cities in the world

### Strong Foundations

- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking on the Social Capital Index from 26th to 10th
- Increase average life expectancy from 74 to 80 years

## SAUDI VISION 2030 COMMITMENTS

### Strong Foundations

- **Efficient and High Quality Health Care**

The Kingdom's goal is to enhance the standard and quality of health care services. Our aim is a health care sector that promotes competition and transparency among providers. This will enhance the capability, efficiency, and productivity of care and treatment, as well as increase the options available to our citizens.

To achieve this goal, Saudi Arabia will introduce corporatization into the sector by transferring the responsibility for health care to a network of public companies that compete both against each other and against the private sector. This will provide our citizens with the highest quality of health care, while at the same time allowing the government to focus on its legislative, regulatory, and supervisory roles. Corporatization shall also promote and prioritize specialization in health care services and enable citizens to choose their preferred service provider.

- **Irtiqaa: A more prominent role for families in the education of their children**

The engagement of parents in their children's education is one of the main principles of success. Our goal by 2020 is for 80 percent of parents to be engaged in school activities and the learning process of their children. The Kingdom will launch the "Irtiqaa" program, which will measure how effectively schools are engaging parents in their children's education.

Saudi Arabia will establish parent-led boards in schools to open discussion forums and further engage with parents. Teachers will receive training to raise their awareness of the importance of communicating with parents and equip them with effective methods to do so successfully. We will also collaborate with private and non-profit sectors to offer innovative educational programs and events that can improve this academic partnership.

## Fulfilling Lives

- **Daem: Meaningful Entertainment for Citizens**

Saudi Arabia will increase the number and variety of cultural and entertainment activities with the aim of opening dedicated venues to showcase our citizens' myriad talents. The Kingdom will review our regulations to simplify the establishment and registration of amateur, social, and cultural clubs.

Saudi Arabia will launch and provide the necessary financial support for "Daem", a national program to enhance the quality of cultural activities and entertainment. The program will create a national network of clubs, encourage the exchange of knowledge and international experiences, and promote better awareness of a wide range of hobbies and leisure activities. By 2020, there will be more than 450 registered and professionally organized amateur clubs providing a variety of cultural activities and entertainment events.

## Strong Roots

- **World's Largest Islamic Museum**

Saudi Arabia will build an Islamic museum in accordance with the highest global standards, equipped with the latest methods in collection, preservation, presentation, and documentation. It will be a major landmark for our citizens and visitors, where they will learn about the history of Islam, enjoy interactive experiences and participate in cultural events. Using modern technology, visitors to the museum will take an immersive journey through the different ages of Islamic civilization, as well as its science, scholars and culture. It will also be an international hub for erudition, and include a world-class library and research center.

- **Serve the Increasing Number of Umrah Visitors**

Saudi Arabia is honored to attend to pilgrims and Umrah visitors' needs, fulfilling a role bestowed on us by Allah. Our expansion of the Two Holy Mosques has led to a tripling in the number of foreign Umrah visitors over the last decade, reaching eight million in 2015. By increasing the capacity and by improving the quality of the services offered to Umrah visitors, we will by 2020 make it possible for over 15 million Muslims per year to perform Umrah and be completely satisfied with their pilgrimage experience.

The Kingdom will achieve this by improving visa application procedures which will smooth the visa process with the aim of full automation. We will also further integrate e-services into the pilgrims' journey, which will enrich their religious and cultural experience. Both the public and private sectors will play a crucial role in this project as we work to upgrade accommodation, improve hospitality, and launch new services for pilgrims.

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.



## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## THE YEMEN CONFLICT

**HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE PEOPLE OF YEMEN**

APRIL 2017

### **Overview**

The Saudi-led Coalition continues to make the protection of civilians a priority in its efforts to restore peace and stability to Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has been the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, providing more than \$840 million in humanitarian assistance. In May 2015, the Kingdom established the King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Works (KSRelief) to more effectively deliver aid to the people of Yemen. Since that time, KSRelief has become a humanitarian force in Yemen, providing aid and relief to nearly 17 million people within the country, as well as refugees in Djibouti and within Saudi Arabia.

Overall, the Kingdom has committed to provide more than \$8.2 billion in humanitarian and developmental assistance to Yemen since April 2015. This contribution includes:

- \$847,598,580 in humanitarian aid and relief provided through KSRelief.
- \$1,130,186,557 in aid provided to Yemenis inside Saudi Arabia.
- \$2,950,000,000 in development aid allocated to Yemen.
- \$2,275,718,347 in bilateral government assistance.
- \$1,000,000,000 in deposits to the Central Bank of Yemen.

### **KSRelief**

KSRelief is providing aid to all areas of Yemen, including areas controlled by Houthi militias. KSRelief cooperates with more than 80 international humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, the UN, and Doctors Without Borders, to facilitate their efforts in Yemen.



- **Food Security Sector:** KSRelief plans on providing 50,000 food baskets, which will be distributed in districts of Hadhramaut, two baskets of food per family. The aid will benefit 150,000 displaced people suffering from food shortages.
- **Health Sector:** Dengue fever control and treatment project was signed with AlAwn Foundation for Development in (six governorates) in Yemen that follows the international standards in this field. The project includes environmental and health activities to control and treat dengue fever at a cost of \$2 million and benefiting more than 10 million beneficiaries.
- **Protection Sector:** Continuing to strengthen life-saving means for women and mothers, targeting nearly 80,000 beneficiaries, Dignity kits will be provided and distributed by UNFPA in 63 districts in the 17 governorates of the Republic of Yemen.
- **Logistics Sector:** KSRelief, in cooperation with World Food Programme, has worked in the logistics sector to coordinate, manage information and provide public services that include cantonment areas, dispatching inter-agency humanitarian convoys and sending trans-border convoys to ensure full assistance to the affected areas.

KSRelief has implemented several projects and programs in the health, nutrition and sanitation sectors that benefit the Yemenis. These include:

- Establishing more than 100 health facilities.
- Assisting more than 2,500 Yemeni refugees through medical clinics in Djibouti.
- Providing more than 27 million liters of water to Yemeni health facilities.
- Delivering more than 2,785 tons of medical aid and supplies.
- Airdropping more than 27 tons of medicine and supplies during the siege of Taiz.
- Utilizing more than 250 trucks and 30 airplanes to deliver aid and equipment.
- Providing more than 350,000 gallons of fuel to 88 hospitals and 19 health facilities.
- Providing more than 12 million vaccines for Yemeni children.
- Training more than 3,100 health workers on social management of acute malnutrition.
- Providing pregnancy and post-delivery care for more than 220,000 women.

## Financial Contributions

The Kingdom has been the largest provider of humanitarian aid in Yemen provide more than \$840 million in assistance since the start of the conflict. Some of the financial contributions to include:



- **Direct Aid (Provided through KSRelief):** \$311.1 million
- **World Food Program:** \$153.3 million
- **UN High Commission for Refugees:** \$36.1 million
- **UNICEF:** \$19.6 million
- **World Health Organization:** \$15.8 million
- **International Committee for Red Cross:** \$10.0 million
- **UN Office for Coordinating Human Affairs:** \$8.0 million
- **Food and Agriculture Organization:** \$5.8 million
- **International Organization for Migration:** \$5.0 million
- **International Media Corps:** \$3.8 million
- **UN Population Fund:** \$2.5 million
- **UN Development Programme:** \$1.7 million
- **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent:** \$1.0 million
- **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights:** \$0.5 million

## Displaced Yemenis

In another major humanitarian effort, Saudi Arabia has allowed Yemenis who fled the civil war and entered the Kingdom illegally to adjust their status and become legal residents. This initiative has enabled more than 600,000 Yemenis to obtain medical care, education, and jobs.

## Port of Hodeidah

Seventy percent of all humanitarian aid to Yemen arrives through the port of Hodeidah, however the population around the area is at very high risk of famine. This is because the city of Hodeidah is one of the major population concentrations under Houthi control. The Houthis have deliberately obstructed the entry of shipments in order to deepen the humanitarian crisis and arouse international public opinion against the Coalition. The militias have created a black market for petroleum, good and humanitarian supplies and used the proceeds to help finance their operations. They have also used the threat of starvation at the ports they control as a political bargaining chip.





## International Praise

The international community has praised the Kingdom's humanitarian efforts in Yemen.

- **UN Secretary-General António Guterres**, after a visit to KSRelief in Riyadh, said that he was encouraged to see the Center developing its activities, with a strong commitment to humanitarian principles, not just in Yemen and Syria, but also around the world. He added that KSRelief's role in the region is vital and important.
- **UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien** commended KSRelief's efforts and achievements during a meeting with Dr. Al-Rabeeah. O'Brien conveyed his great appreciation for the strong and growing partnership that the UN has with the Kingdom, as the two sides carry out humanitarian work in the region and in the world. He ensured KSRelief's neutrality and its commitment to abide by the international humanitarian law.
- **Director of the Operational Division of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs John Ging** recently stated, "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia maintains the first center to offer humanitarian aid in solidarity with the Yemeni people, and has become a representation of the generous giving that has contributed to saving an enormous number of Yemenis who are currently suffering."
- **Regional Representative of the UN High Commission for Refugees in the GCC Dr. Nabeel Othman** extended his sincere gratitude to the Kingdom and the Center's representatives for their service to refugees, stating that it indicates notable awareness of humanitarian issues and relief. He noted that the center had previously signed an agreement with the commission to offer support to displaced peoples in Yemen to alleviate their burden caused by the situation in their country. Othman said that UNHCR looks forward to strengthening the partnership with KSRelief and stated that the Kingdom has an honorable record of offering urgent assistance to refugees and the displaced, and UNHCR has a strategic relationship with the Kingdom.
- **U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Timothy A. Lenderking** also praised KSRelief, stating, "There is strong cooperation between KSRelief and the UN World Food Program, and we are happy to have partnered with Dr. Rabeeah and his team in their concerted efforts."
- **Yemen Health Minister and member of the High Commission for Relief Dr. Nasser Baoum**, thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for his aid to Yemen, noting, "[KSRelief] reached the needy [of Yemen] within the first two weeks of its establishment, and they managed to deliver humanitarian aid," highlighting the direct aid given to Yemen and its health sector, noting that these executive programs solved a number of health issues inside Yemen.

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.



## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## THE YEMEN CONFLICT

**IRANIAN SUPPORT OF HOUTHİ MILITIAS**

APRIL 2017

"Iranian influence, Iranian support, infiltrating weapons that have been caught in transit by the French navy, by the Australian navy, by the U.S. Navy, shows that Iran once again is no help. So we will make progress on this. The international community will make progress on it. We'll have to overcome Iran's efforts to destabilize yet another country and create another militia in their image of Lebanese Hezbollah."

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JIM MATTIS SPEAKING ABOUT YEMEN

APRIL 19, 2017

### **Iranian Aggression in Yemen**

After the fall of the Yemeni government at the beginning of 2015, Iran increased political and financial support for the Houthi rebel militia. In turn, Houthi violence has been directed at Saudi targets: In July 2015, Houthi military units shelled Saudi military sites in Jizan province. Between May 2015 and January 27, 2017, the Kingdom intercepted over 40 missiles launched at Saudi territory; nine other missiles have struck. A convoy of Iranian ships headed to the Gulf of Aden in April 2016 carrying weapons to that group's militia was intercepted by US carriers responding to Saudi Arabia's request. The Kingdom has also prevented or eliminated the presence of hundreds of Iranian military personnel in Yemen sent there by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard for the training of those Houthi forces.

### **Documented examples of Iranian support for the Houthi militia in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions 2216 and 2231**

Iran has provided military support to the Houthi militia years before the launch of Operation Decisive



Storm. The Iranian attempt to control Yemen started in the Summer of 2014, culminating in the Houthis taking over the government in Sana'a in January 2015.

- March 2016—USS Sirocco, operating as part of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, intercepted and seized the shipment of weapons hidden aboard a small, stateless vessel. The arms cache included 1,500 AK-47s, 200 RPG launchers and 21 .50-caliber machine guns.<sup>1</sup>
- March 2016—The French frigate FS Provence stopped a vessel off the Yemeni island of Socotra, seizing AK-47s, sniper rifles and anti-tank missiles.<sup>2</sup>
- February 2016—Australian frigate HMAS Darwin of the Royal Australian Navy seized a cache of arms from a vessel 313 km off the coast of Oman, including machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and mortars.<sup>3</sup>
- September 2015—Coalition naval forces seize Iranian-registered fishing boat southeast of Salalah, carrying 18 Konkurs anti-armor missiles and 54 BGM-17 anti-tank missiles.<sup>4</sup>
- December 2014—Senior Iranian official told Reuters that the Quds Force, the external arm of the Revolutionary Guard, had a "few hundred" military personnel in Yemen who train Houthi fighters and that 100 Houthis had traveled to Iran for training at a Revolutionary Guards base near the city of Qom.<sup>5</sup>
- October 2014—Khamenei advisor Ali Akbar Velayati told the delegation of Yemeni clerics and cultural figures visiting Tehran: "Just as Hizbullah in Lebanon fights and defeats the terrorists and its enemies, Ansar Allah (Houthis) must also continue its struggle against Yemen's terrorists... The Islamic Republic of Iran supports Ansar Allah's wise struggle in Yemen and sees it as part of the success of the Islamic Awakening movement... Ansar Allah and the Zaidis will undoubtedly win, and this victory is near."<sup>6</sup>

---

1 America's Navy. "Third Illicit Arms Shipment in Recent Weeks Seized in Arabian Sea" Apr 04, 2016. [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=93990](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=93990)

2 Naval Today. "French Warship Seizes Somalia-Bound Weapons" Mar 29, 2016. <http://navaltoday.com/2016/03/29/french-warship-seizes-somalia-bound-weapons/>

3 Navy Daily. "HMAS Darwin Seizes Large Weapons Cache" Mar 07, 2016. <http://news.navy.gov.au/en/Mar2016/Operations/2744/HMAS-Darwin-seizes-large-weapons-cache.htm#.WP5sJEO5DXM>

4 U.S. News. "Yemini-Bound Ship Stopped" Sep 30, 2015. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2015/09/30/saudi-led-coalition-says-it-seized-iran-arms-bound-for-yemen>

5 Reuters. "Iranian support seen crucial for Yemen's Houthis", Dec 15, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-houthis-iran-insight-idUSKBN0JT17A20141215>

6 ISNA (Iran), October 18, 2014.



- September 2014— After the Houthi occupation of the capital Sana'a, the Yemeni government freed at least three suspected Iranian Revolutionary Guard members and two suspected members of Lebanon's Hezbollah group.<sup>7</sup>
- September 2014—Ali Reza Zakani, Iranian MP who is close to the Iranian supreme guide Ali Khamenei, said: "Three Arab capitals have today ended up in the hands of Iran and belong to the Islamic Iranian revolution". He noted that Sana'a has now become the fourth Arab capital that is on its way to joining the Iranian revolution. The Iranian Rasa News Agency quoted Zakani saying to the Iranian parliament that Iran is passing through the phase of "grand jihad." He added "The Yemeni revolution will not be confined to Yemen alone. It will extend, following its success, into Saudi territories. The Yemeni-Saudi vast borders will help accelerate its reach into the depths of Saudi land."<sup>8</sup>
- March 2013—Yemeni naval forces seize Jihan 2 in Bab al Mandab strait while unloading weapons onto a Yemeni fishing boat.<sup>9</sup>
- January 2013—Yemeni naval forces seize Jihan 1, carrying surface-to-air missiles and 16,716 blocks of C4 explosive.<sup>10</sup>

### U.S. Documentation of Iranian Aggression

On March 24, 2017, the U.S. State Department issued a press release on non-proliferation that reads in part: "As part of the March 21st sanctions, a group of eleven entities and individuals were sanctioned for transfers of sensitive items to Iran's ballistic missile program.[...] As an example, we have seen indications Iran is providing missile support to the Houthis in Yemen. This destabilizing activity only serves to escalate regional conflicts further and poses a significant threat to regional security. We will

---

7 Reuters. "Yemen frees members of Iran Revolutionary Guards-sources" Sep 25, 2014. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-yemen-iran-idUKKCN0HKIK320140925>

8 Middle East Monitor. "Sana'a is the fourth Arab capital to join the Iranian revolution," September 27, 2014

9 The New York Times. "Seized Chinese Weapons Raise Concerns on Iran" Mar 02, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/03/world/middleeast/seized-arms-off-yemen-raise-alarm-over-iran.html>

10 The New York Times. "Yemen Seizes Sailboat Filled With Weapons, and U.S. Points to Iran" Jan 28, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/world/middleeast/29military.html>



continue to take steps to address Iran's missile development and production and sanction entities and individuals involved in supporting these programs under U.S. law. The imposition of sanctions against these eleven foreign entities is a continuation of our commitment to hold Iran accountable for its actions".<sup>11</sup> The Congressional Research Service, in a memo to U.S. Senators on July 31, 2015 entitled Iranian Support for Groups in Yemen, Syria and Iraq, cited a Wall Street Journal article in which it was noted: "According to the Wall Street Journal, a Houthi official said the group received assistance from Iran in the form of logistics, intelligence, and cash, and that over the past couple of years the group had received "tens of millions of dollars" in cash from Tehran."<sup>12</sup>

### International Documentation of Iranian Aggression

A 105-page declassified report to the United Nations Security Council published in August 2016<sup>13</sup> documented violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law committed by the Houthi-Saleh forces, noting assistance from Iran. In a September 14, 2016 letter to the Council president, Saudi Arabia asserted that Iran had supplied weapons and ammunition to the Houthi rebels in Yemen. While Saudi Arabia reported the transfer as a violation of Resolution 2216, which imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis and forces loyal to former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh, it would also contravene Resolution 2231. In a September 27th letter, Iran firmly rejected "the pure fabrications and unsubstantiated allegations" made by Saudi Arabia. Around the same time, in a November 21st letter to the Secretary-General and Council president, Israel alleged that Iran's Quds Force was using commercial flights from Iran to Lebanon to transfer arms and related material to the Shia militant group Hezbollah and called on the Council to condemn both Iran and Hezbollah for the violation of its resolutions.<sup>14</sup>

---

11 United States Department of State, "Iran, North Korea and Syria Non-Proliferation Act Sanctions"; 24 March 2017; at: <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/269084.htm>

12 See the citation in this memo by the Congressional Research Service at: <http://freebeacon.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/20150731-CRS-Memo-to-Senator-Kirk-Iran-Financial-Support-to-Terrorists-and-Militants-1.pdf>

13 Please see the following list of reports on the conflict in Yemen and Houthi violations at the UN Security Council publications site at: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/search.php?search=Houthi&Template=globalsearch&IncludeBlogs=18%2C19%2C20%2C21%2C23&limit=20&x=0&y=0>

14 United Nations Security Council, Monthly Report: Iran; January 2017. At: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-01/iran\\_14.php](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-01/iran_14.php)



**"In Yemen, Iran continues to support the Houthis' attempted overthrow of the government by providing military equipment, funding, and training, thus threatening Saudi Arabia's southern border. Interdictions by Emirati forces in Yemen and coalition forces in the Arabian Sea have revealed a complex Iranian network to arm and equip the Houthis."**

**SECRETARY OF STATE REX TILLERSON**

**APRIL 19, 2017**

**"Everywhere you look, if there's trouble in the region, you find Iran."**

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JAMES MATTIS**

**APRIL 19, 2017**

**"[I]n the past six months, Houthi forces trained and armed by Iran have attacked Emirati and Saudi vessels and threatened U.S. and allied vessels transiting the Red Sea, and they continue to threaten U.S. friends and allies in the region."**

**SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL ANNOUNCING SANCTIONS ON IRAN**

**FEBRUARY 3, 2017**

**"We are aware that Iran provides lethal support to the Houthis."**

**FORMER U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN JOHN KIRBY**

**OCTOBER 24, 2016**

**"We are well aware of the support that Iran has been giving to Yemen, and Iran needs to recognize that the United States is not going to stand by while the region is destabilized, or while people engage in overt warfare across lines - international boundaries of other countries."**

**FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY**

**APRIL 8, 2015**

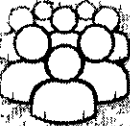


مركز الملك فهد للإغاثة الإنسانية  
KING FAHD HUMANITARIAN RELIEF CENTRE

Aid provided by Saudi  
to Yemeni and Syrian visitors (refugees)

# inside Saudi

(2015 - 2017)

 **603,833** Yemeni


+

 **291,342** Syrian

=


**895,175**  
Equal to **4.5%** of Saudi citizens

**Health**  
Saudi hospitals provided medical services




Around **35** thousand beneficiary

Primary Health Care Centers received




Around **370** thousand beneficiary

**Education**  
Higher Education Grant




More than **8** thousand students

Public Education




**141** thousand students

**Health**  
Saudi hospitals provided medical services




Around **41** thousand beneficiary

Primary Health Care Centers received




Around **437** thousand beneficiary

**Education**  
Higher Education Grant



More than **4** thousand students

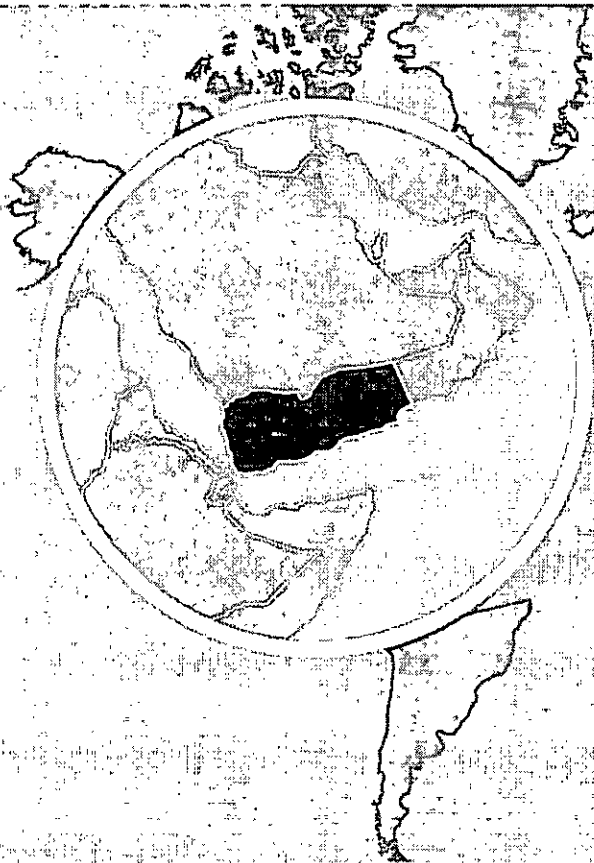
Public Education



**285** thousand students



مركز الملك سلمان للإغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية  
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE



## Total of aid provided by Saudi to Yemen

(April 2015 - April 2017)

# \$ 8.2

Billion U.S. Dollars



Humanitarian aid and relief provided through KSrelief

**\$ 847,598,580**



Aid provided to Yemenis inside Saudi Arabia

**\$ 1,130,186,557**



Development aid allocated to Yemen

**\$ 2,950,000,000**



Bilateral Government Assistance

**\$ 2,275,718,347**



Saudi Arabia's deposit to the Central Bank of Yemen

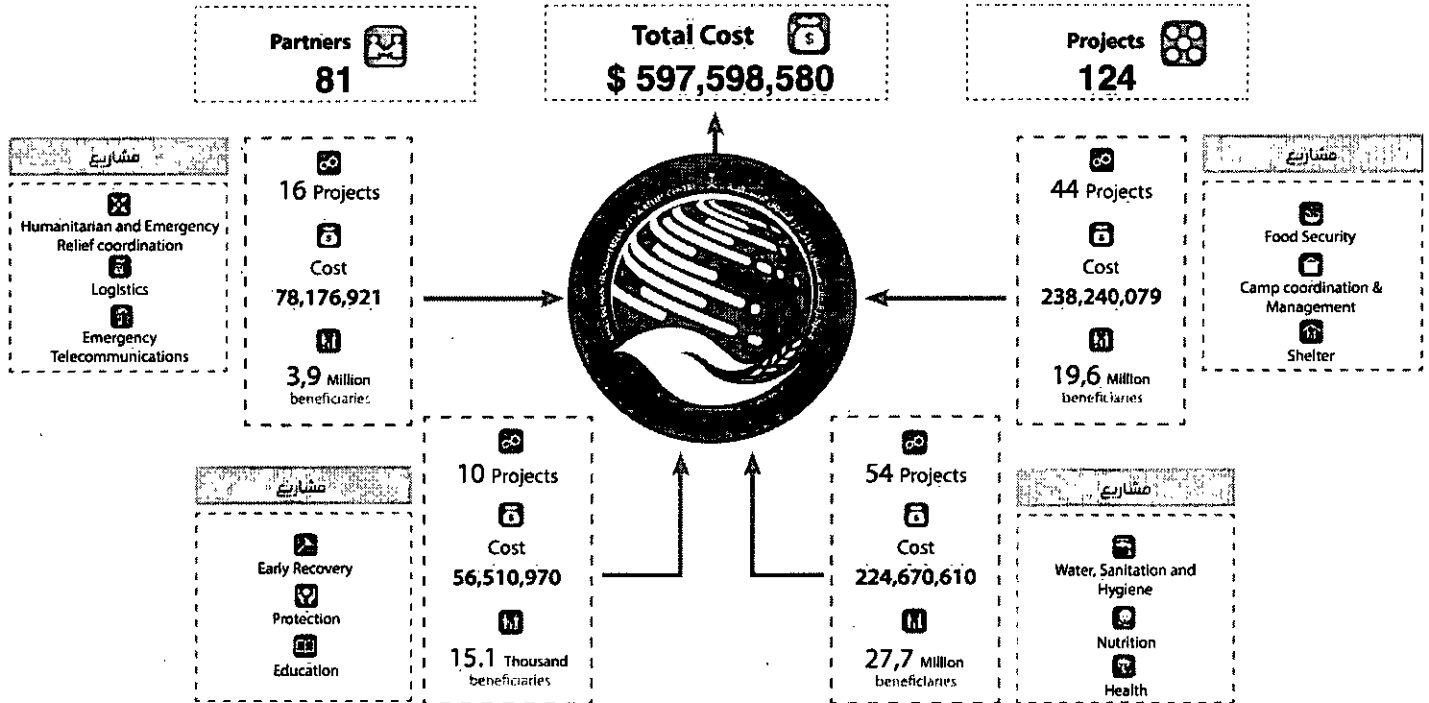
**\$ 1,000,000,000**



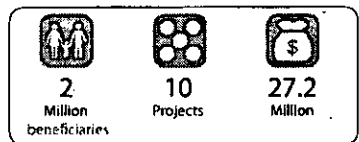


مركز الملك سلمان للإغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية  
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE

### KSrelief's Projects in Yemen

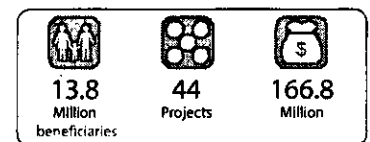
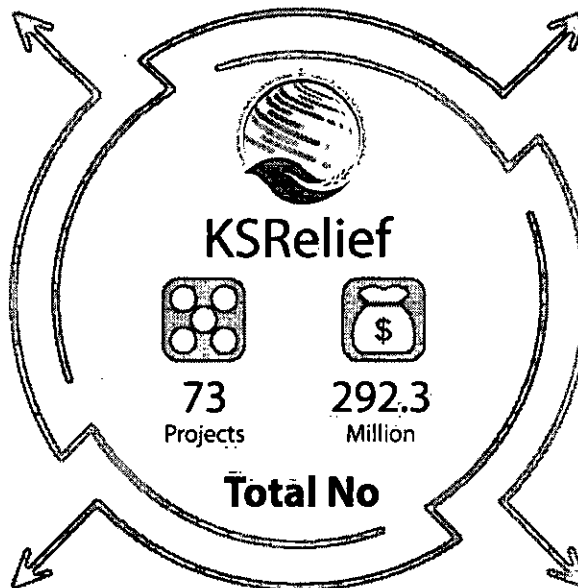
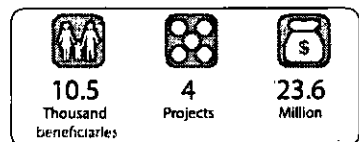


### KSrelief's Projects for women & children in yemen



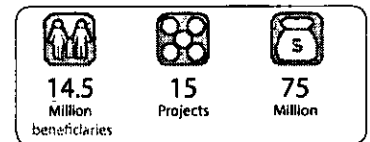
- Early Recovery
- Protection
- Education

- Humanitarian and Emergency Relief coordination
- Logistics
- Emergency Telecommunications



- Food Security
- Shelter
- Camp coordination & Management

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Nutrition
- Health

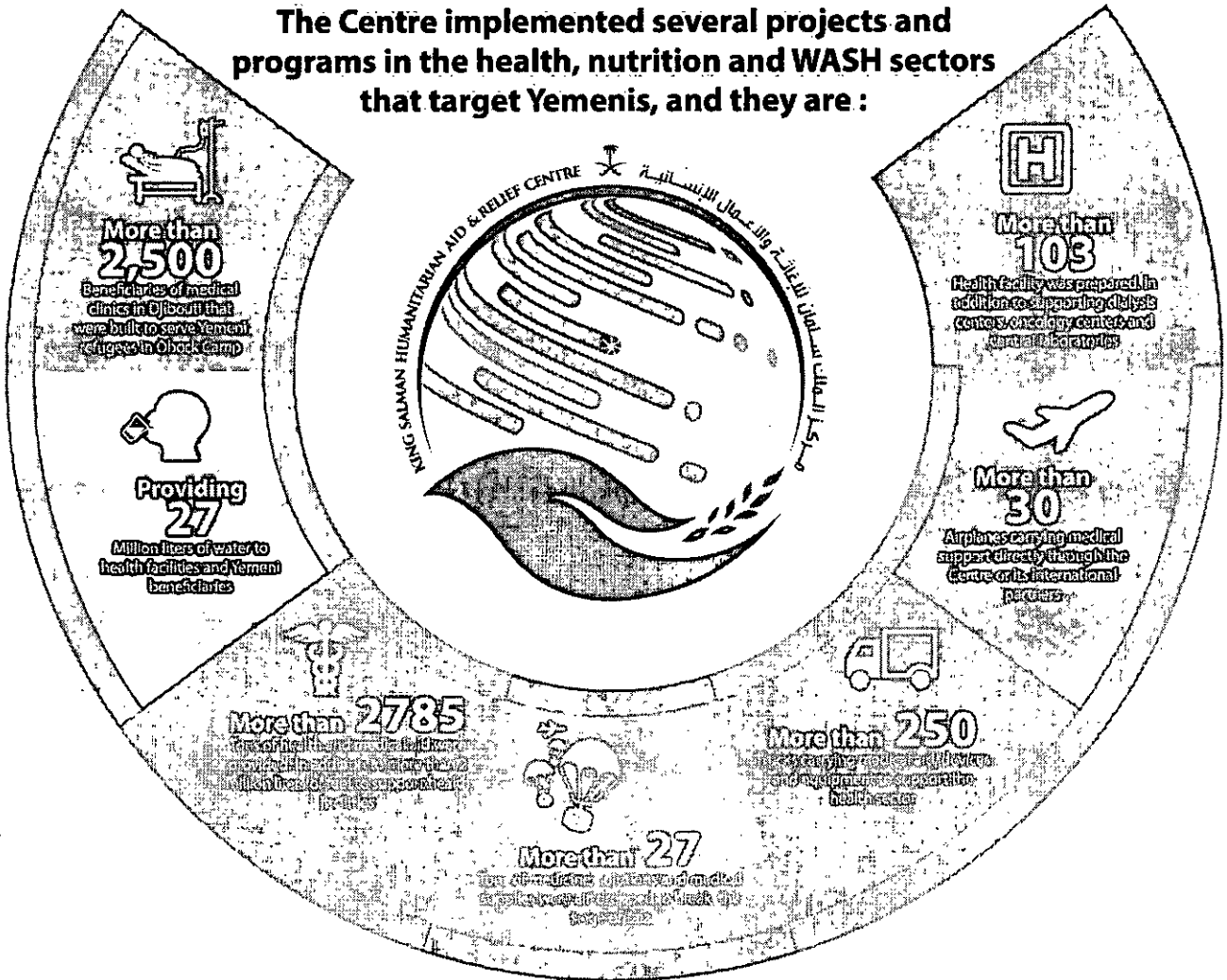




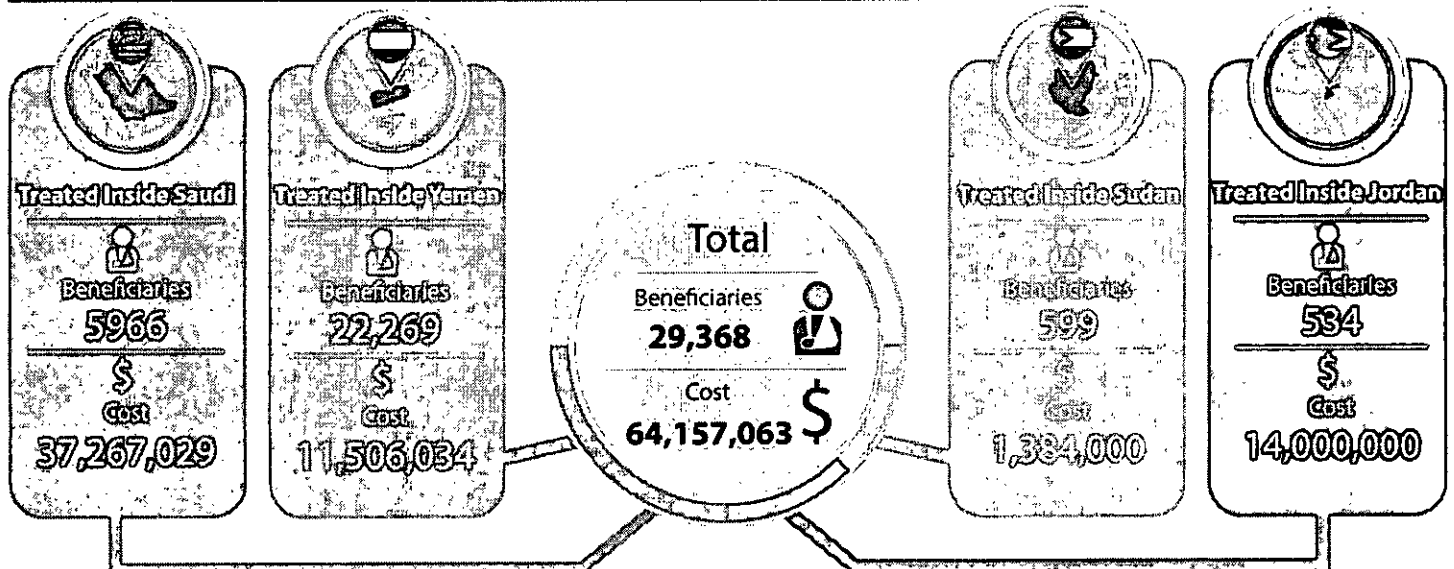
مركز الملك سلمان للإغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية  
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE

### Health Sector Projects in Yemen

The Centre implemented several projects and programs in the health, nutrition and WASH sectors that target Yemenis, and they are :



### Saudi's Aid to Wounded Yemenis

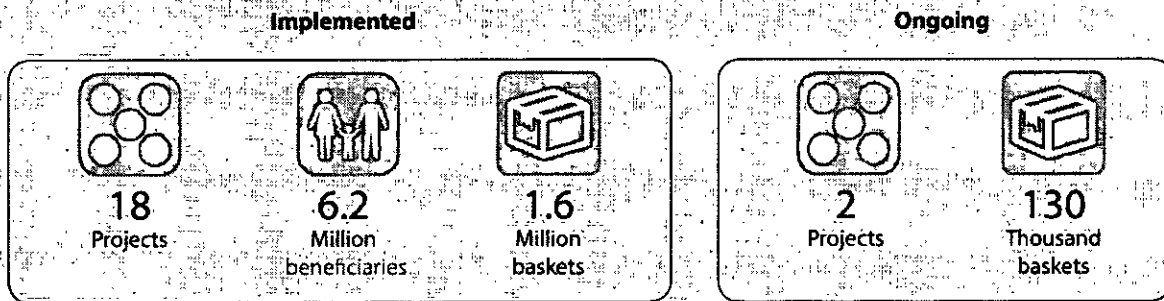




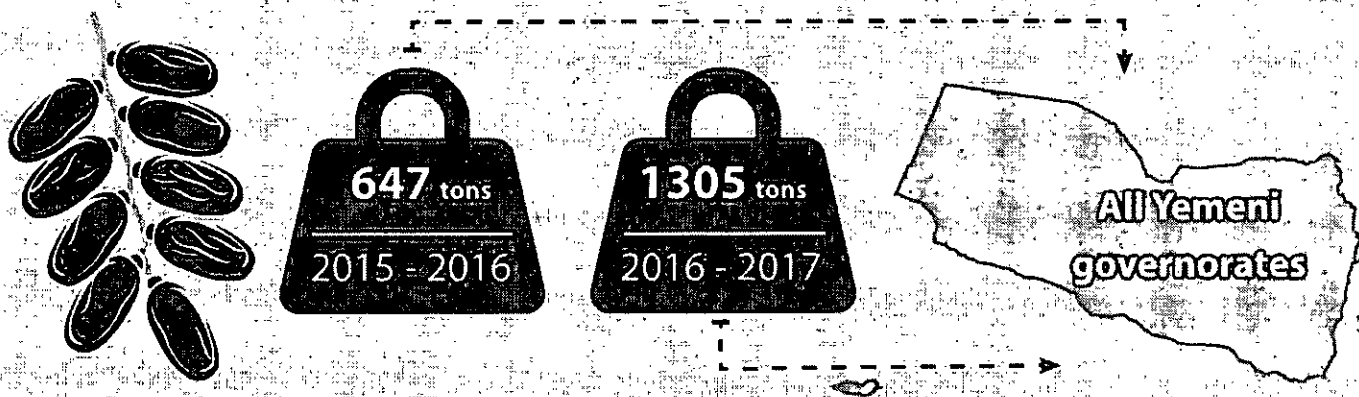
مركز الملك سلمان للأغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية  
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE

## Food Security Projects in Yemen

### Implemented Food Baskets Projects



### Dates Project



### Our Partners





## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## THE YEMEN CONFLICT

### **FACT SHEET: MILITARY TARGETING AND THE REDUCTION OF CIVILIAN CAUSALITIES**

MAY 2017

### **Target Selection**

Saudi Arabia has taken several steps to create a more thorough vetting process for target selection and validation for the Saudi-led Coalition's operations in Yemen. This process is meant to ensure that the Coalition:

- Adheres to the Law of Armed Conflict;
- Expands the 'No Strike List' now at over 33,000 targets;
- Enhances target criteria such as Damage Assessment and Collateral Damage Estimates;
- Observes the implementation of stricter Rules of Engagement.

The Coalition has implemented additional vetting criteria for time-sensitive targets. These criteria place extra responsibilities on Coalition pilots before conducting a mission.

The Coalition adheres to a no-strike list that includes over 33,000 targets, as referenced above. This list includes locations provided by U.N. and other humanitarian organizations on the ground in Yemen, in addition to locations collected by the Coalition. Furthermore, the Coalition is constantly updating this list and adding locations to it.

Currently, the Coalition seeks to align its targeting practices and personnel training with NATO standards, and only personnel that meet these rigorous standards are involved in target selection.



## U.S. Cooperation

Additionally, the Coalition is in regular consultation with the United States government regarding U.S. assistance in the vetting process. Saudi Arabia and the Coalition welcome the opportunity to grant access to U.S. personnel to the Air Operations Center, and any other facilities where targeting is approved, to observe the decision-making process implementation of such procedures.

The Coalition believes that increased U.S. support for coalition operations, including assistance in vetting targets, will increase the effectiveness of operations, and more importantly reduce mistakes.

Investigations: The Coalition has implemented recommendations of the Joint Incident Assessment Team (JIAT), which is responsible for investigating any incidents where it is alleged that Coalition operations have targeted civilians. The JIAT's findings have been made public. The aforementioned steps were largely instituted based on JIAT recommendations.

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.



## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## THE YEMEN CONFLICT

**FACT SHEET: OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN YEMEN**

MAY 2017

Saudi Arabia is committed to advancing reconstruction, relief, and political stabilization efforts to assist the Yemeni people. The Saudi government has mobilized significant financial resources and emergency material support through the King Salman Center Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), which has provided health, nutrition and sanitation aid and relief to 17 million people impacted by the conflict in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has committed \$8.2 billion for humanitarian and developmental assistance to Yemen since April 2015. Saudi Arabia remains the single-largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

### **Recent Quotes of Saudi and International Officials**

"Saudi Arabia is being attacked by Houthi rebels across its Southern border with Yemen. It's had its towns and villages shelled by the Houthis...Saudi Arabia is fully entitled to defend itself, and it's fully entitled to call on its friends in so doing."

—**UK Defense Secretary Sir Michael Fallon** | BBC Radio 4 | May 11, 2017

"Saudi Arabia and the World Bank agreed on Wednesday to commit \$300 million toward an aid package that would address Yemen's immediate food security needs including rice and wheat."

—**Source from the Saudi-led Coalition** | Reuters | May 10, 2017



"We have no choice but dialogue...We are ready to go to Riyadh, Khamis Mushait, Muscat or elsewhere to start dialogue and to reach an understanding,"

—**Former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh** | AFP | May 10, 2017

"I think the Saudi armed forces accomplished great achievements. When the operations began, legitimate powers' control over Yemeni territory was almost 0 percent. Today, legitimate powers control 80 percent or 85 percent of Yemeni lands."

—**Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman** | Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense | Al Arabiya TV | May 3, 2017

"Our programs have been reaching all regions of Yemen, I want to emphasize all regions, irrespective of who controls it... If you look at what we do as a humanitarian agency, I think it's way beyond any damage that is caused by any attacks."

—**Supervisor General of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre Abdullah Al Rabeeah** | Reuters | April 27, 2017

"The conflict is evidence that the militias did not want to see the will of the Yemeni people. They violated their decision by going against the government democratically elected by the Yemeni people. They also violated international law and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative. Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries are trying to provide food, development and safety to Yemen."

—**Supervisor General of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre Abdullah Al Rabeeah** | Arab News | April 23, 2017



"We'll have to overcome Iran's efforts to destabilize yet another country [Yemen] and create another militia in their image of Lebanese Hezbollah. But the bottom line is we're on the right path forward."

—**U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis** | en route to Riyadh | April 19, 2017

"Within six months, the [legitimate Yemeni] government regained 45 percent of Yemeni territory."

—**Spokesman for the Arab coalition General Ahmed Asiri** | Al Arabiya | April 16, 2017

"We made 70 agreements with Yemen's Houthis and ex-president Saleh. They did not implement a single one."

—**Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir** | Press Conference | Feb. 12, 2017

"I was very encouraged today to see the [KSRelief] centre developing its activities, with a strong commitment to humanitarian principles, not only in Syria and Yemen, but in so many countries around the world."

—**United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres** | Feb. 12, 2017

"Its [KSRelief] generosity has made a real impact in Yemen and elsewhere."

—**United Nations Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien** | Oct. 5, 2016

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.





## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## THE YEMEN CONFLICT

**SUMMARY: YEMEN WHITE PAPER**

APRIL 2017

**The Saudi-led coalition's objectives in Yemen are clear: to restore the legitimate government and protect our borders from a dangerous Iranian-backed Houthi militia.**

- By responding to an appeal from the legitimate president of Yemen and entering the conflict, Saudi Arabia is seeking to restore a sovereign government and standing up to Iran's aggression.
- The Kingdom has been supported in this campaign by several neighboring countries militarily and many more throughout the international community, including the United States.
- The situation in Yemen is a national security issue for Saudi Arabia, which must protect its citizens from being targeted by ballistic missile attacks against its population centers, such as the holy city of Makkah.

**Saudi Arabia is working with all political factions in Yemen towards a peaceful political solution to the conflict.**

- The endgame should be a political solution based on UN Security Council Resolution 2216, the GCC Initiative, and the Yemeni National Dialogue.
- The proposed Saudi framework calls for the withdrawal of forces from Sana'a and other key areas and the transfer of all heavy weapons, including ballistic missiles, from the Houthis to a neutral third party.
- The Houthis have the right to be part of the political process in Yemen, but they cannot use aggression and military weapons to disrupt national order and regional security.
- The Houthis continue to negotiate in bad faith. Saudi Arabia and the international community have made more than 70 agreements with the Houthis and ex-president Saleh, but the Houthis have renege on every agreement.



**The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen is achieving its goals.**

- Military intervention was undertaken only after repeated diplomatic efforts had failed.
- The legitimate government of Yemen now controls over 85 percent of the country. Iranian intervention has been contained and deterred.
- The coalition and the Yemeni forces retook the city of Aden from the Houthis and liberated the city of Al-Mukalla from Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

**Iran makes no secret of its nefarious intentions in Yemen. Their intervention in Yemen is just another example of Iran acting with international mischief and aggression.**

- Yemen is another example – along with Iraq, Syria, Bahrain and Lebanon – that showcases Iran's engagement in aggression outside its borders.
- The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have provided the Houthis with money, training, and weaponry for more than a decade, according to the U.S. State Department.
- According to a recent Reuters article, Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Qods Force, met top IRGC officials in Tehran in February 2017 to evaluate plans that would further advantage the Houthis in Yemen.
- Secretary of Defense Mattis in Riyadh recently reiterated that "Iran once again is no help" in Yemen. Secretary Mattis said the French, Australian and U.S. Navies have intercepted Iranian support and weapons in transit to Yemen.
- According to the White House, the Houthis have threatened U.S. and allied vessels transiting the Red Sea. The Houthis fired missiles at the USS Mason in October 2016.

**Saudi Arabia has a right to defend itself with weapons purchased with their own funds.**

- Every nation should provide for its own security. Iran is posing a threat to Saudi Arabia via its support for the Houthis in Yemen.
- In response to this threat, Saudi Arabia wants to defend itself with weapons purchased with Saudi funds.
- Support for Saudi arms sales is support for Saudi Arabia fighting its own battles in the region.

**The Coalition deeply regrets unfortunate incidents of errant strikes causing civilian casualties in an ongoing war zone. It is committed to protecting civilians in Yemen and has taken steps to avoid casualties.**

- The Coalition established an independent Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) and tasked it with assessing claims of violence against civilians by Coalition forces, including violations and accidental fire incidents.



- The Coalition is working alongside UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross as part of a collaborative approach to minimize the possibility of harm to civilians, medical personnel, journalists and relief organizations.

**The Houthis have repeatedly violated international humanitarian law by design.**

- Houthi militias have shelled civilian targets, planted land mines in civilian areas and coerced child soldiers into their ranks.
- Houthis use aid as a weapon. At ports under their control, such as the Port of Hodeidah, the Houthis sell humanitarian aid on the black market to purchase arms. They use food itself as a weapon, particularly to recruit child soldiers in violation of international law.

**Because of the Coalition's counterterrorism efforts, terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Daesh can no longer use the vacuum created by Houthi destabilization to find a safe haven in Yemen.**

- In April 2016, Coalition forces liberated the city of Mukalla, depriving AQAP of a key stronghold. Today, AQAP no longer controls a single city in Yemen.
- Daesh has attacked Saudi operations in Yemen in retaliation for Saudi participation in airstrikes against Daesh in Syria.

**Saudi Arabia is the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, having contributed over three quarters of a billion dollars through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center.**

- In April 2017, the Kingdom pledged an additional \$150 million donation to support KSRelief in Yemen.
- The new donation comes as part of the \$8.2 billion committed by the Kingdom within its humanitarian and developmental assistance to Yemen since April 2015.
- Hodeidah, specifically, is receiving the largest amount of humanitarian aid from external sources, yet much of the population is suffering from famine. Liberation of the Port of Hodeidah would improve the flow of humanitarian aid, not stifle it.

**This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.**



## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## COUNTERTERRORISM

**FACT SHEET: FIGHTING AND DEFEATING DAESH**

MAY 2017

Saudi Arabia is the main target of Daesh (ISIS) and other terror groups because it is the birthplace of Islam and home to the Two Holy Mosques. Saudi Arabia continues to expand and intensify its counterterrorism initiatives, as terrorism remains a major threat to the safety and security of our citizenry and the global community.

### **Terror Target**

- Saudi Arabia has faced more than 60 terrorist attacks by Daesh and Al-Qaeda, more than 25 of them just in the last two years. More than 200 citizens and policemen have been killed in terrorist attacks.
- Daesh perceives the Saudi government as an "un-Islamic" enemy that is too closely connected to the West.
- There has been a significant increase in the rhetoric against the Saudi government by Daesh activists in social media networks.

### **Fighting Back**

Saudi Arabia is one of the leading nations combating terrorism and terrorist financing, and has been working closely with its allies on all fronts. Saudi Arabia is hunting down the men, cutting off the money and destroying the mindset that Daesh and other terror organizations create and rely on.



## The Men: Combating Terrorism

- Saudi Arabia is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, taking military action in support of coalition airstrikes in Syria. As of March 2017, Saudi Arabia has flown 341 sorties against Daesh in Syria, the second largest number after the United States.
- In December 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the formation of a multi-nation Islamic Military Alliance to combat terrorism, with a joint operations center based in Riyadh. The Alliance currently consists of 41 member nations.
- Saudi security forces have arrested more than 300 foreign nationals in the last two years for involvement in terrorist activities with Daesh.
- In 2014, Saudi Arabia issued a royal decree on counterterrorism. The decree reinforced that acts of terrorism, including membership in terrorist organizations and participation in hostilities outside the Kingdom, will not be tolerated.
- In 2011, Saudi Arabia signed an agreement with the U.N. to launch the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center. Saudi Arabia has pledged \$110 million to the center to help build its capabilities and effectiveness in helping countries combat terrorism.

## The Money: Combating Terror Financing

- Saudi Arabia, the United States and Italy are co-chairs of the Counter ISIL Finance Group, a broader coalition established in 2015 focused on disrupting ISIL's financing.
- Saudi Arabia earned observer status in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2015 and is aiming for full membership in 2018.
- Saudi Arabia has established a financial intelligence unit (FIU), which is a member of the Egmont Group.
- The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) requires all financial institutions within the Kingdom's jurisdiction to implement all of the recent recommendations for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism issued by the FATF.
- Saudi charities are prohibited from transferring money abroad.
- Saudi charities cannot operate abroad except through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre or the Saudi Red Crescent, which is a semi-government entity.
- The collection of cash contributions in mosques and public places is prohibited.
- Saudi authorities have closed down unlicensed money-exchange or money-transfer centers.
- Saudi Arabia has placed sanctions on entities that assist in terror financing, including joint designations with the U.S. against the Al-Haramain Foundation, Al-Furqan, and others. In October 2016, Saudi Arabia imposed sanctions on two individuals and a business for connections with Hezbollah.



## The Mindset: Overcoming Extremism

- Saudi Arabia's actions against Daesh include an aggressive public education/ideological campaign by official clerics in the Kingdom to discredit the group and condemn their activities as acts of terrorism.
- Saudi Arabia monitors its mosques to prevent political and religious incitement. Preachers espousing radical ideologies are removed from their posts and sent through re-education programs.
- Saudi officials and religious scholars have publicly and unequivocally condemned terrorist acts.
- The Senior Council of Ulama (religious scholars) has issued a fatwa (religious edict) prohibiting terrorism and terrorist financing, and declaring any support for terrorism a violation of Islamic law.
- Saudi Arabia works with affected individuals through de-radicalization programs and campaigns to promote tolerance.

## Recent Quotes by Saudi Officials and Senior Religious Scholars

**"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is determined, God willing, to strike with an iron fist those who target the minds and attitudes of our youth."**

King Salman bin Abdulaziz  
Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques  
July 5, 2016

**"The most powerful weapon being used by the enemies of our nation is to stoke division and have the youth break away from the group and consensus."**

Sheikh Hussain Al-AsShaikh  
Imam of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah  
July 8, 2016



SAUDI ARABIA AND COUNTERTERRORISM

**"The greatest and most appalling of all sins is for anyone to deliberately and premeditatedly shed the blood of innocent people... wreak chaos and havoc and undermine security and stability in order to achieve the evil goals of criminal gangs and sectarian terrorist organizations."**

Sheikh Khalid Ali Al-Ghamedi  
Imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah  
July 8, 2016

**"Islam magnifies the sanctity of human blood and criminalizes terrorism that kills and terrorizes innocent people in their homes, markets and facilities teeming with men, women and children, and that all humanity rejects and condemns it."**

General Secretariat of the Council of Senior Scholars  
July 15, 2016

**"Terrorism has no religion, it has no nationality, it has no ethnicity, it has no humanity. It is incumbent upon all of us to do everything in our power to defeat it."**

Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir  
July 15, 2016

**"The Kingdom has been keen to combat terrorism based on its conviction that terrorism has no identity and no religion, and from its belief that the terrorists are committing these acts stemming from their deviant ideologies and evil thought. All negative religious, political and social ideologies that use religion as a tool, throughout human history, do not reflect the absolute truth about religion."**

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior  
February 10, 2017



**"I believe that no two countries are working as closely in fighting terrorism, and in particular ISIS, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States. This has been the case for a number of years. We are intensifying our efforts."**

Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir  
March 23, 2017

## **Recent Quotes by Current and Former U.S. Officials**

**"The Saudi government took a zero-tolerance stance on ISIL, condemning its activities and participating in coalition military action to defeat the group in Syria and Iraq. Its external military action against ISIL in Syria as a part of the U.S.-led coalition was complemented by an aggressive campaign by both official clerics and King Salman to discredit the group and condemn its activities as acts of terrorism."**

U.S. Department of State  
Country Reports on Terrorism 2015  
June 2, 2016

**"...there's no country that wants to defeat the Islamic State or al Qaeda more than the country [Saudi Arabia] whose current crown prince was nearly blown up by an al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula terrorist with a bomb inside him that was built by Ibrahim al-Asiri, the most dangerous man in the world, still at large in Yemen."**

Retired Gen. David Petraeus  
June 20, 2016





SAUDI ARABIA AND COUNTERTERRORISM

**"...Saudi Arabia remains one of our most important allies in that region. We have robust cooperation with Saudi on counterterrorism, regional challenges, economics, energy. Our cooperation in those and in other areas will not change."**

Elizabeth Trudeau  
Director, Press Office  
U.S. Department of State  
July 15, 2016

**"Saudi Arabia is one of our closest partners on counterterrorism. I have worked very closely, especially [with] Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, over the last 15 years. And they are truly a good example of how foreign intelligence services can work against these terrorist organizations. And Saudi Arabia faces a very serious threat from counterterrorism."**

Director John Brennan  
Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency  
September 11, 2016

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.  
Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

6

**CONTACT:**

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
Information Office  
Washington, D.C.  
[press@saudiembassy.net](mailto:press@saudiembassy.net)

**Saudi Foreign Minister and US Secretary of State Confirm Strategic Partnership**

WASHINGTON [May 20, 2017] –Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir and U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said today that the Saudi.-U.S. partnership is stronger than ever and built on shared security interests, close economic cooperation and mutual trust. They made the remarks during a press conference in Riyadh to brief reporters on the first day of President Trump’s visit to Saudi Arabia.

Minister Al-Jubeir described the day as a truly historic one for U.S.-Saudi relations, further deepening the ties between the two longstanding allies. Minister Al-Jubeir discussed the Joint Strategic Vision Declaration signed by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and President Donald Trump.

He said the strategic vision will address ways to cooperate on “violent extremism, financing of terrorism, increasing defense capabilities, working on a defense architecture for the region ... trade and investment, education, and working in all fields in order to enhance our common interests and deal with the challenges that face both of our countries.”

Minister Al-Jubeir also said that the visit is a turning point for the Islamic world’s relationship with the U.S. and will advance international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

“If we can change the conversation in the Islamic world from enmity towards the U.S. to partnership with the U.S. and if we can change the conversation in the U.S. and in the West from enmity towards the Islamic world to one of partnership, we would have truly changed our world and we would have truly drowned the voices of extremism and we will have drained the swamp from which extremism and terrorism emanates,” said Minister Al-Jubeir.

The two leaders outlined a renewed commitment to defense cooperation. Earlier today, the two countries signed a defense agreement worth more than \$100 billion that will upgrade Saudi Arabia’s military capabilities, allowing it to better protect its borders and aid in the global fight against terrorism. Secretary Tillerson praised the deal’s economic impact, stating that it would generate “hundreds of thousands” of American jobs.

Minister Al-Jubeir criticized Iran for conducting destabilizing actions throughout the region, including in Yemen, Syria and Lebanon. The foreign minister said the world should judge Iran by its actions, not words.

“If Iran wants to be a normal country and wants others to treat it like a normal country, it has to act in accord with international law and the values and the mores of the international system that have existed for centuries,” said Minister Al-Jubeir.

Minister Al-Jubeir expressed an outlook for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Yemen and called on the Houthi militias to end all separatist activities.

“Now we have a radical militia [Houthis], allied with Iran and Hezbollah in possession of ballistic missiles and an air force, that has taken over a friendly government. [The] friendly government asked for support, we intervened,” explained Minister Al-Jubeir. “The Houthis are less than 50,000 in a country of 28 million. It is unacceptable that they would be allowed to seize power and get away with it.”

###

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*



## **Inaugural Saudi-U.S. CEO Forum set to bolster business partnerships, create jobs and secure investment**

**Riyadh, 14 May 2017:** Multiple bilateral agreements will be signed and new licences issued this week between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America at the inaugural Saudi-U.S. CEO Forum in Riyadh.

Coinciding with the historic visit by the U.S. President Donald Trump to Saudi Arabia, the Forum will be attended by leading senior executives of the largest corporations and investment funds from both Saudi Arabia and the United States, and a number of Ministers from the Kingdom, under the theme of 'partnership for generations'.

Drawing on over 80 years of close partnership between Saudi Arabia and the U.S., the CEO Forum will focus on expanding trade leading to the creation of jobs in the Kingdom in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and as part of President Trump's commitment to provide jobs for the American people. A significant number of MoU's and announcements will be made at the Forum and new licences issued for U.S. companies to establish their footprint in the Kingdom, further strengthening the established ties of economic inter-dependency. The strategic relationship and joint partnership between the two nations covers key sectors include oil and gas, aviation, healthcare, technology, manufacturing, industrials and infrastructure.

Held under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Saudi-U.S. CEO Forum aims to develop actionable partnerships, collaboration and investment opportunities catalyzed by the Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 to create jobs and drive economic diversification.

The Forum will feature four roundtable discussions. HE Khalid Al Falih, Saudi Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, will chair a session on industrial capacity building, while HE Dr. Majid Al Kassabi, Minister of Commerce and Investment, will lead a discussion on the progress the Kingdom has made to foster business partnerships.

Two other sessions on privatization and Saudi investment opportunities will be chaired by HE Mohammad Al-Tuwaijri, Vice Minister of Economy and Planning, and HE Yasir Al Rumayyan, Managing Director of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, respectively.

The Saudi-U.S. CEO Forum will also be addressed by Amin Al Nasser, President and CEO of Saudi Aramco, Dr. Ghassan Al Shabal, CEO of Saudi Research & Marketing Group, Loubna Olayan, CEO of Olayan Financing Co., Yousef Al-Benyan, CEO of SABIC and Essam Al Muhaidib, CEO of Al Muhaidib Group.



Saudi - U.S.  
CEO FORUM  
2017

Prominent speakers from the U.S. include Andrew Liveris, Chairman and CEO of Dow Chemical, Michael Corbat, CEO of Citigroup, Jeff Immelt, Chairman and CEO of GE, Chuck Robbins, CEO of Cisco and Laurence Fink, Chairman and CEO of Blackrock.

The Saudi-U.S. CEO Forum will be held annually to drive investment and create further jobs between the two countries, continuing the strong strategic partnership between Saudi Arabia and the U.S.

**ENDS**

**For more information kindly contact:**

Sconaid McGeachin

+971 50 708 4952

[Sconaid.mcgeachin@hkstrategies.com](mailto:Sconaid.mcgeachin@hkstrategies.com)

Marwan Abu Ghanem

+971 55 910 8924

[Marwan.Abu-Ghanem@hkstrategies.com](mailto:Marwan.Abu-Ghanem@hkstrategies.com)

Sol Levine

+1 202 365 7229

[sol.levine@qorvismsl.com](mailto:sol.levine@qorvismsl.com)

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*

**CONTACT:**

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
Information Office  
Washington, D.C.

**Saudi King Urges Stronger Partnership with the US to Fight Terrorism**

WASHINGTON [May 21, 2017] – Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz today urged Arab nations to promote a genuine partnership with the United States of America and fight “the forces of evil and extremism” together. He made the remarks at the historic Arab Islamic American Summit today in Riyadh, where he and U.S. President Donald Trump urged more than 50 leaders from the Arab and Muslim world to cooperate in the fight against terrorism.

King Salman thanked President Trump for visiting Saudi Arabia on his first official trip abroad. He praised the Kingdom’s partnership with the U.S., which he said was aimed at achieving “peace, security and positive development.”

“We are meeting today at this summit to express the seriousness in taking rapid steps to promote a genuine partnership with the friendly United States of America in a way that serves our common interests and contributes to achieving security, peace and development for all mankind, which is confirmed by our Islamic religion,” said King Salman.

“Due to our responsibility before God and then before our peoples and the world, we have to stand united to fight the forces of evil and extremism whatever their source,” said King Salman.

King Salman criticized Iran for “rejecting good neighborliness” and instead pursuing regional expansion, engaging in criminal behavior, interfering with other countries’ internal affairs and violating international law.

“The Iranian regime has been the spearhead of terrorism since the Khomeini revolution until today,” said King Salman.

Following the Summit, King Salman and President Trump inaugurated the Center for Combating Extremist Ideology. The Center will work to counter and prevent the spread of extremism by promoting moderation, compassion and productive dialogue.

###

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*

**CONTACT:**

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
Information Office  
Washington, D.C.

**Saudi Foreign Minister Says Arab Islamic American Summit  
Will Promote Partnership to Fight Terrorism**

WASHINGTON [May 21, 2017]—Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir and U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that the Arab Islamic American Summit, held today in Riyadh, was an important step in building an effective partnership to combat terrorism, promote positive dialogue and counter Iran.

Minister Al-Jubeir praised U.S. President Donald Trump's attendance at the summit and his efforts to promote dialogue between the U.S. and Muslim-majority countries. He reiterated President Trump's message that the fight against terrorism is one of good versus evil.

"The President deserves a lot of credit for taking this step, making his first visit outside the U.S. to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam and land of the Two Holy Mosques, and then going to Israel and then going to the Vatican to deal with the Jewish world and with the Christian world in order to try to bring the three religions together," said Minister Al-Jubeir.

Both leaders stressed the importance of productive understanding, tolerance, and dialogue among nations and different religions.

"I believe that the fact that this summit took place is historic. I cannot overemphasize the importance of it to the history of the world," said Minister Al-Jubeir. "Unless we are able to move from notions of a clash of civilizations and move towards a partnership among civilizations, we will not be able to eradicate the scourge of terrorism."

Minister Al-Jubeir argued that Iran must end its meddling in international affairs and its expansionist behavior.

###

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*

**CONTACT:**

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
Information Office  
Washington, D.C.

**Saudi Arabia Pledges \$150 Million in Humanitarian Aid to Yemen**

WASHINGTON [April 25, 2017] – The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pledged today a \$150 million donation to support the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) in Yemen.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeah the supervisor general for KSRelief, issued the announcement during the Geneva aid conference, a day-long meeting of international donors focused on responding to Yemen's humanitarian crisis.

Dr. Al-Rabeeah explained that the new donation comes as part of the \$8.2 billion committed by the Kingdom within its humanitarian and developmental assistance to Yemen since April 2015. Saudi Arabia remains the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

Established in May 2015, KSRelief has provided health, nutrition and sanitation aid and relief to 17 million people impacted by the conflict in Yemen. Partnering with international humanitarian organizations, KSRelief has established more than 100 health facilities, provided emergency food aid and supplied more than 350,000 gallons of fuel to medical facilities.

###

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*





## SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

## THE UNITED STATES

### FACT SHEET: SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

MAY 2017

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America have a longstanding relationship dating back to the 1930s, when American businessmen first traveled to the Kingdom to help develop the country's natural resources. Today, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is stronger than ever.

On issues of national security and economic opportunity, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is vital. The Kingdom remains one of America's closest allies and strongest economic partners in the Middle East. American and Saudi security forces work together to root out terrorism.

Saudi Arabia works with the U.S. to open markets for American goods and create jobs for Americans. Our two countries continue to cultivate this partnership through a broad range of cultural and educational exchanges. As the number of students and tourists traveling between the two countries continues to grow, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. will strengthen their relationship in the decades to come.

### Counterterrorism

- Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, was awarded the Central Intelligence Agency's George Tenet Medal for his relentless counterterrorism efforts and commitment to international peace, demonstrating the strength of cooperation between the Saudi Ministry of Interior and the CIA.
- Saudi Arabia is among the coalition nations of Operation Inherent Resolve conducting airstrikes against Daesh (ISIS) in Syria.
  - Saudi Arabia has announced that it is ready to send ground troops to fight Daesh in Syria as part of the U.S.-led coalition.
- Saudi Arabia, the United States and Italy are co-chairs of the Counter ISIL Finance Group (CIFG)



- The CIFG was established in 2015 with the aim of enhancing the sharing of information and developing coordinated countermeasures to disrupt ISIL's financing.
- Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have established two Joint Task Forces—one to combat terrorists, another to combat terror financing. Experts from both governments work side-by-side, sharing real-time information about terror networks.
  - Recent joint actions to disrupt terror financing include:
    - October 2016: Imposed sanctions on two individuals and a business over links with Hezbollah in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Treasury.
    - March 2016: Imposed sanctions on leading terrorist individuals and entities with ties across Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, disrupting the fundraising and support networks of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.
    - April 2015: Disrupted the financing and operations of Al-Furqan Foundation Welfare Trust, which is the successor entity to the Afghan Support Committee and Revival of Islamic Heritage Society branches in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both were designated as Specially Designated Global Terrorists and listed on the United Nations Al-Qaeda Sanctions List in 2002.
    - In 2011, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Intelligence helped foil a plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. in Washington, D.C.
    - In 2010, Saudi intelligence provided key information to American officials. The information helped foil an attempted terrorist plot involving bombs heading to the United States that originated in Yemen.
  - The Saudi government has increased the size, training and professionalism of its security forces, which are now seasoned by direct experience in Saudi Arabia. Saudi security forces have trained alongside American counterterrorism forces in the U.S. This experience and training has led to the arrest and conviction of hundreds of wanted terrorists and the destruction of most of the known terrorist cells in the Kingdom.
  - The Saudi-U.S. Strategic Dialogue, a counterterrorism working group created following September 11, 2001, continues to help ensure the governments' efforts and resources are aligned.

## Defense Cooperation

- Saudi and U.S. defense forces regularly participate in joint exercises to advance shared interests in regional security.
- Saudi Arabia is the largest U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customer, with nearly \$100 billion in active FMS cases.



## Trade and Investment

- Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 lays out a path for increased trade and investment with the United States.
- Saudi Arabia is 12th largest trading partner of the U.S. while the U.S. is the second largest trading partner of Saudi Arabia.
- U.S. exports to Saudi Arabia in 2016 totaled \$18 billion. Total bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$35 billion in 2016.
- The U.S. has the highest share of FDI stock in Saudi Arabia.
- Approximately 10,400 jobs were created in the U.S. as a result of Saudi investments in the country.
- In April 2017, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted the U.S.-Saudi Arabia CEO Summit to facilitate discussions on a new partnership for job creation under Saudi Vision 2030. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson delivered remarks at the event, reaffirming that "[U.S.] support for a strong and steady partner on economic cooperation remains as firm as ever."

## Education

- The late King Abdullah created the King Abdullah Scholarship Program in 2006. Saudi Arabia sends more university students to the U.S. than it does to any other country.
- In 2016, more than 65,000 Saudi students were studying in the United States.
- King Abdullah University of Science and Technology opened in 2009. This international research university established a digital library partnership with the U.S. Library of Congress in 2008, and has signed agreements with many U.S. universities. This is one of many educational partnerships between the two countries.

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.  
Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

Department of Treasury  
May 21, 2017

U.S. and Saudi Arabia to Co-Chair New Terrorist Financing Targeting Center

*Collaboration with Gulf Partners to Counter Terror Networks*

**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia** – Today, the United States and Saudi Arabia signed a historic agreement announcing the two nations' intent to establish the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC), a collaborative approach to confronting new and evolving threats arising from terrorist financing. The TFTC represents a new and creative response that leverages existing tools and formalizes cooperation between the United States, Saudi Arabia and partners in the Gulf to counter terrorist financing.

"This new Terrorist Financing Targeting Center will enhance existing tools and cooperation with partners in the Gulf to forcefully address evolving threats," said Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. "Treasury will offer the vast expertise of our Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence to this creative new effort. We will co-chair the TFTC with Saudi Arabia, and will work collaboratively with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council to counter these global terror networks."

The United States and the Gulf have worked hard to strengthen cooperation on countering the financing of terrorism. This relationship is exemplified by information sharing, regular high-level and expert-level engagement, and joint disruptive actions that the U.S. and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council have taken together over the years.

With today's announcements, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and other strategic partners in the Gulf are confronting new and evolving terrorist networks including ISIS, al Qa'ida, Hizballah, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, the Taliban, and the Haqqani Network. This collaboration will also address a host of other transnational threats emanating throughout the Middle East, including from Iran, the Assad regime, and the situation in Yemen.

The TFTC's goals are to:

1. Identify, track, and share information regarding terrorist financial networks;
2. Coordinate joint disruptive actions, and;
3. Offer support to countries in the region that need assistance building capacity to counter terrorist finance threats.

View the full text of the Memorandum of Understanding on Countering the Financing of Terrorism below:

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
ON  
COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is entered into by and between:

- (1) The Kingdom of Bahrain,
- (2) The State of Kuwait,
- (3) The Sultanate of Oman,
- (4) The State of Qatar,
- (5) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,
- (6) The United Arab Emirates, and
- (7) The United States of America.

hereinafter each referred to individually as "Participant" and collectively as "Participants."

In recognition of the strong relations existing among the Participants, and of the mutual desire to further these relations, the objective of this MoU is a bold and historic effort to expand and strengthen the cooperation among the Participants to counter the financing of terrorism, and to spur further action in this regard, based upon the principle of mutual benefit.

The Participants have reached the following understanding:

#### **Section 1: Principles and Aims**

1.1 This MoU between the Participants establishes the intent to create a Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC), to be chaired jointly by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Interior) and the United States of America (U.S. Department of the Treasury), for the purpose of facilitating coordination, information sharing, and capacity-building to target terrorist financing networks and related activity of mutual concern that pose national security threats to the Participants.

1.2 The TFTC would work to leverage the Participants' existing expertise to target specific terrorist finance networks, and also to identify and work to provide regional partners with the capacity they need to combat the financing of terrorism within their own borders.

1.3 This MoU does not replace or modify in any manner existing bilateral information sharing and operational relationships among the Participants. No resources are intended to be diverted from existing bilateral information sharing and operational relationships among the Participants.

#### **Section 2: Scope of Cooperation**

2.1 The Participants, through the TFTC, intend to:

- a) Identify, track, and share information regarding terrorist financial networks and related activity of mutual concern, including related threats emanating from countries and terrorist organizations;
- b) Coordinate action, such as joint sanctions designations or other disruptions against terrorists and their financial networks; and

c) Offer expert support to Participants that need assistance building capacity to counter terrorist finance threats, including establishing workshops on best practices in line with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards.

### Section 3: Working Mechanism

3.1 The Participants declare their intent to work together through the TFC on countering the financing of terrorism.

3.2 Participants intend initially to work together to increase information sharing and coordinate sanctions and other disruptive actions against terrorist finance networks, with the goals of coordinating action against the highest-level threats and increasing joint actions as quickly as possible, with a longer term goal of co-locating experts in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

3.3 The Participants intend that the TFC build upon their capacity and the capacity of regional countries to counter the financing of terrorism through regional workshops and other events focused on improving collective capabilities to combat terrorist finance.

### Section 4: Duration, Revision, and Discontinuance

4.1 The Participants intend to begin activities under this MoU upon signature.

4.2 Any revision to the content of this MoU is expected to be mutually decided upon in writing by the Participants and be done in writing by the Participants.

4.3 Financial and other technical details are intended to be reached as necessary among the Participants. The activities of each Participant in connection with this MoU are contingent on the availability of funds and other resources, and subject to the laws and regulations that govern each Participant.

4.4 This MoU is not legally binding and is not intended to give rise to any rights or obligations under domestic or international law.

4.5 The Participants intend to address any differences of opinion arising among them in regard to the interpretation of the present MoU through friendly consultation among the Participants.

4.6 Any Participant may discontinue cooperation under this MoU at any time, but in such case, should endeavor to give at least three months' prior written notice of discontinuation of its cooperation to the other Participants.

Signed in Riyadh, in seven originals in the English and Arabic languages, on the 21st of May 2017 corresponding to the 25th of Shaban-1438.

###

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*



## SAUDI ARABIA

and

## PRESIDENT TRUMP

### U.S. OFFICIALS COMMENT ON THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

May 2017

**"From assisting the refugees who are being thrown out of Syria by the fighting there, supporting Jordan in taking care of those refugees; the energy supplies and other support they are giving to Egypt as they work through some really tough financial times ... It's very clear that Saudi Arabia is stepping up to its regional leadership role out here right now at a key time in terms of trying to restore stability in this key region of the world."**

Secretary of Defense James Mattis

Press Conference in Riyadh

April 19, 2017

On February 10, 2017, CIA Director Mike Pompeo awarded the George Tenet Medal to Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif in recognition of distinguished intelligence work in the fight against terrorism and the Crown Prince's contributions toward security and peace.

**"Places like Saudi Arabia do have very, very good police forces, intelligence forces, so we know when someone comes from Saudi Arabia who they are and what they've been up to."**

Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly

Testimony before the House Committee on Homeland Security

February 7, 2017

**"We have a long relationship with Saudi Arabia that goes back over 80 years, and our support for a strong and steady partner on economic cooperating remains firm. When U.S. companies invest in the Saudi economy, everyone wins. The U.S. creates jobs at home, and businesses in the Gulf region get the best business partners that the global marketplace has to offer."**

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

U.S.-Saudi Arabia CEO Summit

April 19, 2017

This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 05/25/2017 4:23:50 PM



**The White House**

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 23, 2017

**Statement of Extraordinary Summit of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the United States of America**

1. At the invitation of the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the leaders of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the United States of America held their meeting in Riyadh on May 21, 2017, to reaffirm the strategic partnership between the two sides.
2. During the meeting, regional and international issues of common concern were discussed. The parties aligned on the importance of concerted efforts to achieve stability, security and prosperity.
3. The leaders reviewed the significant progress achieved since the previous summit in April 2016, including the measures taken to enhance cooperation and deepen the strategic partnership between the two sides.
4. The leaders expressed their commitment to tackling the root causes of crises in the Middle East, as well as taking more urgent steps to intensify efforts to defeat Daesh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or ISIS) and al-Qaida, oppose Iran's malign interference, and ease regional conflicts and find solutions for them.
5. The leaders stressed strengthening the ability of GCC countries to address threats wherever they originate, confront Iran's destabilizing activities, and work together to reduce sectarianism and regional tensions that fuel instability.
6. The leaders appreciated the agreement reached to establish a Terrorist Financing Targeting Center in Riyadh, which will open the door for other countries to join in the future.
7. The leaders reviewed the achievements of the joint working groups that were formed to implement the outcomes of the first Gulf-American Summit in the fields of defense against ballistic missiles, arms transfers, training, combating terrorism, maritime security, cyber security, and protecting infrastructure, as well as confronting malign Iranian interference in the region.
8. The leaders affirmed their commitment to continue close coordination between the GCC and the United States on issues of mutual concern through meetings of foreign and defense ministers from both sides.

9. The leaders directed the joint working groups to meet at least twice a year to accelerate the partnership on, inter alia, combating terrorism and facilitating the transfer of sensitive defense capabilities, the defense against ballistic missiles, military preparedness, and cyber security in order to ensure the continuity of these activities and accelerate implementation of the decisions contained in the joint statement of the second Gulf-American Summit on April 21, 2016.
10. The leaders instructed their respective administrations to strengthen their partnership frameworks, including the "GCC-US Strategic Cooperation Forum."
11. The leaders stressed their common interest in preserving the security and stability of the region and working together to confront all security threats that face the countries of the region, including the threats posed by terrorist organizations.
12. The United States reaffirmed its commitment to the security of the GCC member states against external threats. The leaders pledged deeper security cooperation and shared responsibility to address the threats facing the region. The leaders discussed a common vision for dealing with the most pressing conflicts in the region.
13. They affirmed their support for common principles, including that there is no solution to armed civil conflicts in the region but through political means, respect for the sovereignty of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, the need to protect minorities and respect for human rights in conflict-ridden countries.
14. The leaders renewed their determination to continue joint efforts to combat terrorism, eliminate its organizations, prosecute its members, and dry up its sources of funding.
15. They also stressed the importance of working together to confront terrorist threats and combat terrorism financing, with more measures, including protecting infrastructure facilities and enhancing border and aviation security. The United States welcomed the establishment of the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism, founded by Saudi Arabia, as part of the global fight against terrorism.
16. The leaders praised the efforts of the United States-led Global Coalition Against ISIS, or Daesh, in Syria and Iraq, and stressed the need for concerted efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to Iraqi and Syrian refugees and displaced persons.
17. The leaders expressed their total rejection of Iran's continued interference in the internal affairs of GCC states and the region, and called for full compliance with the rules of international law and its basic underpinnings, foundations and principles, which are based on good neighborliness, respect for the sovereignty of states, and refraining from threatening the use of force. They called on Iran to take concrete, practical steps to build trust and resolve its differences with neighbors by peaceful means.
18. They expressed their condemnation of Iran's interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region, in violation of the sovereignty of the GCC States, and its attempt to spread division

and stir sectarian strife among their citizens, including in the Kingdom of Bahrain, by supporting violent extremists, training proxies, smuggling weapons and explosives, inciting sectarian strife, and making statements at various levels to undermine security, order and stability.

19. They also stressed the need for Iran to comply with the nuclear agreement, and expressed their deep concern over Iran's continued firing of ballistic missiles, in clear defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions.
20. The leaders committed to working together to achieve a comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The leaders agreed to do everything they can to promote an environment that is conducive to advancing peace.
21. The leaders affirmed their firm position to preserve the unity, stability and territorial integrity of Syria and expressed their support for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General's envoy to find a political solution based on Geneva 1 Communiqué and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, and stressed the need to lift the siege on besieged Syrian cities, the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected areas and besieged civilians, the cessation of shelling of civilian areas, and the release of detainees.
22. The leaders affirmed their full commitment to the unity of Yemen, respect for its sovereignty and independence, and the rejection of any interference with its internal affairs. They also stressed the importance of a political solution according to the Gulf Initiative and its executive mechanism, and implementation of United Nations Security Council decisions. They expressed their great appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen to resume consultations between the Yemeni parties with the view toward reaching a political solution.
23. The leaders affirmed their commitment to work with the international community to prevent the continued supply of weapons to Houthi militias and their allies. They also stressed the need for collective efforts to confront the affiliates of al-Qaeda and Daesh or ISIS in the Arabian Peninsula.
24. The leaders expressed their concern about the continuation of the Houthi militia's confiscation of humanitarian and relief materials, which contributed to the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen, and welcomed the results of the donor conference held in Geneva on April 25, 2017, stressing the need for quick fulfillment of the commitments made by donor countries. The leaders look forward to working together to restore security and stability, rehabilitate the Yemeni economy and restore public services after reaching a political solution.
25. The leaders expressed their hope that the process of liberating Mosul will lead to the return of displaced persons to their cities and villages, and to finding a comprehensive political reform process that brings together the Iraqi people without exclusion or dispersion to meet the aspirations of the Iraqi people.

26. The leaders agreed to strengthen and support economic relations in various fields, including trade and investment, energy and alternative energy, industry, technology, agriculture, transportation and infrastructure development, in line with the development visions adopted by GCC countries.
27. The leaders agreed to meet annually in this format to review progress made on all the initiatives agreed upon during the Summit and to look for further ways to strengthen GCC-US Strategic Partnership.

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*



# SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

# COUNTERTERRORISM

APRIL 2017 REPORT



Defeating terrorism requires sound policies, concerted government efforts and international cooperation. Saudi Arabia works closely with its allies to hunt down the men, cut off the money, and change the mindset that terror organizations create and rely on.

# Contents

---

01	Overview: The Men, the Money and the Mindset: A Global Strategy to Defeat Terrorism and Extremism.	5
02	The Men: Updates on Combating Terrorism	11
03	The Money: Latest Developments in Combating Terror Financing	25
04	The Mindset: The Fight Against Extremism	37
05	Fighting and Defeating Daesh	53
06	Chronology of Terrorism Against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: 2015 through February 2017	57
	Op Ed: Saudi general: My country supports America's tough stance against ISIS terror and Iran Fox News, 26 March 2017	60
	Op Ed: "The Saudis are Fighting Terrorism, Dont Believe Otherwise" Newsweek, 3 February 2016	64
	Op Ed: "Saudi Arabia does not support Islamic State, terrorists - or any others" The Guardian, 17 August 2014	68
	Op Ed: Don't Blame 'Wahhabism' for Terrorism Mohammed Alyahya, Nonresident Fellow Atlantic Council; New York Times, 19 October 2016	70



**"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is determined, God willing, to strike with an iron fist those who target the minds and attitudes of our youth."**

**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques  
King Salman bin Abdulaziz  
July 5, 2016**



01

## Overview

### Capturing the Men; Cutting off the Money and Changing the Mindset

As the birthplace of Islam and home to the Two Holy Mosques, Saudi Arabia is an attractive strategic target of extremists who seek to redefine Islam for their own nihilistic purposes. To combat this threat, Saudi government officials and religious scholars have condemned terrorist acts and aggressively sought to combat deviant ideologies.

Defeating terrorism requires sound policies, concerted government efforts and international cooperation. Saudi Arabia is one of the leading nations in combatting terrorism and terror financing, and has been working closely with its allies to hunt down the men, cut off the money, and change the mindset that terror organizations create and rely on.

Terrorism is an enormous challenge to the global community, and the terrorist threat that directly faces Saudi Arabia is multifaceted – from Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) on its southern border to the rise of Daesh (also known as ISIS or ISIL) to its north, in Iraq and Syria, to the clandestine activities of Al-Qaeda and Daesh in the Kingdom itself. Saudi Arabia has responded by taking firm action against terrorism and its extremist roots and embracing the roles of regional leader and committed global partner to combat terrorism. The Kingdom uses all the tools at its disposal: military action to roll back the territorial gains of terrorist organizations, aggressive action to counter terrorist financing, innovative efforts to challenge and eventually overcome the ideology, theology and messages that underlie terror organizations.

The Kingdom has enthusiastically joined the U.S.-led fight against Daesh. In February 2017, Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir told a German newspaper that the Kingdom was "ready to send ground troops" to fight Daesh in Syria on the side of the United States, should the U.S. lead a coalition against the terrorism in that country. Saudi Arabia greatly values its strong alliance with Washington today. Few global partnerships are combating terrorism more effectively than the joint military and finance tasks forces operated by the two countries.

"Saudi Arabia is one of our closest partners on counterterrorism. I have worked very closely, especially [with] Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, over the last 15 years. And they are truly a good example of how foreign intelligence services can work against these terrorist organizations. And Saudi Arabia faces a very serious threat from terrorism."

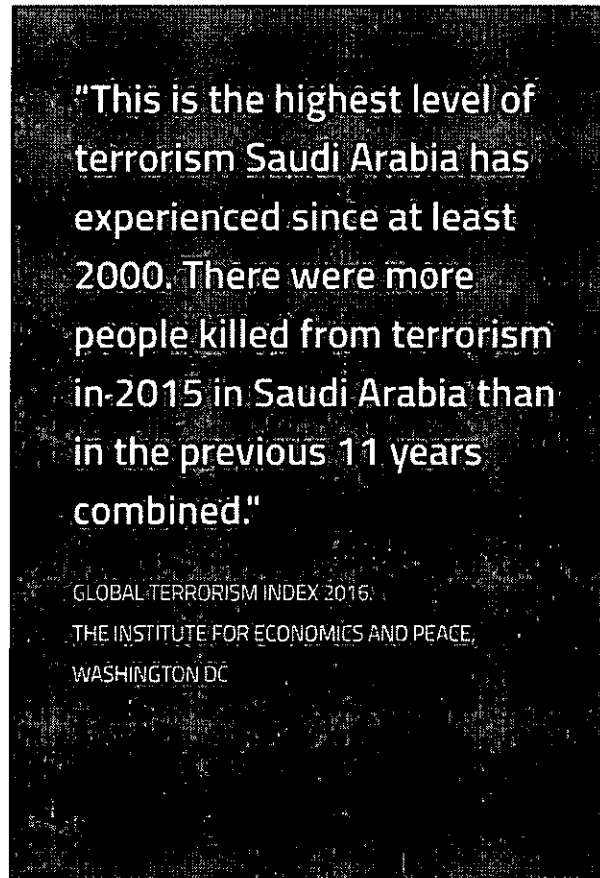
---

Former CIA Director John Brennan  
Face the Nation  
September 11, 2016

Saudi Arabia's multifaceted approach to fighting terrorism is reflected in the Kingdom's:

- Membership in the 68-nation strong Global Coalition to Counter ISIS; making 341 sorties in support of coalition airstrikes in Syria.
- Creating in December 2015 a multi-nation Islamic Military Alliance against Terror;
- Co-chairmanship of the Counter ISIL Finance Group, along with the United States and Italy;
- Agreement with the UN in 2011 to launch the United Nations Counterterrorism Center; Saudi Arabia has pledged \$110 million to the center;
- Imposition of sanctions on entities that assist in terror financing, including joint designations with the U.S Treasury Department;
- International intelligence sharing by the Saudi Ministries of Defense and Interior;
- Strengthening of local banking laws;
- Far-ranging investigations into terror-funding networks;

- Crackdowns on local money-exchange operations;
- Military-technology transfers from the U.S. that contribute to joint counterterrorism efforts;
- Army and Special Forces training with the American and British militaries, as well as security-technology research and development between Saudi Arabia's scientific institutes and their international equivalents.
- Implementation of aggressive public education campaigns by official clerics in the Kingdom to discredit terror groups and condemn their activities;
- Monitoring its mosques to prevent political and religious incitement.



The Kingdom's commitment to fighting terrorism stems from its history as a target of terrorist violence, but also from its recognition that terrorism is a serious threat to order, stability and human development in the world today.

In 2016, Saudi Arabia suffered 34 attacks on its soil from a variety of extremist groups, including a trio of simultaneous attacks against U.S. targets on July 2016. In total, the country has faced more than 60 known attacks by Al-Qaeda and Daesh, some two dozen of them in the last two years. The self-proclaimed leader of Daesh called for the extermination of the Saudi royal family in three formal decrees, or "fatwas," issued between 2014 and 2016. Confronted with such threats, Saudi security forces continue to bolster their resources and capabilities.

The international situation today demands ongoing and close cooperation between nations allied against terror. Although successful in the design and implementation of its counterterrorism programs, Saudi Arabia continues to build on its initiatives, because terrorism remains a threat

to the safety and security of its citizenry and the global community. The effort must continue to be a collective one wholly dedicated to eradicating terrorist violence, extremism and radicalization in all its forms: cultural, political and religious.



"From assisting the refugees who are being thrown out of Syria by the fighting there, supporting Jordan in taking care of those refugees; the energy supplies and other support they are giving to Egypt as they work through some really tough financial times ... It's very clear that Saudi Arabia is stepping up to its regional leadership role out here right now at a key time in terms of trying to restore stability in this key region of the world"

U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JIM MATTIS

APRIL 19, 2017

"I believe that no two countries are working as closely in fighting terrorism, and in particular ISIS, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States. This has been the case for a number of years. We are intensifying our efforts."

FOREIGN MINISTER ADEL BIN AHMED AL-JUBEIR

MARCH 23, 2017

"There is great unanimity around the effort to defeat ISIS — not just on the battlefield, but also off the battlefield and around the world."

U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE REX TILLERSON

MARCH 23, 2017





Saudi security forces have arrested more than 300 foreign nationals in the last two years for involvement in terrorist activities with Daesh.

Saudi Special Forces during a training demonstration, May 2015

02

## The Men

### Updates on Combating Terrorism

During the last decade, the Saudi government has fundamentally restructured operations and coordination to better address national security threats and to prevent terrorist attacks. Much of this activity has been aimed at dismantling the physical presence of terrorists and the ability of militants to operate within the Kingdom.

To do so effectively, Saudi security forces maintain rigorous security standards and undertake continuous training on the latest best practices for combating terrorist threats. Security professionals regularly participate in joint programs throughout the world, including in Europe and the United States.

Saudi security agents also work with their international counterparts to conduct missions and exchange information. Saudi Arabia and the United States have established two joint task forces—one that pursues leads to terrorist activities and another that tracks terror financing. These efforts to enhance the sophistication of Saudi Arabia's human resources have been complemented by the deployment of new technologies that assist in safeguarding the Kingdom.

In addition to adopting enhanced tactics to patrol the country's desolate borderlands, the Saudi government has also implemented counterterrorism measures designed to confront threats in the Kingdom's dense urban areas. Neighborhood police units engage and work directly with community members, encouraging citizens to provide tips and leads about suspicious activity. This approach has led to arrests of most-wanted terrorists and to the discovery of safe houses where terrorists were meeting, plotting and staging attacks.



"We are tremendously pleased with the work and sacrifice of our brave security men who operate out of loyalty for their nation and religion, guided by their belief in God while facing the dark terrorist groups that have violated the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and follow the ways of Satan in shedding blood. Their crimes and harm extend near and far, sparing no father, brother, friend or relative their heinous acts through their actions; they revealed that they are a scourge that poses harm to the society, but their efforts are constantly thwarted, thanks to God, first, and then to the efforts of our heroic security men."

THE CUSTODIAN OF THE TWO HOLY MOSQUES KING SALMAN BIN ABDULAZIZ  
IN A LETTER TO CROWN PRINCE MOHAMMAD BIN NAIF,  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR,  
JANUARY 27, 2017



These activities - training, education, the inclusion of technology and community outreach - have allowed Saudi security forces to foil many terrorist plots within the Kingdom and to dismantle Al-Qaeda's operations. They have also created an unwelcome environment to terrorists and extremists.

Despite their effectiveness, these activities have not come without sacrifice. In combating terrorist-related events, many Saudi security officers have died and hundreds have been wounded carrying out their duties. Casualty rates have decreased in recent years, as a result of improved training, experience and preventative activities—including increased efforts to combat the financing of terrorism and to eradicate the influence of extremist ideologies.

In addition to training courses for combating terrorists, Saudi Arabia has led numerous international counterterrorism conferences on subjects ranging from combating extremists ideology to combating terror financing. International conferences such as these give nations and international organizations an opportunity to meet and discuss best practices for combating terrorism. These conferences are critical to ending the threat of terrorism on global community.

### **Saudi Internal Security, Special Forces, and International Collaboration**

Recent Actions by Saudi Arabia's Special Operational Forces (SOF) and its sub-agencies: the Saudi Emergency Force (SEF) and Special Security Forces (SSF).

In early January 2017, the Ministry of Interior announced that Security Forces had arrested more than 300 foreign nationals from nine different nations in the last two years for involvement in terrorist activities with Daesh. In addition to these arrests, preemptive security operations by SSF that foiled terrorist plots throughout 2016 have included: thwarting planned attacks at a) the Prophet's Mosque in Medina during the Pilgrimage season (September 2016); b) the U.S. consulate in Jeddah during Ramadan (July 2016); c) an international football match at the al Jawahara Stadium, also in Jeddah; d) a checkpoint in Damman in early August; and e) the tourist areas of the island of Tarout on the Arabian Gulf. They also prevented seven suicide attacks targeting a number of mosques in the region of Eastern Province.

In early 2017, Saudi Security Forces continued to disrupt planned attacks and to capture extremists. On January 7, Daesh-linked extremists Tayea Salem Yaslam Al-Sayari - known as a "suicide belt" maker for Daesh - and Talal Samran A-Saadi were killed during a shootout with police forces in the Riyadh neighborhood of Yasmeen. Two weeks later, two extremists blew themselves up after security forces cornered them in the Harazat residential area of Jeddah.

Throughout 2016 and into early 2017, Saudi security forces dismantled several terrorist cells and arrested dozens of individuals connected to terrorism. Pakistani national Abdullāh Gulzar Khan was arrested for plotting the Ramadan suicide attack on the U.S. consulate in Jeddah. Yemeni national Omar Saeed Mahdi Bahdaissami was arrested for the murder of a Saudi corporal as he was leaving early morning prayer at a local mosque. Six other Yemeni nationals were arrested in connection with that attack. A Syrian national, Nasser Mohammed Shafiq Al-Barazi, and an accomplice were arrested for manufacturing explosive belts and preparing explosive materials for Daesh to use in the Kingdom. In addition, Egyptian national Hisham Mohammed Abdo was caught before attempting a suicide attack on a mosque in Al-Ahsa.

## TERROR PLOTS FOILED BY SAUDI SPECIAL FORCES IN 2016

- Thwarting planned attacks at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina during the Pilgrimage season
- Thwarted attack on the U.S. consulate in Jeddah during Ramadan
- Foiled a planned terror attack on an international football match at the al Jawahara Stadium, Jeddah
- Thwarted a terrorist attack at a checkpoint in Damman
- Foiled a terrorist attack on tourist areas of the island of Tarout on the Arabian Gulf
- Prevented seven suicide attacks targeting a number of mosques in Eastern Province

On September 19, 2016, Saudi Special Forces arrested 17 members of Daesh terror cells. Saudi authorities seized pipe bombs, weapons, ammunition, suicide vests and bomb-making materials in the raids. In a press conference, Ministry of Interior spokesman Major General Mansour Al-Turki said the terrorist cells had a list of targets that included civilians, religious scholars and security officers as well as the locations of military installations and economic targets.

In February, Daesh claimed responsibility for the murder of retired Brigadier General Ahmad Faya Asiri in the city of Jizan. On August 21, 2016, Ministry of Interior spokesperson Major General Mansour Al-Turki announced that security forces arrested Osama Ahmed Mohammed Al-Rajhi, a Yemeni national; Muwafaq Saleh Sunaid Al-Harbi, a Saudi national; and Mohammad Ahmed Mohamed Al-Rajhi, another Yemeni national.

In addition, on June 3, 2016, security forces announced the arrests of three individuals, among them an imam at a mosque in Medina, suspected of supporting Daesh. These arrests highlighted the fact that there has been a marked increase in the presence of known individual terrorists and their related networks in the southwestern provinces of the country, and Saudi security operations have intensified there. For example, on May 5, 2016, security forces conducted two operations in Jeddah and the Taif provinces; the larger of these operations took place in Wadi Noman and involved sustained exchanges of gunfire with security forces and two suicide-bomb attacks.

### Counterterrorism Operations and Exercises

On November 4, 2016, Saudi Special Security Forces simulated an attempt by a terrorist group to free a prisoner during his transfer from prison. The simulation was part of the tenth day of the Arab Gulf Security-1 exercises hosted by Bahrain. Saudi Special Security Forces carried out

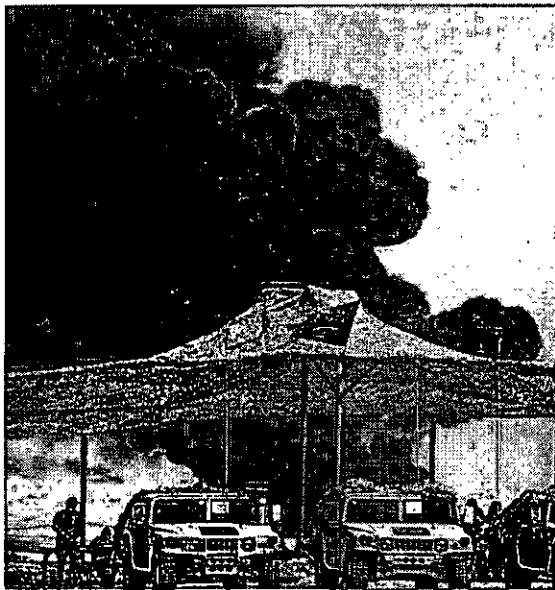
### THE BLACK LEOPARDS

As Saudi Arabia prepared to receive nearly 2 million pilgrims from all over the world for the annual Hajj in September 2016, the Kingdom put a new security plan in place to engage a number of highly equipped government agencies. One of the most important measures taken was the deployment, for the first time, of the SSF unit known as the "Black Leopards," an elite force trained in rapid-intervention operations.

Black Leopards were positioned in Security Control Centers, specifically at the entrances of holy sites. They are trained and equipped to respond to emergency events and were given the authority to deal directly with any terrorist attacks or other incident that would have put the pilgrims' safety at risk.

several operations during the exercise, which entailed dividing special operations forces and armored security forces, defusing and removing explosives, and coordinating with the air force. The security forces worked according to detailed plans to respond to a large number of possible scenarios.

In March 2016, the Special Forces took part in a 20-nation counterterrorism exercise called "North Thunder." The three-week exercise took place along Saudi Arabia's border region with Iraq and Kuwait, using conventional and unconventional warfare techniques as part of a wider strategy to develop a counterterrorism alliance of Islamic nations in the Middle East.



## NORTHERN THUNDER MILITARY EXERCISES FEBRUARY – MARCH 2016

Special forces train during the North Thunder military exercises in Hafar Al-Batin, 500 kilometers northeast of the Riyadh on March 10, 2016. Armed forces from 20 countries conducted maneuvers in northeastern Saudi Arabia, participating in one of the world's biggest military exercises. North Thunder involved 350,000 soldiers, 20,000 tanks and 2,500 warplanes.

The Special Forces continue to conduct regular training with partner nations in the Middle East, including NATO allies such as the French Special Forces Command (Commandement des Opérations Spéciales). These training programs focus particularly on interoperability.

In October 2015, the SSF took part in a joint training exercise with Pakistan's Special Services Group aimed at improving interoperability in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations and developing associated tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) in rugged environments.

### **Collaboration with the United States**

Saudi Arabia and the United States have a longstanding relationship dating back to the 1930s, when American businessmen first traveled to the Kingdom to help develop the country's natural resources. Today, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is stronger than ever. A major reason for the strength of this vital partnership has been the cooperation between the two countries on matters related to security and intelligence. Both nations are committed to rooting out the sources of terrorism.

On February 10, 2017, Central Intelligence Agency Director Mike Pompeo presented Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, with the George Tenet Medal in recognition of his efforts in the fight against terrorism. The award reflects the close cooperation between the CIA and the Ministry of Interior, particularly over the past decade-and-a-half.

### **NSA-MOD**

The U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) collaborates with the Kingdom's Ministry of Defense, focusing on internal security and terrorist activity on the Arabian Peninsula. This partnership has been conducted within the framework of the CIA's relationship with the Kingdom's Ministry of Interior—specifically, the Mabathith, or General Directorate for Investigations (GDI—roughly analogous to parts of the FBI). While structured in distinct divisions, the GDI works alongside the Special Security Forces (under the Assistant Minister for Security Affairs) and the Special Emergency Forces, which report directly to the Minister of the Interior.

### **U.S. SWAT TEAM MODEL**

The Saudi Special Security Forces (SSF) is modeled after the special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams employed by U.S. law enforcement and comprises



"We, God willing, continue to confront terrorism and extremism everywhere, and with thanks to God we have managed to thwart many terrorist plots. We are surrounded by areas of conflict, and we were the first [nation] affected by terrorism from various sources, but we are equipped to combat terror in any place and under any circumstances."

CROWN PRINCE MOHAMMAD BIN NAIF

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR, ON THE OCCASION  
OF BEING AWARDED THE CIA 'GEORGE TENET MEDAL' BY AGENCY

DIRECTOR MIKE POMPEO

FEBRUARY 10, 2017

some 500 operatives across 13 centers throughout the country. The SSF is the counterterrorism unit of Saudi Arabian General Security within the MOI and is funded through allocations within the Defense budget. The operations of the SSF include: a) counterterrorism operations "in all forms and methods," b) VIP protection at home and abroad, c) aviation protection for local and international flight; d) to guard and protect country embassies abroad in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs e) Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) f) protection of critical installations and facilities, g) supporting other security sectors and helping to maintain security during the Hajj in cases of disasters and crises.

## **U.S.-Built Military Bases**

U.S. Army and Air Force engineers designed and constructed Saudi military bases in Taif, Khamis Mushait and Hafar Al-Batin. The latter, King Khalid Military City in Hafar Al-Batin, was built to defend the Kingdom's northeastern border and was used to house thousands of American and other coalition soldiers during the Gulf War.

In February 2016, the base played host to a large-scale military maneuver, North Thunder. Approximately 150,000 soldiers, 2,540 warplanes, 20,000 tanks, and 460 helicopters participated in the largest military exercise in the history of the region. Twenty Arab and Muslim countries and the GCC-formed Peninsula Shield took part in the drill, led by Saudi Arabia.

## **The United States Military Training Mission**

(USMTM) to Saudi Arabia is a special Security Assistance and Security Cooperation organization under the authority of the chief of the U.S. diplomatic mission. From March 30 to April 19, 2016, U.S. Army Special Forces teams conducted combined training with the Royal Saudi Land Forces 1st Airborne Brigade in Tabuk, in the northwestern part of the Kingdom. Training included small-arms marksmanship; machine-gun, mortar and anti-tank weapons training; land navigation; and counter-IED. The training culminated in a maneuvered live-fire raid coordinated by U.S. Special Forces team leadership.

## **Collaboration with International Organizations**

### **INTERPOL**

In mid-2016, Saudi Interpol announced plans to link internal sections of its databases to the General Secretariat of Interpol based in Lyon, France, in order to ensure a more effective and efficient method of investigation.

In February 2016, Saudi Interpol detained an Indian doctor, Sabeel Ahmed, for his involvement in a 2012 plot to recruit people for the terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba.



"I can tell you even to this day there are plots directly targeting the U.S. homeland that would not have been disrupted without the assistance of Saudi Arabia. I can't think of another ally that plays a more important role than Saudi Arabia does in our counterterrorism fight and our ability secure our own homeland."

FRANCES TOWNSEND

FORMER HOMELAND SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM ADVISOR

TO PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

JULY 20, 2016

On December 15, 2016, Interpol's Director for Saudi Arabia Major General Mohammed bin Ali Al-Zabin concluded a new cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabian Airlines in which Interpol and the airline would coordinate the transfer of wanted and convicted persons.

On September 17, 2015, the Kingdom chaired a meeting of the heads of Interpol's National Central Bureaus in the Middle East and North Africa. Interpol member states agreed to double the exchange of information that is recorded in the Interpol database, particularly with regard to terrorist offenses and foreign terrorist fighters. The meeting also resulted in 18 new initiatives on Interpol capacity-building to prevent the infiltration of terrorist elements and improve border security.

In January 2014, Interpol and Saudi Arabia strengthened fugitive investigations, in-



cluding electronic surveillance. Interpol-Riyadh arranged for its frontline police officers across the country to have direct access to Interpol's global databases.

In March 2011, the first Arabic Interpol mobile police training program took place at the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences in Riyadh with participation by investigative units from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan and Yemen.

### **United Nations Counter Terrorism Center**

In September 2011, Saudi Arabia signed an agreement with the United Nations to create the United Nations Counter Terrorism Center (UNCCT) and donated \$10 million to its establishment. The initiative for this center was conceived in 2005, when the late King Abdullah held the "Counter-Terrorism International Conference" in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The UNCCT was established within the international body's Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) to promote international cooperation on counterterrorism through the implementation of the UN's Global Counterterrorism Strategy.

In 2014, King Abdullah provided the Center with a donation of \$100 million to enhance its capabilities and effectiveness in helping countries combat terrorism. Other donors include the U.S., the U.K., Norway and Germany. The Center consists of an Advisory Board of 21 member states including the U.S., the U.K., Russia, China, Germany, France, Switzerland and numerous Arab and Muslim States.

To date, the UNCCT has initiated more than 30 non-military counterterrorism projects around the world at the global, regional and national levels. Working alongside the Security Council Counterterrorism Committee, the Saudi-funded program initiated two programs in the latter half of 2016:

- The Counter Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) Program targets FTFs in Syria and Iraq and prevents their radicalization and their recruitment by Daesh, the Al-Nusra Front and groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda, as well as inhibiting

## Interpol Red Notices

In January 2011, Interpol released "Red Notices" – international notices for wanted individuals that amount to arrests warrants for all member countries of Interpol (save for the United Kingdom) – for 47 terror suspects wanted by the Kingdom. Interpol's General Secretariat Headquarters in Lyon issued the notices at the request of its National Central Bureau (NCB) in Riyadh; the Interpol NCB for Saudi Arabia is part of the Ministry of the Interior and partners with the Kingdom's General Directorate of Investigation.

In March 2009, Saudi Arabia and Interpol published the largest-ever issue of Red Notices for more than 80 suspected terrorists with links to Al-Qaeda in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

A 'Red Notice' can be requested by any Interpol member country. It is placed in the central database and added to foreign law enforcement databases and is sent to all 187 member countries with details of terror suspects to help those enforcement officials world-wide in their search. The notice remains in effect until the wanted fugitive is extradited. (Interpol does not have authority to arrest individuals who are the subject of a Red Notice. Only the law enforcement authorities of the Interpol member country where the individual is located have the legal authority to make an arrest). Of the Red Notices issued by Saudi Arabia since 2011, thirteen arrests have been made, while three Notices--those of a Jordanian man, a citizen of the United Kingdom, and a Saudi citizen--have been dismissed. The Kingdom has also stepped up efforts to cooperate regionally. In June 2016, Jordan's Interpol office in Amman received a wanted suspect from Saudi Arabia, authorized under an order issued by Jordan's Public Security Department.

their travel to and from these areas.

- The Advance Passenger Information Program is based on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's system for collecting personal information on air travelers when they book their flights to prevent terrorists from boarding aircraft.

"Combating terrorism is an international obligation that requires global cooperation in efforts, at all levels, to confront it—in security, intellectually, in the media and militarily—remembering that such cooperation shall be in accordance with the rules of international law and the founding principles of the UN, the first of which is equality of sovereignty."

---

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Interior, on the occasion of being  
awarded the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's George Tenet Medal by CIA  
Director Mike Pompeo, February 10, 2017



In order to combat terror financing, Saudi Arabia has put in place one of the strictest financial control systems in the world.

Saudi delegation attends the Counter-ISIL Finance Group, October 24, 2016

## 03

---

# The Money

## Combating Terror Financing

Illicit funding allows terrorist networks to thrive. In order to combat the threat posed by terrorist financing, Saudi Arabia has worked diligently to put in place one of the strictest financial control systems in the world. Saudi Arabia works very closely with its allies on all fronts to destroy terror groups' access to financial systems. In recent years, the Kingdom has undertaken a number of measures to combat money laundering and realized a number of accomplishments in preventing terrorist financing.

According to the U.S. Department of State's 2015 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), published in December 2016, Saudi Arabia has enacted legislation in all of the following areas critical to cutting off funds for terrorist organizations:

- 1) the criminalization of drug-money laundering;
- 2) the criminalization of money laundering beyond drugs;
- 3) 'Know-Your-Customer' provisions;
- 4) the reporting of large banking transactions;
- 5) the reporting of suspicious banking transactions;
- 6) the maintenance of banking records over time;
- 7) disclosure protection;
- 8) the official criminalization of terrorist financing;
- 9) the reporting of suspected terrorist financing;
- 10) cross-border transportation of currency;
- 11) the establishment of financial intelligence units;
- 12) an international law enforcement cooperation system for identification;
- 13) the ability to freeze terrorist activity without delay;
- 14) as a state party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention;
- 15) as a state party to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).



"[Saudi Arabia is] the target of extremists. We have suffered in terms of terrorist attacks, we have suffered in terms of loss of security personnel trying to defend the innocent, we are the forefront of fighting extremism and terrorism in the region and in the world. And so for somebody to say the Saudis are funding extremism or [that] their ideology is funding extremism is preposterous."

HIS EXCELLENCY ADEL BIN AHMED AL-JUBEIR  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
PRESS CONFERENCE, JULY 21, 2016

Furthermore, in response to the efforts of terrorist organizations to exploit the sympathies of Saudi citizens, the Kingdom has established new laws or considerably strengthened laws in place designed to ensure that charitable contributions are not diverted from authentic humanitarian organizations. Riyadh has issued instructions to a number of agencies prohibiting the transfer of funds by charitable organizations to recipients outside Saudi Arabia, except with Foreign Ministry approval and subject to stringent reporting requirements. The Kingdom reformed its banking laws in order to require that charitable organizations have single-disbursement bank accounts, as well as an approved official with signatory authority, in order to maintain tighter controls over these accounts:

Parallel to this, new rules have been codified concerning the opening of bank accounts by charities, including requiring one single account for each charity, with sub-accounts permitted only for the purpose of receiving deposits. Particularly stringent in this regard is the fact that no ATM or credit cards can be issued for these accounts and that all payments may be made only by checks payable to the first beneficiary for deposit in a Saudi bank.

Across Saudi Arabia, all unlicensed money-exchange houses have been shut down, while the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, the financial oversight authority founded in 2003, conducts tight supervision of so-called "informal" money-transfer houses used to send funds abroad. The establishment of a financial intelligence unit (the Saudi Arabian Financial Intelligence Unit, or SAFIU), in compliance with the standards of the G7's Financial Action Task Force (FATF), provided for the collection and sharing of information on suspicious financial transactions. In 2015, Saudi Arabia intensified its campaign against money laundering by requiring financial institutions to verify customers' identities and by placing restrictions on non-residents' ability to open accounts in the country.

Saudi Arabia has also worked to target individuals and entities providing assistance to terrorist organizations. The U.S. Department of the Treasury noted in March 2016 that Saudi security forces killed a number of high-profile Al-Qaeda financiers, including Yousif Salih Fahad Al-Ayeeri and Khaled Ali Al-Hajj, central facilitators of the organization. In addition to these operations, the Kingdom has placed sanctions on entities that assist in terror financing, including joint designations with the U.S. against the Al Ayeeri Foundation, Al-Hajj and others.

### **Financial Counterterrorism Efforts**

Saudi Arabia has implemented a number of financial regimes and institutions to effectively regulate the financial sector. These include:

- The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) requires all financial institutions within the Kingdom's jurisdiction to implement all recommendations for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- Saudi Arabia established money-laundering units in SAMA and all local banks to ensure the banking system is not exploited by money laundering

operations. These units are responsible for reporting dubious transactions to the authorities.

- Saudi Arabia established a money intelligence department to monitor and investigate any suspicious financial transactions. Investigations are typically done in coordination with the SAMA and Saudi banks.
- Saudi authorities have closed down unlicensed money-exchange or money-transfer centers.
- Saudi Arabia established a financial intelligence unit (FIU) and is a member of the Egmont Group, a Toronto-based international body consisting of 152 national Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) formed in 1995 to exchange information on money laundering and terror-financing.
- Saudi Arabia earned observer status in the FATF in 2015 and anticipates full membership in 2018.

### **Preventing the Misuse of Saudi Charitable Contributions**

Terror networks often gain access to funds by hiding behind charitable organizations, preying on the sympathies of Saudi citizens seeking to support philanthropic causes. The Saudi government has put into place a variety of rules and regulations to prevent the manipulation of good-will and charity.

- Saudi charities are prohibited from transferring money abroad.
- Saudi charities cannot operate abroad except through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center or the Saudi Red Crescent, a quasi-government entity.
- The collection of cash contributions in mosques and public places is prohibited. The Kingdom has instituted a thorough vetting of religious clerics to ensure charitable giving is not misdirected. The government suspended more than 1,000 clerics in 2013 and 900 clerics in 2014 on the grounds of negligence with regard to this requirement.
- Saudi Arabia monitors all appeals for charitable funds via television, the internet and social media, and operates a hotline for private citizens to contact authorities to report suspected activity related to terrorism or terror finance.
- In February 2016, SAMA announced that bank accounts for collecting donations solicited on social media and SMS messages would be frozen. The new



regulation follows a decree that all citizens and NGOs wishing to establish a charitable project in another country must receive permission from the Saudi Ministry of the Interior before setting up operations in that country.

### **International Cooperation in Combating Terrorist Financing**

The globalization of financial and banking networks necessitates effective coordination between governments to ensure that funds are not falling into the wrong hands. Terrorist financing has required the formulation and implementation of international regimes aimed to stem the flow of illicit money and cut organizations off from resources.

Saudi Arabia currently has Financial Action Task Force Observer status. This status requires a full endorsement of FATF practices. Saudi Arabia is currently a member of that body's sub-set organization, the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF). Throughout 2016, the Kingdom continued to implement compliance standards and undergo "mutual assessment" procedures for full membership in the FATF, set for June 2018.

Abdulaziz Saleh Al-Furaih, Vice Governor of SAMA, stated: "We cannot discuss compliance and combating money laundering apart from terrorist financing. If money laundering is a crime, terrorist financing is a much graver crime." The statement was made during the Eighth Forum on Compliance and Combating Money Laundering held in Riyadh on May 9, 2016, one of many such conferences the Kingdom has held since earning FATF observer status. At the conference, the Kingdom reiterated its commitment to:

- Establish money laundering units in SAMA and in all local banks to ensure the banking system is not exploited and to report any dubious transactions to the authorities;
- Issue any necessary new rules and regulations for combating money laundering and terror financing as these may arise;
- Implement Know-Your-Customer rules in financial and non-financial institutions;
- Establish a permanent intergovernmental agency committee to oversee all issues pertaining to terror financing;

- Circulate lists issued by the UN to freeze financial assets of suspected terrorist individuals or groups;
- Continue to strengthen the country's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

#### **THE UNITED NATIONS**

On August 23, 2007, the Kingdom ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1999). This convention, ratified by 187 countries as of 2015, mandates the identification, detection and freezing or seizure of funds used or allocated with the purpose of committing terrorist offenses; the forfeiture of funds used or allocated for the purpose of committing acts of terrorism and any proceeds derived therefrom; and requires of signatories "the greatest measure of assistance" in connection with criminal investigations or criminal or extradition proceedings in respect of terrorist acts. State parties commit themselves not to use bank secrecy as a justification for refusing to cooperate in the suppression of terrorist financing.

#### **UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS 1267, 1333, 1373**

The Kingdom supported the following requirements of various UN Resolutions related to combating terrorism:

- Freezing of funds and other financial assets of terrorist regimes based on UN Security Council Resolution 1267.
- Freezing of funds of listed individuals related to terrorist activity based on UN Security Council Resolution 1333.
- The signing of the International Convention for Suppression and Financing of Terrorism based on UN Resolution 1373.
- Reporting to the UN Security Council the implementation of Resolution 1390.

#### **Recent Cooperation**

Saudi Arabia works in tandem with its international partners to place sanctions on entities that assist in terror financing. Since 2004, the Kingdom has worked with the U.S. Department of the Treasury to identify and publicize terror-finance

related individuals and front-groups, while the Kingdom has legally formalized such designations. Many of these individuals are included on the UN Sanctions list pursuant to that body's counterterrorism legal regime.

On October 20, 2016, Saudi Arabia designated two individuals and one business as supporters of terrorism over their links to Hezbollah, the international terror group closely tied to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Those sanctioned are Lebanese nationals Muhammad Al-Mukhtar Falah Kallas and Hasan Jamal-al-Din, and the Iraq and Lebanon-based Global Cleaners S.A.R.L. The individuals and business sanctioned were designated under the Saudi Law of Terrorism Crimes and Financing and Royal Decree A/44. Under the law, any assets connected to the sanctioned entities under Saudi jurisdiction are frozen, and Saudi citizens or residents are generally prohibited from engaging in any transactions with the individuals or entities.

In March 2016, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia took joint action to disrupt the fundraising and support networks of various terrorist groups by imposing sanctions on several individuals and organizations with ties across the Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This follows the designation in 2015 of 17 individuals identified as Daesh officials and financial facilitators.

The U.S. State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism in its Country Reports on Terrorism 2015, released June 2, 2016, reported that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is cooperating with U.S. requests for access to certified bank records. It said the action was "based on reciprocity and increased cooperation on identification of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) traveling to Syria and Iraq." The move was a breakthrough in U.S.-Saudi cooperation given the absence of a formal mutual legal assistance treaty between the two countries. The agreement was negotiated between the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs and the Saudi Ministry of the Interior's (MOI) Department of Legal Affairs and International Cooperation. The International Center for Counterterrorism in The Hague estimated in October 2016 that there were 35,000 FTFs in Syria and Iraq with Daesh.

Saudi Arabia is also working with its allies to deploy new and effective financing-tracking methods to prevent travel and support for foreign terrorist fighters

(FTFs). For instance, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are working directly with banks to determine the whereabouts, activities and intentions of their account and card holders. Enhanced cooperation in recent years has assisted in identifying and capturing foreign fighters.

### **Counter-ISIL Finance Group**

Saudi Arabia serves as a co-chair of the Counter ISIL Finance Group (CIFG), alongside the U.S. and Italy. The CIFG was established in 2015 to disrupt ISIL's sources of revenue and its ability to move and use funds to wage its campaign of terror.

The group most recently met in October 2016, hosted by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, to pursue the following objectives: 1) to prevent Daesh from accessing the international financial system; 2) to counter the extortion and exploitation of assets and resources that transit, enter, or originate from Daesh-held territory; 3) to deny Daesh funding from abroad; and 4) to prevent Daesh from providing financial or material support to foreign affiliates.

### **BACKGROUND ON THE ELIMINATION OF MONEY-TRANSFER CENTER NETWORKS**

As of 2015, Saudi Arabia had effectively eliminated the nationwide network of money-transfer centers that were used for many years as terrorist-financing vehicles under the guise of "charities." After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. Department of the Treasury initiated the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) to identify, track and pursue terrorists and their networks. The United States has worked closely with the Kingdom to track and close down illicit money-transfer centers.

As part of this cooperation, Saudi Arabia established its Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) regime, providing a statutory basis for criminalizing money laundering and terrorist financing activities. Article II of this law created the Saudi Arabian Financial Intelligence Unit (SAFIU), which is responsible for receiving and analyzing reports on suspicious transactions, and comprises 130 officers. By February 2016, some 196 suspected terrorist financiers had been arrested by that body.

Article X of the Anti-Money Laundering Statute requires Saudi financial institutions to continue to develop their AML/CTF training programs which, in turn, are reviewed annually for adequacy.

Saudi Arabia's comprehensive crackdown on illicit money transfers - developed in earnest since 2004 through the present day - was later praised by an official of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), who remarked that the Kingdom's new regulations to control suspicious financial transactions "probably go further than any country in the world."

### **Saudi Legal Regimes and Compliance**

The Saudi government has worked aggressively to pass and implement laws on terror financing that stem the flow of financial resources to terrorist organizations.

Originally approved in December 2013 and subsequently updated in 2015, the Saudi Council of Ministers passed its Penal Law Concerning Crimes of Terrorism and Its Financing, signed into law by the late King Abdullah in February 2014. This legislation added 41 new laws to the country's existing counterterrorism laws. Among its provisions, this law:

- Gives the Minister of the Interior the power to issue arrest warrants against those suspected of having committed terrorist crimes and to delegate this power as he sees fit "according to guidelines he prescribes," and;
- Defines terrorist crime as: "Any act undertaken by the offender directly or indirectly in pursuance of an individual or collective criminal enterprise intended to disturb the public order, destabilize the security of society or the stability of the state, expose its national unity to danger, obstruct the implementation of the organic law or some of its provisions, harm the reputation of the state or its standing, endanger any of the state facilities or its natural resources, force any of its authorities to do or abstain from doing something, or threaten to carry out actions leading to any of the aforementioned objectives or encourage their accomplishment."

In addition, Royal Order A/44 (Article IV) Against Terrorism of March 2014 formally declared Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Al-Nusra Front (Syria), Hezbollah in the Kingdom (also known as Hezbollah in the Hijaz), the Muslim Brotherhood and the Houthis as terrorist organizations.

Furthermore, the Order authorized the formation of a committee that includes members from across the government to file a list of factions affiliated with the fore mentioned organizations.

Additionally, the Order criminalizes the following:

- Providing financial or material donations to or funding of extremist and terroristic organizations, factions and groups, or sheltering their members or their promoters inside or outside the Kingdom;
- Contacting or communicating with groups or factions or individuals who harbor enmity for the Kingdom;
- Being loyal to, in liaison with, or communicating with another country with the intention of exploiting the secure unity and stability of the Kingdom and its people;
- Committing offenses against other countries and/or their leaders;
- Soliciting the help of States, international organizations or bodies against the Kingdom;
- Taking part in, calling for, or promoting fighting in conflicts in other countries, or issuing fatwas that encourage cross-border foreign terrorist fighting.

"We have faced more than 63 terror attacks by Al Qaeda and ISIL, 26 of them just in the last two years. More than 200 citizens and policemen were killed in terrorist attacks. More than 2800 suspects have been arrested since 2015. We have assured and enforced laws which criminalize all sorts of terrorist-related activities, including involvement in conflicts or financing terrorist or extremist groups. We have classified and announced a list of terrorist organizations, we have taken major actions to prevent radicalization and protect the community in Saudi Arabia with a private phone number to report suspicious activity. We have established a major intelligence department to monitor and investigate any suspected financial transactions. This is usually done in coordination with the Saudi Monetary Agency and the banks. This led to convicting more than 226 persons in terrorist financing activities, prosecuting more than 240 suspects, freezing and investigating more than 117 suspected accounts, closing all unlicensed charity collection locations. Also, in the international effort we have contributed to international community efforts to combat terrorism and its finance through exchanging information and some of that information has helped in saving lives in other countries."

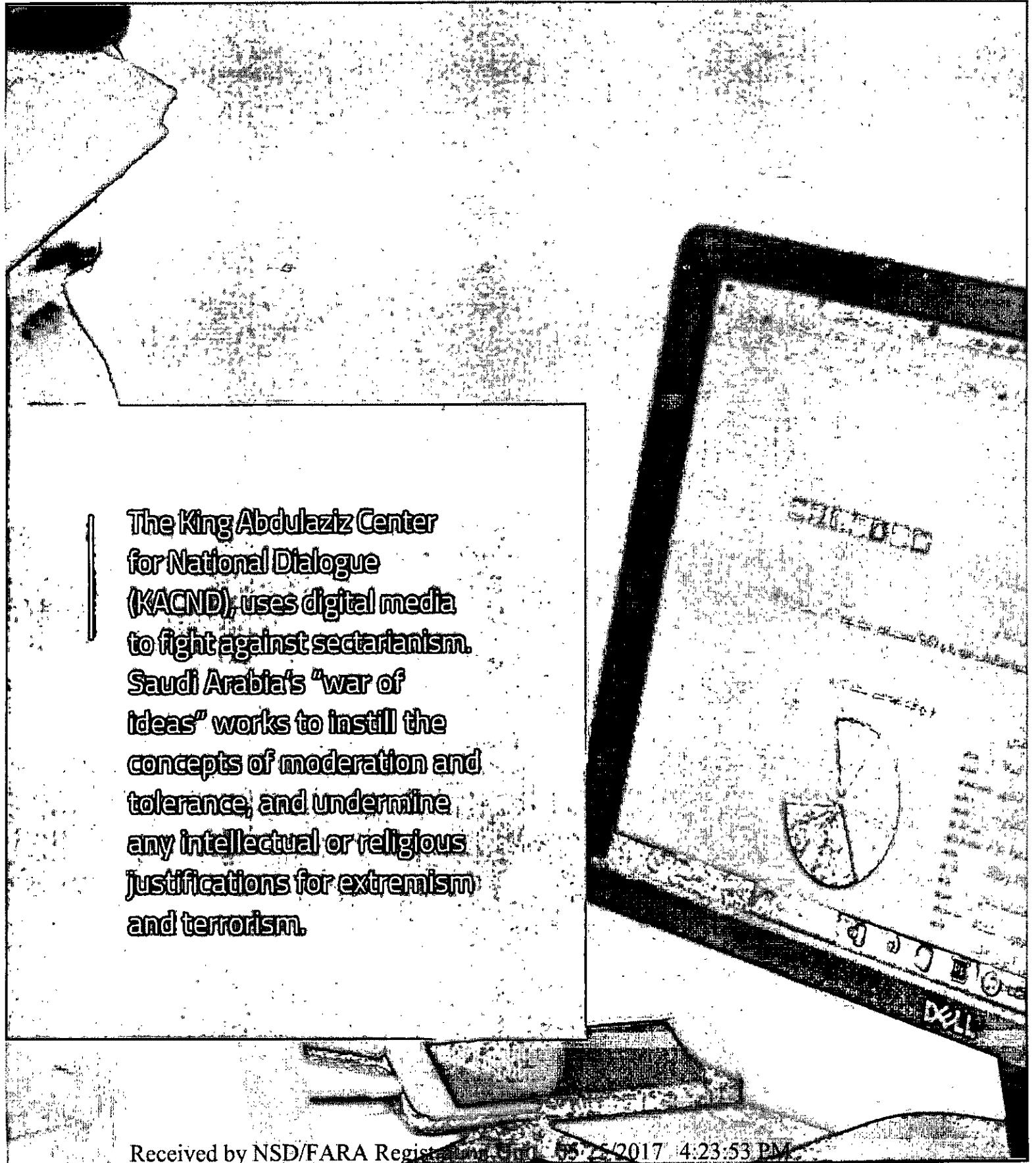


GENERAL MANSOUR AL-TURKI

SPOKESMAN OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

PRESS BRIEFING WITH U.S. JOURNALISTS

JUNE 8, 2016



The King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) uses digital media to fight against sectarianism. Saudi Arabia's "war of ideas" works to instill the concepts of moderation and tolerance, and undermine any intellectual or religious justifications for extremism and terrorism.



## 04

---

# The Mindset

## Combating Extremism

Attacking extremism at its psychological and ideological roots—and not merely cracking down militarily on its manifestations—is a critical component of Saudi Arabia's strategy to defeat terrorism. From public awareness campaigns to establishing counter-radicalization and rehabilitation programs, Saudi Arabia's "war of ideas" works to instill the concepts of moderation and tolerance, and undermine any intellectual or religious justifications for extremism and terrorism. The multi-faceted campaign aims to protect vulnerable groups, such as the youth, among other potentially disenfranchised members of society.

Fighting radical religious beliefs in the Kingdom is an immense challenge. The Kingdom's counterterrorism-education measures focus on communicating the distinguishing aspects of the true Islamic faith in contrast to those individuals and entities whose actions are centered on the intentional misrepresentation or the degradation of its teachings.

These measures include, but are not limited to, counseling and conferences led by the Riyadh-based King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) and the Vienna-based King Abdullah International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID); and a Sakinah "Tranquility" campaign that is run by an independent NGO with support from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs.

The following reflects initiatives the Kingdom has implemented to counter extremist mentality and promote moderation and tolerance among its citizenry. More detail on these programs are provided in the sections that follow.

- **Public Awareness Campaign:** This ongoing public awareness campaign reinforces Islam's true values and educates Saudi citizens about the dangers of extremism and terrorism. The campaign includes advertisements on television, radio, billboards and online, as well as programs on television, in schools and mosques, and at sporting events.

A public service announcement produced in Saudi Arabia provides an example of efforts to curb online extremism, in particular. This public service announcement, released by the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue in June 2015, generated more than 150,000 views in the first 48 hours after its release.

The text of the public service announcement ran as follows:

*"What is the greatest destroyer of nations and peoples? Disease? Natural disasters? Famine? Perhaps. But there is a hidden killer worse than all of them. A killer many of us don't know, but who has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives – children, women, the elderly. And it doesn't stop at killing people. It destroys states. It bleeds their resources, wrecks economies, and stifles knowledge. It brings states back to zero – to less than zero.*

*Shall I surprise you some more? The killer lives among us. Right now, at this very moment, he walks around free and loose. He might be near you, in the same building. He might be right beside you. He might be your dearest friend, or your closest relative. Shall I shock you even more? The hidden killer might be... YOU. You think you are innocent? Think again. Go over your convictions and ideas. Think back on the grudges you bear. Lots of people like you thought they were innocent, but became wild animals. They ruined their own states, destroying them with enormity. Hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded.*

*This killer, sleeping inside you, wakes up the moment you give up on the value of coexistence. You transform into a killer, because the fire of hate has been ignited. Dividing people into categories. Insularity. When you fail to live together with people who are different than you, you grow wild. The result? A devastating war. Its soldiers are you and thousands like you, all from a single country. Then come years of conflict. No one*

*wins except for death. The country falls behind the rest of the world. Resources are wasted that could have been invested for everyone to make a better life, to build a solid economy, to strengthen security, to support teaching and knowledge. It might have been possible for everyone together to avoid this disaster if everyone thought about coexistence and rowed on both sides of the lifeboat, rather than vanish into a whirlpool.*

*On your way to work, or when you enter your home and are among your family, always ask yourself – is a dispute worth losing all of this? Coexistence. Let's talk to each other, let's live together.*

- **Public and Religious Education:** The program audits curriculum material to vet and eliminate extremist-related material, as well as introduce enhanced teaching methods and provide better training for educators. Imams have been prohibited from incitement and talk of intolerance, and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs is conducting a program to educate imams and monitor mosques and religious education to purge extremism and intolerance.
- **Global Interfaith Dialogue Initiative:** Launched an international effort to promote interfaith dialogue. In early 2008, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz launched the interfaith dialogue as a way to underscore the commonalities among the world's religions. To initiate this endeavor, King Abdullah convened a meeting on June 4, 2008 of more than 500 Muslim scholars from around the world. The conference highlighted the importance of dialogue and emphasized the need for the faiths and cultures of the world to combat extremism and intolerance. This was followed by the World Conference on Dialogue in Spain on July 16, 2008. The conference, hosted by King Abdullah and King Juan Carlos I of Spain, brought together 300 delegates from around the world representing Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Judaism and Shintoism. The culmination of this dialogue initiative was a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on November 12, 2008, attended by more than 25 world leaders.
- **United Nations Counterterrorism Center:** The Kingdom is the founder and primary funder of the United Nations Counterterrorism Center, with more

than \$100 million in donations from the Kingdom to date and more than 30 non-military counterterrorism projects around the world at the global, regional and national levels aimed at fighting the twin evils of terrorism financing and terrorist indoctrination.

- **Counter-Radicalization and Rehabilitation:** In addition to public awareness campaigns to prevent the spread of terrorist ideologies, Saudi Arabia has taken direct, focused steps to neutralize sources of extremism. For example, the Ministry of the Interior has been working in conjunction with King Fahd Security College and Naif Arab University for Security Sciences to develop and refine training for public security professionals. The rehabilitation program for detainees is the longest continually functioning program in the world, and several countries are establishing similar programs based on the Kingdom's model.

Saudi counter-radicalization efforts are a model for other nations around the world. The Government of Malaysia, for example, announced in November 2016 that it would send 10 senior security specialists to Saudi Arabia to study at the Prince Mohammad bin Naif Center for Security Studies. "We want to benefit from the experience of the Kingdom in counseling and countering extremist ideology with moderation, argument and proof," said Zainol Rahim Zainuddin, the Malaysian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Malaysian Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said that he had discussed with King Salman solutions to protect Southeast Asian countries from the threat of terrorism carried out by Daesh, which has recruited individuals from these countries.

In the discussion, an understanding was reached that Saudi Arabia and Malaysia would continue to exchange knowledge on experiences with combating terrorism and extremist ideology. In addition, Prime Minister Hamidi praised the counseling practices applied by Saudi Arabia, pointing to the Prince Mohammad bin Naif Center for Counseling and Care as a "unique model to counter extremist ideology with moderate ideology." Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the United States military through "Task Force 134" in Iraq have also modeled their counter-radicalization programs after Saudi Arabia's approach.

On November 23, 2016, Ben Emmerson, the UN Special Envoy on Counterterrorism and Human Rights, praised prison conditions of those accused of terrorism in the Kingdom as humane and focused on rehabilitation. He expressed admiration for humanitarian aid and psychological support provided by the Mohammad bin Naif Center to those accused of terrorism and their families, and allowing these families to become involved directly in the rehabilitation programs of detainees. After attending a trial session of those accused of plotting to assassinate the late King Abdullah, Emmerson said the condition of detainees or those accused of terrorism should be considered an example to be followed at the international level. He cited as well the level of professionalism and respect for human rights in Saudi prisons.

"The counseling center's continuous support program does a great job at rehabilitating extremist young men and integrating them as efficient members in their societies through a series of programs and activities," Emmerson said.

### **Overview: Recent Activity**

The Kingdom's religious establishment is fully engaged with the Saudi government in countering the mindset sustaining radical extremism.

Following the three simultaneous terror attacks of July 4, 2016, the imams of the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina vehemently condemned terrorism and urged waging a tough fight against the "evil goals" behind extremist organizations. On July 5, 2016, on the celebration of the Eid Al-Fitr, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz said in an address to all Muslims that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will "strike with an iron fist" the terror groups that seek to recruit youths to "extremism and violence," and pledged efforts to "distance them from masterminds of misleading ideas." King Salman urged Muslims to unite, and condemned terrorism and extremism, stressing their contradiction to Islam.

On June 3, 2016, Saudi security services announced the arrest of terror suspects, including an imam at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina suspected of supporting Daesh.

In his sermon of July 8, 2016, Sheikh Khalid Ali Al-Ghamedi, the Imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, described terrorism as "an outlandish phenomenon for Islam and in particular for Saudi Arabia, home to the two holiest mosques."

On June 9, 2016, the Kingdom announced that it would install surveillance cameras inside and outside all mosques throughout the country. The long-term plan, announced by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, includes setting up an operations room with links to 95,000 mosques.

In July 2016, at a conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, King Salman made a series of remarks about the widespread phenomenon of online terrorist recruitment and incitement. He called on Saudi youth to take the initiative to counter extremists' online activity with their own responses by arguing against strident interpretations of Islam and advancing their own, tolerant understanding of the religion instead. He also called on people of good conscience throughout the world - including state and non-state entities - to play their part in fighting extremism across the Internet and on social media.

In August 2016, the Deputy Minister of Islamic Affairs for Call and Guidance Tawfiq Al-Sudairi told Arab media that there are specific regulations and controls in place in the Kingdom to monitor religious activities and preaching. That ministry also monitors any preaching or writing in the guise of religious guidance that may lead to the spread of deviant ideologies.

**The 19th International Conference on Processes of Radicalization and Deradicalization (ICPRD) Jan. 30-31 2017, Jeddah** – The ICPRD convened leading scientists, researchers and scholars to exchange views, share their experiences and research all aspects of the processes of radicalization and deradicalization. The conference provided researchers, practitioners and educators an interdisciplinary forum to review the most recent innovations, trends, concerns and practical challenges encountered in the following areas: 1) "Processes of Radicalization and Deradicalization," 2) "Analyzing the Positions of Terrorists," 3) "Assessing Countering Violent Extremism Programs," 4) "Assessing the Effectiveness of Deradicalization," 5) "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 6) "Care Rehabilitation," 7) "Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of Deradicalization Programs," 8) "Challenges in

"The Kingdom has been keen to combat terrorism based on its conviction that terrorism has no identity and no religion, and from its belief that the terrorists are committing these acts stemming from their deviant ideologies and evil thought. All negative religious, political and social ideologies that use religion as a tool, throughout human history, do not reflect the absolute truth about religion."

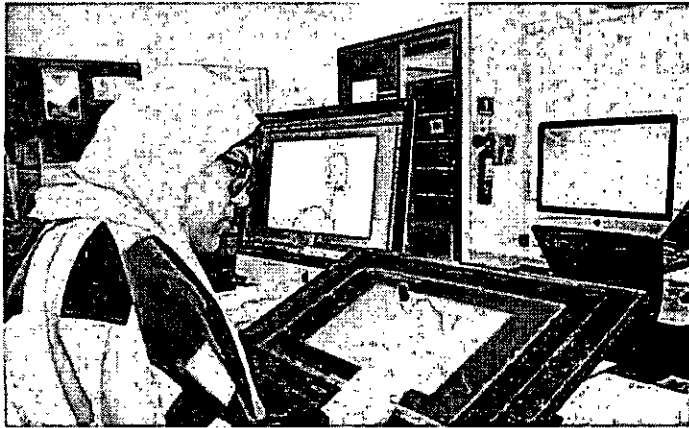
CROWN PRINCE MOHAMMAD BIN NAIF  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR  
FEBRUARY 10, 2017



Terrorist Rehabilitation," 9) "Civilian Victims of Terrorism," 10) "Combating Violent Extremism and Radicalization in the Digital Era."

The Kingdom has undertaken the modernization of its educational system, reviewing curriculum materials and removing any teachers or professors who profess and inculcate extremist beliefs. The country promotes cultural exchange, sending and paying for tens of thousands of students to attend American universities not only to acquire scholarly and technical know-how and expertise, but to gain exposure to Western belief systems and world views.

In fall 2016, several prominent Saudi religious scholars, who had gathered at a conference on extremism, drew attention to the critical importance of the role



Effat University Student Pursuing a Degree in Filmmaking. (Photo Credit: Arab News)

## MODERNIZATION OF SAUDI EDUCATION

- Remove Teachers and Professors Who Profess Extremist Beliefs
- Replace Textbooks with Tablet Computers in Classroom Teaching
- De-Emphasize Rote Learning, Stimulate Critical Thinking
- Emphasize the Role of Modernization in the Outlook of Young Students
- Prepare Students to Compete in a Global Economy

played by scholars in disseminating factual information and revealing the unethical tactics of terrorists in trying to lure people away from the rightful path of Islam. Sheikh Abdullah bin Sulaiman Al-Manea, Member of the Council and Adviser to the Royal Court, highlighted the role of the authorities at the Ministry of Interior in ensuring the safety of Saudi Arabia in light of this trend.

As pointed out by Education Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Issa, much effort has been made in the last decade to improve textbooks and make the education system respond to nation's need to defeat and eventually eliminate extremism. Part of the challenge at hand is to move students away from rote learning and to stimulate critical thinking. The Kingdom also wants to better prepare young Saudis to compete in a global economy, as the government seeks to diversify its economy with new, non-petroleum sources of revenue and investment.



## National Campaigns

To further combat radical ideology, government officials adopted a series of counterterrorism education measures aimed at undermining extremist views and at disrupting the activities of those who promote violent extremism. Led by the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) and the King Abdullah International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), these measures include, but are not limited to, a counseling program, a religious "Tranquility" campaign, public education campaigns, and a "Religious Authority" campaign.

### **KING ABDULAZIZ CENTER FOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE (KACND)**

The National Dialogue Forum of the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) was instituted in June 2003 to debate reform and suggest remedies following the Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Each of these meetings takes place in a different city in the Kingdom. As a forum, KACND has been described as "an independent national institution which seeks to strengthen channels of communication and dialogue between Saudi citizens and the different elements and institutions of Saudi society."

The Center's objective "is to combat extremism and foster a pure atmosphere that give[s] rise to wise positions and illuminating ideas that reject terrorism and terrorist thought."

KACND has intensified its efforts to boost national cohesion through societal engagement to combat extremism and deviant ideology. On Oct. 6, 2016, the center announced a new initiative, dubbed "Talahom," to promote meetings that

"The greatest and most appalling of all sins is for anyone to deliberately and premeditatedly shed the blood of innocent people...wreak chaos and havoc and undermine security and stability in order to achieve the evil goals of criminal gangs and sectarian terrorist organizations."

Sheikh Khalid Ali Al-Ghamedi  
Imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah  
July 8, 2016



"The sedition witnessed in the Islamic world today requires all of us to exert the utmost effort to unify our voice, close ranks and work together to solve the problems of the Islamic nation, and achieve victory for its issues. However, the biggest challenge facing our Islamic nation is how to keep our youth, the real wealth and hope of the future, away from the dangers facing them – particularly extremism and violence – and distance them from masterminds of misleading ideas that force them to behave in extraordinary ways that contradict the principles of our Islamic religion and the pillars and values of our Islamic societies."

CUSTODIAN OF THE TWO HOLY MOSQUES

KING SALMAN BIN ABDULAZIZ

JULY 5, 2016

put into practice the principles of co-existence and national unity. Faisal Al-Muammar, the secretary general of KACND, stressed the initiative's importance as the first step in multiple projects run by the center in the coming year. He added that these types of projects preserve and enhance the Kingdom's security and strengthen national unity based on shared values.

Similar messages stressing the need of those radicalized or at risk of radicalization have been broadcast on Saudi television and radio and at sporting events. Schools, mosques and even the screens of automated teller machines feature such messages. Ministries and government bodies have participated in this campaign by organizing symposiums, exhibitions and lectures, as well as by distributing materials to combat extremism and promote balanced, centrist views and moderation.

#### **MONITORING OF RELIGIOUS PREACHING**

Imams who preach intolerance or hate toward others are dismissed, punished or retrained. To date, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has fired over 400 imams, 'khateeb'— those who deliver religious sermons— and muezzin—those who call Muslims to prayer. The ministry has additionally suspended approximately 1500 others who were ordered to join a multi-year "enlightenment program" devoted to educating imams and monitoring religious preaching. In recurring legislation since 2007, the Kingdom's civil service first announced, and now regularly implements, the dismissal of teachers who espouse extremist views. In 2015, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs intensified an earlier initiative to impose electronic monitoring of all mosques in Saudi Arabia using the Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The project allows the Ministry to monitor day-to-day activities in any mosque, including prayers and ceremonies.

Saudi government and religious leaders have publicly and routinely condemned terrorism and extremism. In May 2009, the Second Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia organized the first national conference on "intellectual security," which was to address the "intellectual abnormality" that, according to the Saudi government, is "the main reason for terrorism." These conferences have since been ongoing, the declaration of which is the moderate nature of Islam and warnings against "the dangers of embracing deviant ideologies." The National Dialogue campaigns against extremism have been ongoing in various cities in Saudi Arabia since 2003, most recently on Feb. 7, 2017.

Related to this campaign, The King Abdullah International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) convened the second annual meeting of the Board of Directors' Advisory Forum on Feb. 6-7, 2017, at KAICIID headquarters in Vienna.

"The most dangerous thing is not the textbook itself but the way the textbooks are translated by the teachers to the students. What we are trying to do—opening the system—will help us make students participate and become active learners, which is a very powerful tool to eliminate and reduce any extreme views."

---

Dr. Ahmed Al-Issa,  
Minister of Education,  
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
February 16, 2017

KAICIID Secretary General Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar described the session as a milestone in which the Advisory Forum laid the foundation for the Forum's development in the coming decades. In particular, the Forum's task forces are vehicles to focus on creating change in four thematic areas: "Interreligious Dialogue Training," "Governance and Common Citizenship," "Reconciliation" and "Capacity Building." The Center is particularly focused on Iraq and Syria as part of its anti-extremism goals.

In early January 2017, the Saudi Embassy in Beirut sponsored an interfaith meeting on the topic "Lebanon unites us" in order to strengthen Saudi-Lebanese relations and to promote Christian-Muslim understanding. Saudi Chargé d'Affaires Walid Bukhari organized the national interfaith meeting at the Saudi diplomatic mission following a

rapprochement that began with the official visit to Saudi Arabia by the President of Lebanon Michel Aoun in January.

Supported by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, the Sakinah "Tranquility" Campaign partners with Islamic scholars who engage potential radicalized online users seeking religious knowledge. These scholars work to direct their focus away from extremists source. The campaign has received praise by American and British officials, and has inspired other nations, including the United Arab Emirates and

Kuwait, to model their own efforts to combat internet radicalization after Saudi Arabia's Sakinah campaign.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS**

The Ministry of Education regularly audits school textbooks and curricula to ensure that teachers do not espouse intolerance and extremism, and a government-sponsored program requires the removal any curriculum element that is radical and inconsistent with Islam. Also in place is a special training program to promote religious tolerance for male and female Islamic Studies teachers. Teachers are periodically dismissed or subjected to punitive action for failure to abide by government instructions to avoid inciting hatred against other religions.

As a result of the institution of the National Dialogues, the Saudi government launched the 'King Abdullah Project for the Development of Public Education' in February 2007.

This project approved a \$2.4 billion, six-year project to transform the Kingdom's public education system. The effort, which has been ongoing since its launch, focuses on teacher training and development; curriculum development with an emphasis on critical thinking; improving the educational environment through technology (i.e., Smart Boards in classrooms); and extracurricular activities. In October 2016, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs launched a program identified as a "Shielding Campaign Against Terrorism." While previous efforts focused on dealing with a problem after it occurred, the current campaign aims at safeguarding youth against radical ideology by using every source available to the ministry, such as sermons and mosque activities and general education curricula and advocacy.

The ministry also has been working on issuing a series of books called the "Shielding Series." The department issued its first release, a work that includes the transcript of the meeting and the dialogue that took place between the late Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz and Saudi imams and preachers. The dialogue provided a detailed outline of "how to address a radical ideology and deviant thinking."

### **CYBER-SECURITY, SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET**

The Saudis are the most active Twitter users in the Arab world, according to a 2014 report, with 4.8 million users producing 40 percent of all tweets in Arab countries. This unfortunately raises concerns in the Kingdom about the penetration of radicalized recruitment through social media and Internet-based communications.

In February 2013, the International Data Corporation (IDC) reported that Saudi Arabia invested the most of any country in the Middle East on technology, underscoring the growing importance with which the Kingdom sees cyber-security and countering extremism on the Internet. The Kingdom has tasked the Ministry of Defense to work with the private sector to defend the Kingdom against those threats.

While the Ministry of Defense works to develop the military aspect of cyber-security as it pertains to the protection of Saudi industry and border surveillance, the Ministry of Interior is focused on the internal and domestic dimension of monitoring extremist communications, applying cyber-security technologies to track radicalized messaging throughout Arab/Muslim social media and the Internet in general.

The Ministry of Interior has significantly developed its technological capabilities in recent years, particularly its computer network. Known as the "National Data Center," this network links the Ministry's centers throughout the Kingdom via terminals for entering and retrieving security, administrative and service data.

The main focus of this project involves investing in building its capacity to monitor online communications and intervene as necessary. To date, there 1,000 terminal systems in more than 250 centers for capturing and accessing this data.

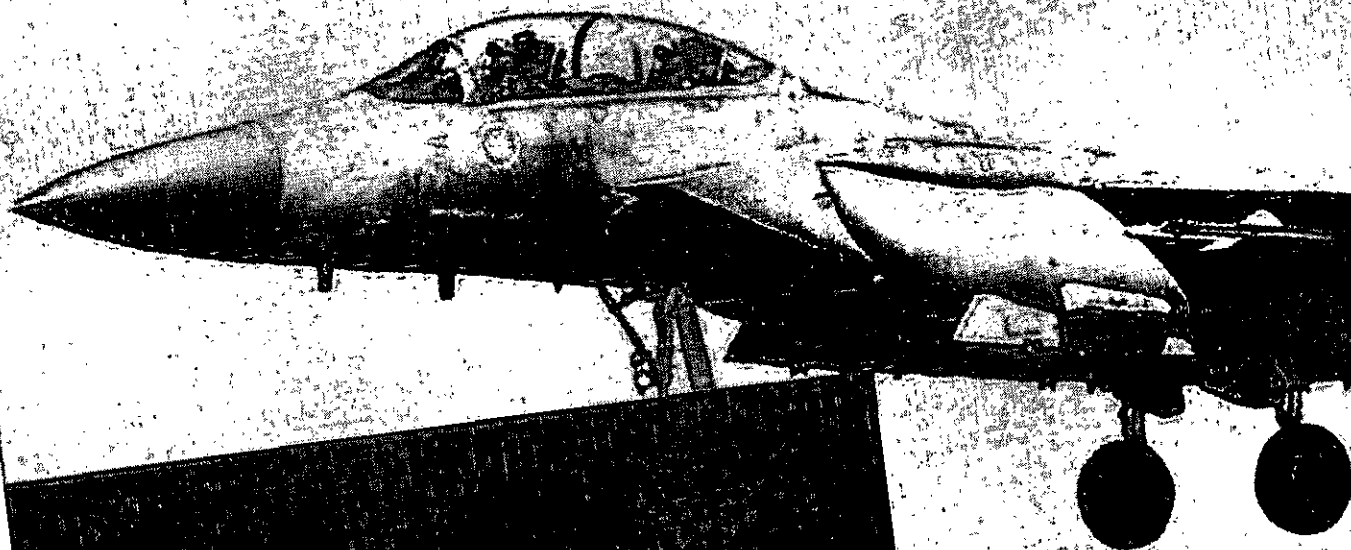
Article 4 of the January 2014 Anti-terrorism Law prohibits support for banned groups "circulating their contents in any form, or using slogans of these groups and currents [of thought], or any symbols which point to support or sympathy with them through audio, visual, or written format, including websites and social media." On March 24, 2007, the Saudi government decreed, and the MOI put into practice, the Anti-Cyber Crime Law, which criminalizes the production

and spread of materials online that damage "public order, religious values, [and] public morals." This law establishes penalties for offenses such as hacking into websites and heavy penalties for anyone who assists a terrorist group build or operate a website, or who uses a website to disseminate information such as instructions on how to build an explosive device. In 2008, the Saudi government established the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) to try terrorism-related cases. This includes those involving violations of the cyber-crime law, such as using social media to incite international organizations against the Kingdom or the founding unlicensed and/or prohibited organizations, online or otherwise.

There are two regulatory agencies concerned with Internet usage in the Kingdom: The Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) and the Internet Services Unit (ISU). Since 2006, the CITC has blocked access to thousands of websites with the aim of destroying the ability of extremist organizations to spread their message and reach potential recruits. The ISU is a department of the King Abdullah Center for Science and Technology (KACST) and registers all blocking requests for content deemed offensive and/or radicalizing.

According to Prince Abdulaziz bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, the assistant to the head of the Saudi National Intelligence Agency (SNIA), there are nearly 17,000 extremist Internet sites carrying radical ideologies, with an annual increase of 9,000 websites that "move away from original Islam in order to legitimize violence." Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz, the head of SNIA, has launched outreach to 14 Western website hosting companies to reduce the activities of more than 5,400 websites used by terrorist groups.

As terrorists traditionally have used the Internet for recruiting and training, the Saudi Council of Ministers approved on April 13, 2007 the Anti-Cybercrime Law. Article 7 (1) of the cyber-crime law imposes a maximum of ten years' imprisonment and/or a maximum fine of \$1.3 million for anyone who creates a website for a terrorist organization, promotes the organizations' radicalism, or propagates information on how to make explosives. In March 2017, the SCC delivered a 27-year sentence to a Saudi found guilty of joining a terrorist group and sending content intended to undermine public order via the social platform WhatsApp. Part of the 27 year-sentence was based on Article 6 of the Anti-Cybercrime Law.



Saudi Arabia has flown 341 sorties against Daesh in Syria, the second largest number of sorties, after the United States.

An F-15 fighter in the Royal Saudi Air Force



05

## Fighting and Defeating Daesh

Saudi Arabia is the main target of Daesh and other terror groups because it is the birthplace of Islam and home to the Two Holy Mosques. Saudi Arabia continues to expand and intensify its counterterrorism initiatives, as terrorism remains a major threat to the safety and security of our citizenry and the global community.

Saudi Arabia is one of the leading nations combating terrorism and terrorist financing, and has been working closely with its allies on all fronts. Saudi Arabia is hunting down the men, cutting off the money and destroying the mindset that Daesh and other terror organizations create and rely on.

On February 21, 2017, Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir told a German newspaper that the Kingdom was "ready to send ground troops" to fight Daesh in Syria. Minister Al-Jubeir noted that not only Saudi Arabia, but other Gulf nations were willing to send special forces troops as part as a U.S.-led coalition against Daesh. Since the rise of that terror group in 2014, all exercises and training of Saudi conventional and special forces have focused on countering and combatting non-state insurgents. Daesh and the emergence of similarly aligned militant Islamists pose the most immediate threat to the Kingdom. Daesh has carried out deadly attacks in the Kingdom and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, Daesh's leader, has declared his intention to destroy the Saudi state. In view of this, the Foreign Minister has said Saudi Arabia is ready to participate with the its own forces if the U.S.-led coalition against Daesh is prepared to engage in ground operations—a comment the Foreign Minister had first said in February 2016.

In 2014, Saudi Arabia condemned Daesh and Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian affiliate of Al-Qaeda. Hundreds of alleged Daesh supporters were arrested in 2015 and 2016. The fight has not been limited to military. In June 2016, Saudi Security Services

announced the arrest of several terror suspects, among whom was an imam at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina suspected of supporting Daesh. The Kingdom will not tolerate any religious figure or scholar who uses his position of authority to spread false beliefs and encourage violent actions that are a degradation of the spirit and meaning of Islam. However, it is the geopolitical threat of this terror group that is the most immediate, and to this end, the Kingdom has been working closely with its allied partners through two major military coalitions—one international and one specifically Muslim-nation based—to eradicate the territorial growth and logistical basis of Daesh.

### **International Cooperation**

Saudi Arabia is a founding member of the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh, beginning airstrikes against Daesh targets in Syria in September 2014. As of March 2017, Saudi Arabia has flown 341 sorties against Daesh in Syria, the second largest number of sorties, after the United States.

In January 2017, Saudi Arabia hosted the general staff chiefs of fourteen countries of the Global Coalition Against Daesh. Representatives from Saudi Arabia, U.S., Jordan, UAE, Bahrain, Turkey, Tunisia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco and Nigeria discussed their approaches to enhance the efforts of the coalition to paralyze and destroy Daesh capabilities.

On March 22, 2017, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed bin Al-Jubeir and foreign ministers of the other Global Coalition member nations met in Washington at the invitation of U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to review and accelerate the campaign for the lasting defeat of Daesh.

### **The Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism**

On December 15, 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the formation of the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism. At the time of the Alliance's original organization, the Kingdom announced that the initial group of 34 states had "decided on the formation of a military alliance led by Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism, coordinate military efforts, exchange information, and train Alliance personnel through a joint operations center based in Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations." This Alliance has been subsequently grown to 41 nations.

The "North Thunder" military drill was launched in northern Saudi Arabia on February 28, 2016 with the participation of forces representing the Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, Senegal, Sudan, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Chad, Turkey, Tunisia, Comoros, Djibouti, Oman, Qatar, Malaysia, Egypt and Mauritania, in addition to the GCC's Peninsula Shield Forces. "North Thunder" received regional and international attention as the largest ever military drill in the Middle East in terms of the number of participating forces.

On March 27, 2016, the Chiefs of Staff of the armed forces of the Alliance member countries issued the Riyadh Declaration, a final statement of their joint commitment to fight terrorism.

### **The Peninsula Shield Force**

The Peninsula Shield Force is the military side of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for the Arab States of the Gulf region and is intended to deter and respond to military aggression against any of the GCC member countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Shield Force recently expanded its mandate to combat the emergence of Daesh, alongside its regular activity of monitoring and containing instability in the Mideast region, regional neighbors' ambitions for nuclear weapons, political instability in Iraq, and the upheaval in Syria. These factors have given the GCC clear incentives to strengthen its collective defense and security systems.

### **The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF)**

The Royal Saudi Air Force is the centerpiece of the Kingdom's defense structure and has been highly effective in combating Daesh in Syria, such as during airstrikes with U.S. coalition forces in early February 2016. Saudi fighter aircraft have carried out 341 strikes against Daesh targets in Syria since the beginning of the international campaign against Daesh. These attacks included the destruction of or damage to Daesh fighters, training bases, compounds, headquarters, command and control facilities, a finance center, supply trucks and armed vehicles.

In 2016, Saudi authorities foiled multiple terrorist plots targeting mosques, sporting events, tourist attractions and the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah.

Member of the Saudi special police unit stands guard during a military parade, September 2016

06

---

# Chronology of Terrorism Against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

## 2015 through February 2017

### **Domestic Terror Attacks: 2015-2017**

#### **2017**

On January 21, two extremists blew themselves up after security forces cornered them in the Harazat area of Jeddah.

On January 7, two terrorists were killed by police in the Al-Yasmin suburb of Riyadh. The two men were named as Tayeh Salem bin Yaslam Al-Sayari, an Daesh "suicide bomb" expert, wanted for previous acts of terrorism, and Talal bin Samran Al-Saedi.

#### **2016**

On August 18, an exchange of gunfire occurred in Qatif, resulting in the death of one person.

On August 15, an exchange of gunfire in Qatif resulted in the death of one person.

On July 4, 2016, four suicide bombs exploded in three locations in Saudi Arabia. One of them exploded in the parking lot of the Nabawi Mosque (the Prophet's Mosque in Medina). The second and third suicide bombers targeted a mosque in Qatif, but they failed to harm anyone but themselves. A fourth militant blew himself up in Jeddah.

On June 27, an exchange of gunfire in the eastern city of Qatif resulted in the death of one person.

On April 30, an explosive device detonated in Al-Ahsa.

On April 16, an exchange of gunfire occurred in Qatif.

On April 6, shootings took place in the city of Riyadh, resulting in the death of one person.

On April 4, a detonation of an explosive device in Al-Kharj resulted in the death of one person.

On February 27, an exchange of gunfire in Qassim resulted in the death of one person.

On February 8, a car bomb exploded in Riyadh without causing injuries. Daesh claimed responsibility.

On January 29, a suicide bombing in the Ridha mosque in Al-Ahsa, in the eastern region of the country, resulted in the deaths of four people, including two security personnel, and the injury of 18 individuals.

On January 5, four armed men set fire to a Saudi Aramco bus in the city of Qatif.

## **2015**

On October 26, a suicide bomber murdered two people and wounded 26 in a mosque in the southern city of Najran. The bomber, a Saudi national who recently returned from fighting for Daesh in Syria, was blocked from entering the center of the mosque by a 95-year-old man, which limited the death toll.

On September 4, at the Aramco Abqaiq Community, Sgt. Ali Al-Habeeb was killed during a confrontation with a terrorist attacker. Saudi security forces pursued and killed the attacker, who was reported to have been wearing an explosives-laden belt.

On August 6, the Abha Mosque bombing was carried out by a suicide bomber, killing 17 people at a mosque in the south-western Saudi city of Abha. The mosque was inside a military installation controlled by Saudi Special Forces engaged in the war in nearby Yemen.

On July 29, a policeman was killed in a drive-by shooting in the village on Al-Jish in Qatif Province.

On July 16, a suicide attacker detonated his car bomb at a police checkpoint near a prison in Riyadh, killing himself and injuring two others.

On July 3, a policeman was killed during a counter-terror operation Taif, in the southwestern province of the country.

On May 29, a suicide bomber attacked a mosque in Dammam, killing 4 people and injuring 4 others.

On May 22, a suicide bomber attacked the Imam Ali mosque in the village of Al-Qadeeh, in Qatif governorate, during Friday prayers. The Saudi health minister told state television that at least 21 people had been killed and more than 80 injured in the blast. Daesh later claimed responsibility for the attack.

On January 5, a pair of suicide bombers attacked a border patrol unit near Arar, killing three border officers.

# Addendum: Op-Eds

---

## **Saudi general: My country supports America's tough stance against ISIS, terror and Iran**

**Major General Ahmed Hassan Mohammad Asseri**  
**Adviser to Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister**



| MARCH 26, 2017

Leaders from 68 countries gathered in Washington for a meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh (ISIL) hosted by President Trump's administration this past week.

Saudi Arabia welcomes the new administration's attention to the Middle East and its support for America's friends who are fighting back against transnational terrorists such as Daesh and pushing back against Iranian interference in countries such as Yemen.

As Americans would say, "You've got our back." And America's support is indispensable as we stand together against a host of threats to regional stability.

While meeting with Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman – an architect of our country's economic, social, and governmental reforms – at the White House recently, President Trump enthusiastically endorsed the modernization drive that will make our country an even more valuable strategic partner. Similarly, our government welcomes the United States' long-standing support of the Saudi defense forces.



The new administration is also tough minded about the Iranian threat to regional stability, which was magnified by the recent nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers, including the United States.

Defense Secretary James Mattis and CIA Director Mike Pompeo each describe Iran as the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism, while Vice President Mike Pence has called the nuclear agreement "a terrible deal."

Saudi Arabia is prepared to work with the United States and its allies to restrain Iranian conduct, just as we have helped to stabilize the Arabian Gulf and its energy supplies since World War II. While the U.S.-Saudi partnership is time-tested, reaffirming this relationship is a matter of strategy, not sentiment. Since the Global Coalition's founding three years ago, Saudi Arabia has been an active partner from Day One, including sending fighter jets to the Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey to join the US-led air campaign against Daesh in Syria.

On the financial front, Saudi Arabia works closely with the United States to cut off funding for Daesh and Al Qaeda. Through real-time information-sharing, we cooperate with the United States to shut down the flow of funds from western banks to Middle Eastern extremists.

To ensure that charitable contributions don't subsidize terrorism, we prohibit Saudi mosques and aid organizations from transferring money outside our country.

We have also taken strong steps to stop unauthorized shipments of military equipment from leaving Saudi Arabia and to prevent people from crossing our borders to join Daesh in Iraq or Syria.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is mobilizing the Muslim world against the extremist threat to our religion. Under Saudi leadership, the 41-nation Islamic Coalition is equipping our countries to fight violent extremists by training our security forces and sharing information and intelligence.

Last March, in the largest joint military exercise ever in the Middle East, some 350,000 soldiers, 20,000 tanks and 2,500 warplanes from 20 countries joined together in "war games" in the Saudi desert to jointly train our security forces for operations against non-state armed groups.

Turning from the battlefields to the battle of ideas, the Islamic Coalition is encouraging educators and scholars as well as religious and political leaders to raise their voices against those who preach violence. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has created a center which operates 24/7 to analyze social media to identify and track terrorist efforts to recruit and activate new followers.

But non-state armed groups and radical preachers aren't the only threats. By conducting ballistic missile tests last month and meddling in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, the Sinai Peninsula and even the Gulf States, Iran is imperiling the stability of our region. Even more disturbingly, Iran is sharing ballistic missile technology with the extremist Houthi militia in Yemen and similar groups in other countries, thereby imperiling the security of the entire region.

In Yemen, which shares a 1,100-mile border with Saudi Arabia, Iran is supporting and arming the Houthi militia, modeled on the terrorist Hezbollah movement that has destabilized Lebanon. While making Yemen ungovernable, the Houthis are attacking Saudi Arabia, having fired more than 40,000 mortars, rockets and other projectiles at our towns, killing at least 375 civilians, closing more than 500 schools and displacing 24 villages and over 17,000 people.

In January, three Houthi suicide boats rammed a Saudi frigate off the western coast, killing two crew members and injuring three others.

Responding to this threat, Saudi Arabia leads a coalition of 12 countries fighting to reinstate Yemen's legitimate, internationally recognized government and restore peace and security to the country.

To be sure, Saudi Arabia prefers to promote stability through peaceful means, as we do by providing much-needed diplomatic and economic support to strategic allies such as Egypt and Jordan. But aggression, active destabilization and acts of terrorism, including Iran's infringements in Yemen, demand a military response.

From the Cold War through the War on Terror, the U.S. has helped Saudi Arabia strengthen our defenses through joint military training exercise and ballistic defensive weapons sales, making our country the largest customer of U.S. military equipment.

Today, we're working with the United States and its allies to defeat Daesh, Al Qaeda and Iranian-sponsored extremism and expansionism.

We stand shoulder-to-shoulder for a secure and stable Middle East in a peaceful and prosperous world.

# The Saudis are Fighting Terrorism, Don't Believe Otherwise

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir

**Newsweek**

| FEBRUARY 3, 2016

Those who accuse Saudi Arabia of supporting violent extremism not only fail to acknowledge the Kingdom's leadership in combating terrorism around the world but also do not see that it is illogical and irrational for Saudi Arabia to be anything less than at the forefront of nations combatting this scourge.

Multiple actors—each with their own motives—have targeted the Kingdom, seeking to destabilize the country and terrorize the Saudi people. So it is in our national interest to defeat terrorism—and a national priority.

Whether non-state actors like Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State militant group (ISIS), or state-sponsored extremism from Iran and its proxies, Saudi Arabia has, as much as any other country, a national security incentive to stop the men, the money and the mindset that foments terrorism and violent extremism.

Some try to malign Saudi Arabia by reciting that "15 of the 19" 9/11 hijackers were Saudi. They should know that the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, told U.S. interrogators that the initial plan was to have 20 hijackers from different nationalities, but late in the planning Osama bin Laden directed him to use as many Saudis as possible to give the attack a Saudi face.

This was likely designed to drive a wedge between the Kingdom and the U.S. If this was Osama bin Laden's plan, it almost succeeded, as we saw from the wave of criticism the Kingdom experienced after 9/11.

## Al-Qaeda

In 2003, the Saudi capital was targeted with simultaneous suicide bombings at three residential compounds. These bombings killed more than 30 persons,

including Saudis, Lebanese, Americans, British and Australians. Other attacks followed, seeking to destabilize the Kingdom and shake the confidence of expatriates to cause them to leave. It did not succeed. Faris al-Zahrani, a top Al-Qaeda strategist whose death sentence was recently carried out, along with other convicted terrorists, masterminded a 2004 attack on the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah, killing four security guards and five staff members.

## ISIS

The murderers of ISIS have publicly proclaimed the taking of the Saudi state as one of their goals. Throughout 2015, ISIS militants struck four mosques in Dammam, Qatif, Abha and Najran, killing 38 and wounding 148. In August 2015, Saudi authorities arrested 421 suspects from four different extremist cells in connection with these crimes. Another 15 suspects were arrested while planning a suicide operation against the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh using a truck loaded with explosives. ISIS operatives in Saudi Arabia have been caught trying to free terrorists from prison, recruit young people to their cause and spread ISIS propaganda.

## Iran

Iran has used terrorism as an instrument of its foreign policy since the 1979 Revolution. Saudi Arabia has long been a target of terrorism perpetrated by Iranian proxies. In 1987, the Iranian sponsored Hezbollah al-Hejaz set fire to an oil facility in Ras Tanura in eastern Saudi Arabia. That same year, Saudi authorities foiled a plot by Iranian pilgrims to smuggle explosives into the kingdom. In 1988, Hezbollah al-Hejaz attacked a petrochemical company facility in Jubail. Most despicable was Iran's involvement in the 1996 Khobar bombings, which resulted in the deaths of 120 people, including 19 Americans.

Faced with such diverse and dangerous adversaries, Saudi Arabia has spared no effort or expense to combat terrorism. The Kingdom is committed to uprooting extremism at the source and draining militant groups of resources.

Saudi Arabia has arrested extremists within its borders, tried them before specialized courts and imposed the ultimate penalties on those convicted. The Kingdom has implemented one of the world's strictest financial control systems to combat terrorism financing.

Donations in mosques and public places are prohibited, and Saudi charities are prohibited from transferring money outside the country to ensure that charitable funds do not find their way to violent extremists.

In 2005, the Kingdom launched a national public awareness campaign against extremism that is still ongoing to counter the extremist narrative and educate our public about the dangers of violent extremism. In 2008, it launched a global interfaith dialogue to promote harmony among the world's religions and cultures. A global center was established in Vienna to continue this effort.

In addition to actions, Saudi Arabia has worked with other nations to combat terrorism—both diplomatically and militarily. Through a \$110 million grant, Saudi Arabia helped establish the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center to combat terrorism, address the mindset of extremism that foments terrorism and build the capacity of UN member states to fight against terrorism.

Saudi Arabia has established "fusion cells" where law enforcement and intelligence officials from Saudi Arabia, the United States and other partners work closely together to investigate and interdict terrorism plots and finances.

Saudi Air Force planes were one of the first to fly sorties over Syria as part of the military actions against ISIS, and Saudi Arabia is leading a coalition of 38 Islamic countries to fight terrorism and extremism.

Terrorism is a global scourge. Many countries have known the grief and pain it causes. It makes no sense for Saudi Arabia to support or condone those who have as their goal the destruction of Saudi Arabia. It is against our values, our faith and our national character.

That is why the Kingdom has responded with strength, persistence and resolve. To accuse the Kingdom of being lax, much less complicit, when it comes to combatting terrorism and its financing is not only irresponsible but also flies against the face of reality.



# Saudi Arabia does not support Islamic State terrorists – or any others

**Mohammed bin Nawaf Al-Saud, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the UK**

**theguardian** | AUGUST 17, 2014

Richard Norton-Taylor suggests that Saudi Arabia has been “funding the most intolerant brand of Islam” in his blog (UK weapons trump human rights in Israel and Saudi Arabia, August 11, 2014).

He suggests this is “Wahhabi absolutism.” Hearsay and a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. He supports his argument with information gleaned from the column of a fellow journalist from another newspaper.

As stated, Wahhabism is not a sect of Islam. What is being referred to is the interpretation of Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, who saw his fellow Muslims being diverted from the path of Islam as it had been delivered by the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Saudis do not accept to be labelled “Wahhabis”. We are Muslims. In 2011, HRH Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz (now the crown prince) said: “Some people use the word Wahhabism to describe the message of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab in order to isolate Saudi Muslims from the rest of the Muslim world.”

This word is a convenient label dreamed up by some governments, political analysts and the media to describe the major “Islamic threat” facing western civilization. It is described as extremist and radical, accused of inspiring movements ranging from the Taliban in Afghanistan to the al-Qaida network and now Daesh in Iraq. This was likely designed to drive a wedge between the kingdom and the U.S. If this was Osama bin Laden’s plan, it almost succeeded, as



we saw from the wave of criticism the kingdom experienced after 9/11.

But this view does not even faintly correspond with the teachings of Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahhab, who was a well-travelled, learned, scholarly jurist of the 18th century. He insisted on adherence to Qur'anic values and the teachings of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which includes the maximum preservation of human life, even in the midst of jihad. He taught tolerance and supported the rights of both men and women.

Let me make it perfectly clear. The government of Saudi Arabia does not support or fund the murderers who have collected under the banner of the Islamic State. Their ideology is not one that Saudi Arabia recognizes, or that would be recognized by the vast majority of Muslims around the world – whether Sunni or Shia.

Under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah, Saudi Arabia launched an initiative for dialogue between all religions and cultures in 2008 with the establishment of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna.

Following an international counterterrorism conference held in Riyadh in 2005, the UN counterterrorism center was established with financial support from Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom has been and will continue to fight extremism within the nation's own borders daily, indeed hourly.

Firm action is taken against any imam who is found to hold extremist views and who tries to incite their followers to violence. Saudi Arabia has passed laws and warned its citizens that they will be arrested and prosecuted if they attempt to join Daesh or any other international terrorist group, or to take part in any of the conflicts raging in any region. Saudi Arabia has done and will do everything it can to stop the spread of this corrosive poison in the country and region and encourage all other governments to do the same.

# Don't Blame 'Wahhabism' for Terrorism

**Mohammed Alyahya, Nonresident Fellow,  
Atlantic Council**

**The New York Times** | OCTOBER 19, 2016

The word "Wahhabism" has become a boogeyman in the West, deemed responsible for the radicalization of Muslims around the world. And since Wahhabism is a strain of Islam that has its origins in the Arabian Peninsula and is the dominant religious doctrine of Saudi Arabia that country is often viewed as the prime culprit in the propagation of violent extremism.

But blaming Wahhabism and Saudi Arabia for Islamist radicalism is a dangerous red herring.

This single-cause explanation distracts from the complex political, economic and psychological reasons people join terrorist groups. In doing so, it impedes Saudi Arabia's ability to effectively fight terrorism.

Wahhabism is, in fact, a loaded, anti-Saudi synonym for Salafism, a puritanical strain of Islam that encourages emulating the "salaf," or predecessors, the first followers of the Prophet Muhammad. Salafism has historically been apolitical and the overwhelming majority of Salafis are not violent.

Most Islamist militants have nothing to do with Saudi Wahhabism. The Taliban for example, are Deobandis, a revivalist, anti-imperialist strain of Islam that emerged as a reaction to British colonialism in South Asia. Most members of Al Qaeda follow a radical current that emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood, a movement that defined itself largely in relation and opposition to the West

and its values. While some terrorists do identify as Salafi, Islamic sects that are ideologically opposed to Salafism – Naqshbandi Sufis and Shiites, among others – have engaged in violent jihad in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria.

And yet much of the Western news media and far too many pundits put forward a different picture entirely, pinning the blame for terrorism on Wahhabi ideology emanating from Saudi Arabia. These arguments lead one to imagine that European terrorists end up joining the Islamic State by wandering the streets of Paris or Brussels and stumbling upon a Saudi-funded mosque. In this mosque, they read a single book, "The Book of Monotheism," by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab, the 18th-century sheikh who founded Wahhabism. A week later, the book's fundamentalist message inspires them to travel to Syria's front lines or to plot terrorist attacks in Europe.

The reality is much more complex. Most of the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Europe have been petty criminals who were known to drink alcohol and take drugs. Their radicalization has little to do with theology. Some European Muslims reportedly purchased books like "Islam for Dummies" before embarking on journeys to take part in jihad in Syria. What they all have in common is a belief that the Muslim world and the West are locked in an irreconcilable clash of civilizations.

It is similarly inaccurate to condemn Wahhabism or Saudi Salafism for the jihadist groups that have emerged in the Arab world in recent years. Tunisians account for the largest foreign population in the Islamic State. The group's top ranks emerged from Iraq. Syria, of course, is a hotbed of jihadists of all stripes. And yet, these countries until recently were ruled by secular dictators, who banned Saudi missionary activities and, in the case of Iraq and Syria, viewed Saudi Arabia as an adversary.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has been engaged in missionary activities in India, building mosques, schools and social service centers. And yet barely any jihadists have emerged from among India's population of more than 170 million Muslims.

The revival of a politicized form of radical Islam, which has been taking place in the Arab world since the 1970s, is not driven just by ideology, but by the failure of Arab governments to meet the expectations of their own populations and the brutal reprisals they have employed to quell demands for better, more transparent governance. Like the social and psychological alienation that drives some European Muslims to join extremist groups, this root cause must be addressed in order to truly fight terrorism. There is no doubt that while certain strains of Salafism are intolerant, intolerance does not necessarily lead to terrorism. Ideological intolerance is a problem in its own right, one that carries risks and dangers and requires its own treatments. But conflating its dangers with the causes of violent extremism can diminish the effectiveness of serious counterterrorism efforts.

It is Saudi Arabia – the country accused of promoting ideas that lead to violent extremism – that has effectively harnessed religion to fight radicalism. Saudi Arabia has fought Al-Qaeda not only operationally, but also by countering its ideology with religious arguments. Scholars have mobilized to condemn both terrorist acts and rhetoric. Salafi scholars have been instrumental in the success of the rehabilitation programs for those convicted of aiding and abetting terrorism.

In the 1990s, Saudi Arabia's grand mufti, Abdul Aziz ibn Baz, issued a fatwa condemning suicide operations. The current grand mufti, Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh, is also on record advocating against Saudis' joining groups fighting overseas and, in keeping with traditional Salafi teachings, has called on all Muslims to remain obedient to the legitimate leader's dictates and avoid any form of organized political activism.

Blaming Wahhabism or Salafism for violent radicalism is not merely an intellectual slip or an injustice to Salafis, it is a distortion that stands to obstruct fighting violent radicalism and understanding its causes. Any religious ideology adopted by radicals is often a mask for other issues. Blaming or even destroying an ideology like Salafism will not end radicalism.





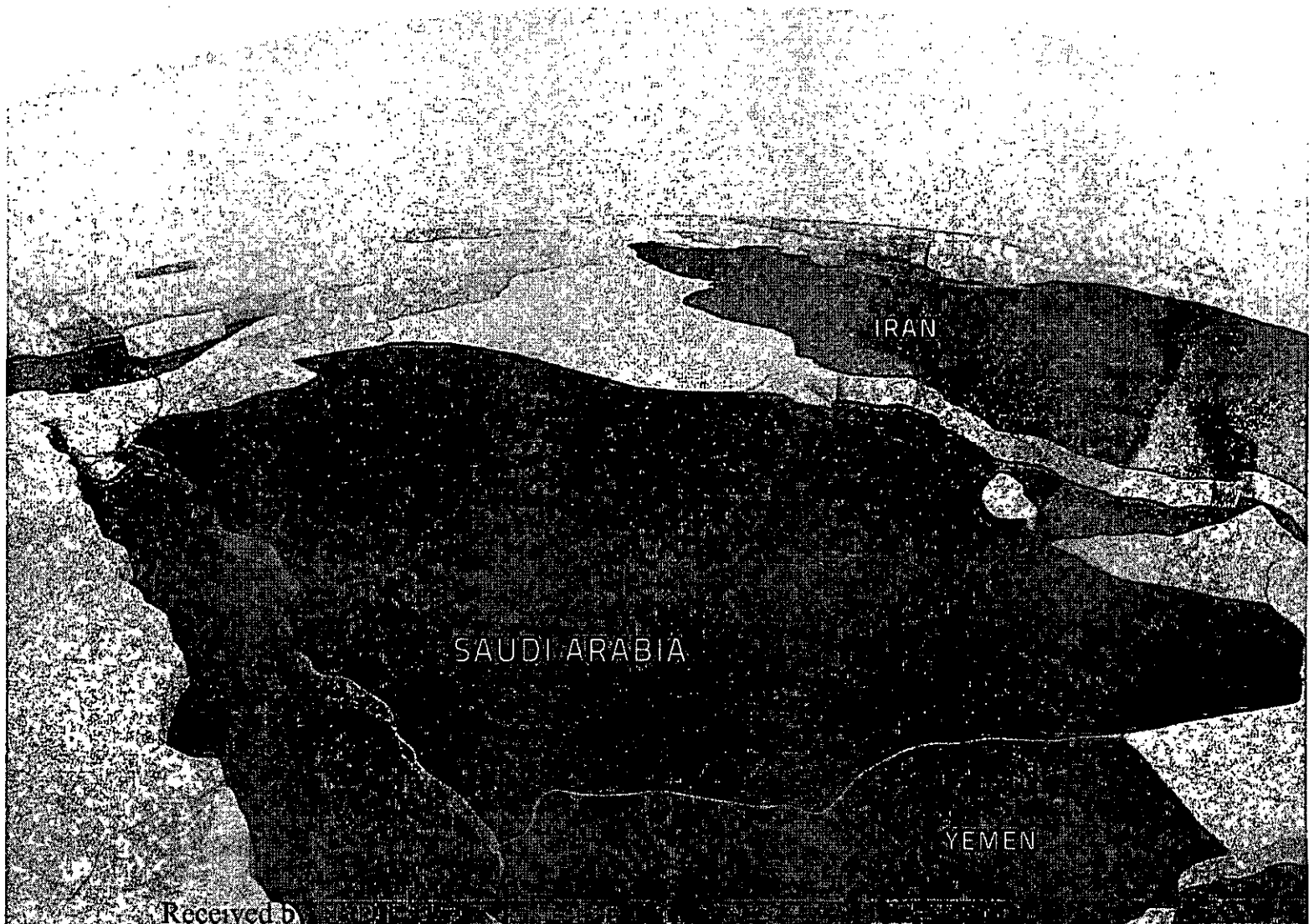


# SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

# THE YEMEN CONFLICT

APRIL 2017 REPORT



“Yemen is where the real proxy war is going on, and winning the battle in Yemen will help define the balance of power in the Middle East”

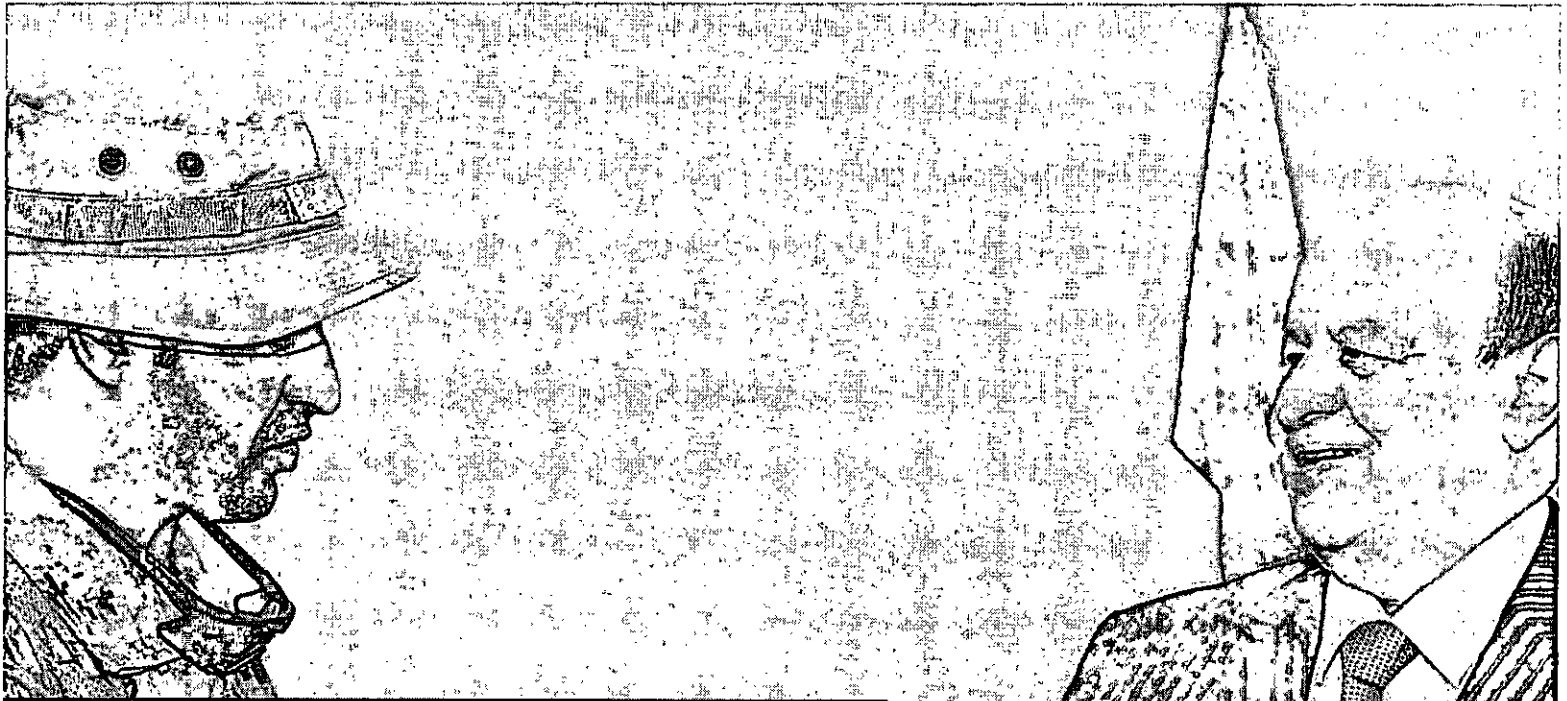
IRANIAN OFFICIAL TO REUTERS, MARCH 22, 2017



# Contents

---

01	Executive Summary	4
02	Overview of Saudi-led Coalition Achievements in Yemen	8
03	Strategic Interests in Yemen	12
04	The Houthis and Iran	16
05	A Recent History of Yemen	20
06	AQAP and Daesh in Yemen	30
07	Houthi Violations	34
08	Humanitarian Aid to the People of Yemen	38
09	Blockade Accusations	42
10	Steps to Reduce Civilian Casualties	44
11	Appendix	50



President Hadi stated that Yemen would have fallen in four days and would have been an Iranian state had it not been for the Operation Decisive Storm launched by the Arab military coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia.

01

---

## Executive Summary

Yemen has experienced political turmoil and a climate of lawlessness for decades. In recent years, however, Iran's covert support for a Yemeni faction exacerbated existing divisions and triggered a political and economic crisis that led to the violent ouster of President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi in 2015. As Yemen found itself on the brink of civil war, an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia and supported by the United States intervened. Its objectives were to protect the civilian population from attacks by Iranian-supported Houthi militias, restore the legitimate government and prevent Yemen from becoming a safe haven for Al-Qaeda and a base for Iranian adventurism and subversion in the region.

Saudi Arabia and the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) began an intense diplomatic effort aimed at avoiding civil war in Yemen when nationwide protests began in February 2011. Saudi Arabia helped to broker the departure of Yemen's longtime leader, Ali Abdullah Saleh, and the formation of a National Unity government. It also promoted a United Nations-led National Dialogue among all political factions and free elections in 2012 in which Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi was elected president. This period of optimism was cut short by repeated attempts by the Houthis to sabotage the nation-building process, at first by political obstruction, and then by military means.

The root causes of the conflict in Yemen are complex. The al Houthi family and the political-rebel movement whose adherents collectively refer to themselves by "the Houthis" have waged a decade-long campaign to achieve political power by military force. This campaign of aggression has aggravated longstanding divisions and produced attacks on both fellow Yemenis and Saudi civilians across the border. Their insurgency against Yemen's central government has been aided by the financial and operational support of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Lebanon's Hezbollah militia.

Iran's interference in Yemen is of a piece with its activities in Lebanon, Iraq, and elsewhere, and Iranian involvement has escalated in Yemen as the conflict wore on. Indeed, upon the capture of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a by the Houthis in 2014, a prominent Iranian government official boasted that Iran now controls four Arab capitals, with Sana'a joining Beirut, Baghdad and Damascus.<sup>1</sup> Iran has

In 2014, a prominent Iranian government official boasted that Iran now controls four Arab capitals, with Sana'a joining Beirut, Baghdad and Damascus.

---

smuggled weapons into Yemen, in violation of an arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council, that have been used to attack Saudi, U.S. and Emirati ships off the Yemeni coast and civilians in Saudi Arabia. Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Qods Force—the external arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—met top IRGC officials in Tehran in February 2017 to evaluate plans that would further advantage the Houthis in Yemen. A senior Iranian official told Reuters, "Yemen is where the real proxy war is going on, and winning the battle in Yemen will help define the balance of power in the Middle East."<sup>2</sup>

As President Hadi sought to draft a constitution that could represent the interests of all Yemenis and capitalize on the achievements of a political transition endorsed by the United Nations, former president Saleh found common cause with Iran and its Houthi allies, who sought to unilaterally redraw Yemen's internal boundaries in their favor. The Houthis resisted repeated diplomatic efforts by multilateral organizations to find a political solution. As violence escalated, the international community expressed grave concern at the prospect of a coup d'état by an Iranian-backed extremist militia that had already violently occupied several cities, seized government posts, and bombed the Presidential Palace.

---

1 Middle East Monitor, "Sana'a is the fourth Arab capital to join the Iranian revolution," September 27, 2014

2 Reuters, "Exclusive: Iran steps up support for Houthis in Yemen's war," March 22, 2017

It was successive Houthi military offensives throughout 2014 and 2015 that finally provoked the Hadi government to request the intervention of what was to become the Saudi-led coalition. Military action was based upon the principle of self-defense contained in Article 51 of the UN Charter. Preventing Houthi control of Yemen and protecting Yemen's neighbors from the Houthis' arsenal of ballistic weapons, tanks and other advanced military equipment was essential to the national security of Saudi Arabia and other GCC nations.

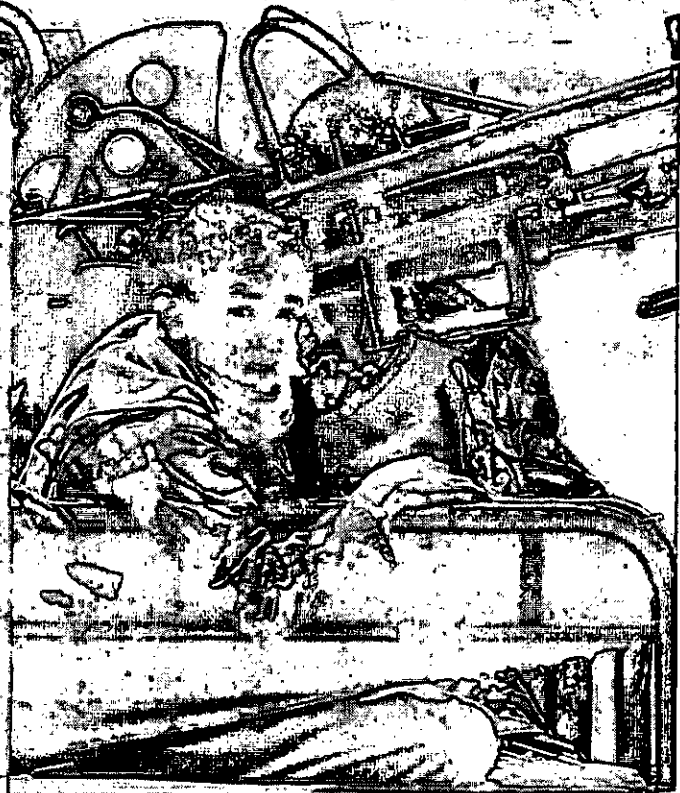
As part of the effort to restore the legitimate government of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and its Coalition partners have also degraded the ability of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Daesh (ISIS) to use Yemeni territory as a safe haven. AQAP terrorists have exploited the security vacuum that followed the Houthi assault on Sana'a in September 2014, and expanded their presence in the countryside, specifically Yemen's southern and eastern regions. In April 2015, AQAP fighters attacked and occupied the strategic port city of Mukalla, which was subsequently liberated by Yemeni armed forces, in collaboration with Saudi and Emirati special forces. Today, AQAP does not control a single city in Yemen. In November 2014, Daesh established a foothold in Yemen and began to directly target Coalition forces in Yemen in response to the Kingdom's coordinated efforts to degrade the terror group's operational bases in Syria.

Saudi Arabia remains committed to a peaceful, diplomatic and multilateral solution to the crisis in Yemen. Saudi Arabia supports the UN-led efforts to achieve a political solution in Yemen based upon UNSC Resolution 2216, the GCC initiative, and the outcomes of the National Dialogue. Although military intervention in Yemen was necessary to prevent Yemen's collapse, the solution to the country's conflict will be political: the formation of a new national unity government, with power shared among the parties. Such a unity government would respect the sanctity of international borders, ensure Yemen's territorial integrity, and prohibit the deployment of weapons from Yemeni territory that threaten international waterways or the security of Yemen's neighbors.

A stable, prosperous and self-governing Yemen free of foreign influence and transnational terrorist organizations is within reach. As the single-largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, the Kingdom has committed to play a substantial role in future reconstruction efforts.



Left unchecked, the Houthi militias, backed by Iran, would have taken control of Yemen—along with its military arsenal of ballistic weapons, tanks and other advanced military equipment—and turned those weapons on its neighbors.



Armed Houthi militia in southern Sana'a, April 2015.

02

---

# Overview of Saudi-led Coalition Achievements in Yemen

Following are the achievements in the campaign against Iran-backed Houthi separatists as well as against the terrorist organizations in Yemen:

## **Improved Containment of Iranian Influence on the Arabian Peninsula**

After the fall of the legitimate Yemeni government at the beginning of 2015 because of the Houthi offensive, Iran sought to provide the Houthis with political and financial support. The Houthis subsequently became the single largest militia force in the country, and were particularly strong in north and central Yemen. The Houthis were then able to direct significant violence at Saudi targets: In July 2015, Houthi military units shelled Saudi military sites in Jizan Province. Between May 2015 and January 27, 2017, the Kingdom intercepted more than 40 missiles launched at Saudi territory from Yemen<sup>3</sup>, nine of these missiles have struck Saudi territory. A convoy of Iranian ships headed to the Gulf of Aden in March 2016 carrying weapons to that group's militia was intercepted by U.S. naval vessels responding to Saudi Arabia's request. Saudi intervention has stalled Iranian ambitions to turn Yemen into a proxy-state and Houthi militias into another Hezbollah.

## **Substantial Eradication of Houthi-led Separatism**

Houthi rebels participated in the Yemeni national dialogue and agreed to its outcomes. The Houthis, however, reneged in their commitments and launched a military offensive occupying the city of Amran in the summer of 2014 and the capital of Sana'a in September 2014. Saudi Arabia's intervention, done as a response to a request by the legitimate government of Yemen, prevented the fall of Aden and supported the legitimate government in regaining control over more than 85 percent of Yemen's territory.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Missile War in Yemen; Missile Defense Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies



---

Saudi Arabia is the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, having contributed over \$847 million in food, medicine, shelter and other assistance.

### **Erosion of Religious Extremism**

Left unchecked, Yemen's political power struggle and resulting civil war would have left that country more vulnerable to the violent influence of terror groups already inflaming the region.

### **Reduction of Aggression Against Yemen's Civilian Population**

Over the course of the war, Houthis have bombed civilians on the ground, used child soldiers, and withheld humanitarian food assistance as a means of intimidation. In Taiz, where the Houthis used such brutal tactics against civilians, Saudi Arabia dropped food and medicine to relieve the siege against the city.

### **Resumption of Humanitarian Assistance**

Saudi Arabia has been able to extend significant humanitarian support to help ameliorate the suffering of a population that was devastated by internal conflict long before Riyadh's decision to intervene. The Kingdom has been the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, contributing more than \$847 million during the conflict. In April 2015, responding to an appeal by the United Nations, the Kingdom gave \$274 million to support UN efforts in Yemen, and then announced in May that it would supply an additional



\$267 million in assistance. Such aid is not new: Riyadh pledged \$3 billion to help Yemen implement reforms against poverty and hunger in 2012 and donated millions of barrels of crude oil and petroleum products to assist with Yemen's energy needs that year and beyond.

### **Thwarting the Menace of Al-Qaeda and the Rise of Daesh**

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), cited by the U.S. State Department in 2014 as the greatest threat to Saudi internal security, sought to exploit the Yemen civil war for its own objectives, including suicide bombings that targeted Saudi and Western nationals. Daesh has penetrated Yemen, having carried out car bombings, attacks on mosques, and grisly executions that claimed more than 130 lives by the end of December 2015. Terrorist strongholds have subsequently been liberated by Coalition forces.

### **Diplomatic Efforts**

Saudi Arabia, the GCC, G10 countries and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General have worked diplomatically to seek a peaceful transition of government. In 2011, political parties in Yemen agreed to accept the GCC Initiative. However, while Riyadh and President Hadi have sought compromise with Houthi forces—including parliamentary representation and greater autonomy within Yemen's provinces—the Houthis chose to attempt to win territory through military action. Today, diplomatic efforts are mainly UN-led with the political support of Saudi Arabia, the GCC and the international community. The Kingdom and its Coalition partners continue to prevent further destabilization and create a more hospitable climate for negotiations.

Left unchecked, the Houthi militias, backed by Iran, would have taken control of Yemen—along with its military arsenal of ballistic weapons, tanks and other advanced military equipment—and turned those weapons on its neighbors. Saudi Arabia continues to work toward a peaceful solution that maintains the integrity and independence of Yemen. Saudi Arabia is committed to providing the financial support necessary to rebuild Yemen and improve the quality of life for all Yemenis. Without Saudi involvement, Yemen's conflict could have produced unacceptable consequences for regional and international security.

**Saudi artillery shelling Houthi targets along the Saudi-Yemeni border.**

**Saudi Arabia's intervention, done at the request of the legitimate government of Yemen, prevented the fall of Aden and has successfully restored legitimate government control to more than 85 percent of Yemen's territory.**



03

---

## Strategic Interests in Yemen

The strategic interest of Saudi Arabia in securing stability in Yemen and in maintaining the legitimate, popularly-elected national government of President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi is four-fold: securing Saudi Arabia's border, stemming Iran's regional expansionist ambitions, combating terrorist threats and safeguarding regional security.

Many of Saudi Arabia's strategic interests in seeing stability in Yemen are in line with international priorities in the region. In particular, with respect to fighting terrorism, containing Iranian aggression, and promoting regional stability and cooperation, the interests of the United States and Saudi Arabia run parallel.

Combating Iran-backed Houthi violence directed against the Yemeni population and, by extension, against Saudi Arabia is the first strategic priority of the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia has endured unprovoked attacks towards its Jizan Province, Houthi ballistic missile attacks against civilians, and attacks against Saudi border security forces. To date, Houthi separatists have attempted more than 40 missile strikes against Saudi Arabia from the Yemen border and coastal territories, with nine such attempts striking Saudi land.

Secondly, Saudi Arabia's interest in quelling this conflict also includes thwarting the geopolitical expansionist ambitions of Iran in Yemen - a sentiment also echoed by the Kingdom's Coalition partners and allies.

Iran, the world's biggest state sponsor of terrorism, has provided Houthis with weaponry, financial support and training as part of an effort to swing Yemen in favor of Iran's regional ambitions. Iran has publicly admitted that they will continue to meddle in Yemen's domestic politics, telling Reuters "Yemen is where

the real proxy war is going on and winning the battle in Yemen will help define the balance of power in the Middle East.”

Iran has backed the Houthi militia, an effort that dates back over a decade. The Houthis have been a proxy for Iran, which is seeking to extend its influence in the region, and Iran has provided the Houthis with weaponry, financial support and training.

It will be necessary to break Iranian influence in order to bring stability to Yemen and restore peace in the region. The burden of keeping Iran in check will have to be shared by a strong Arab coalition backed by the United States, all while continuing to press the attack on terrorist organizations. The United States has committed to standing by Saudi Arabia to accomplish this.

Additionally, the international community has strategic interest in preventing Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), long a highly active terrorist group operating in Yemen, from taking advantage of civil strife and political conflict in Yemen to extend its presence there. AQAP is considered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to be the Al Qaeda affiliate “most likely to attempt transnational attacks against the United States.” To date, that terrorist group has unsuccessfully attempted to target the U.S. at least three times – using concealed explosive devices designed to destroy commercial aircraft or detonate inside parcel packages. The intelligence services of Saudi Arabia helped disrupt two of these plots.

The status of Yemen as a safe haven for transnational terrorist organizations has challenged four consecutive U.S. Presidents. Since the bombing of the USS Cole on Oct 12, 2000, terrorist groups have continued to threaten U.S. interests in Yemen. For example, a September 2008 attack on the U.S. embassy in Sana’a resulted in 18 killed and 16 wounded. In November 2014, AQAP claimed it had attempted to kill U.S. Ambassador Matthew Tueller, but the two bombs were detected minutes before their detonation.

Furthermore, terrorist plots originating in Yemen have threatened the U.S. homeland. Saudi and American intelligence have worked together to foil these terrorist plots. For example, Saudi intelligence was crucial in foiling a 2010 AQAP plot to detonate a bomb lodged in a printer on a cargo plane bound for Chicago. The U.S. State Department and National Counter Terrorism Center has designated the

group as the most active of terrorists openly intent on attacking the U.S. homeland. The conflict in Yemen, and all developments that stem from it, are a vital part of the United States' Global War on Terror. Restoration of the legitimate, internationally-recognized government of Yemen would further enhance U.S. counterterrorism objectives in Yemen.

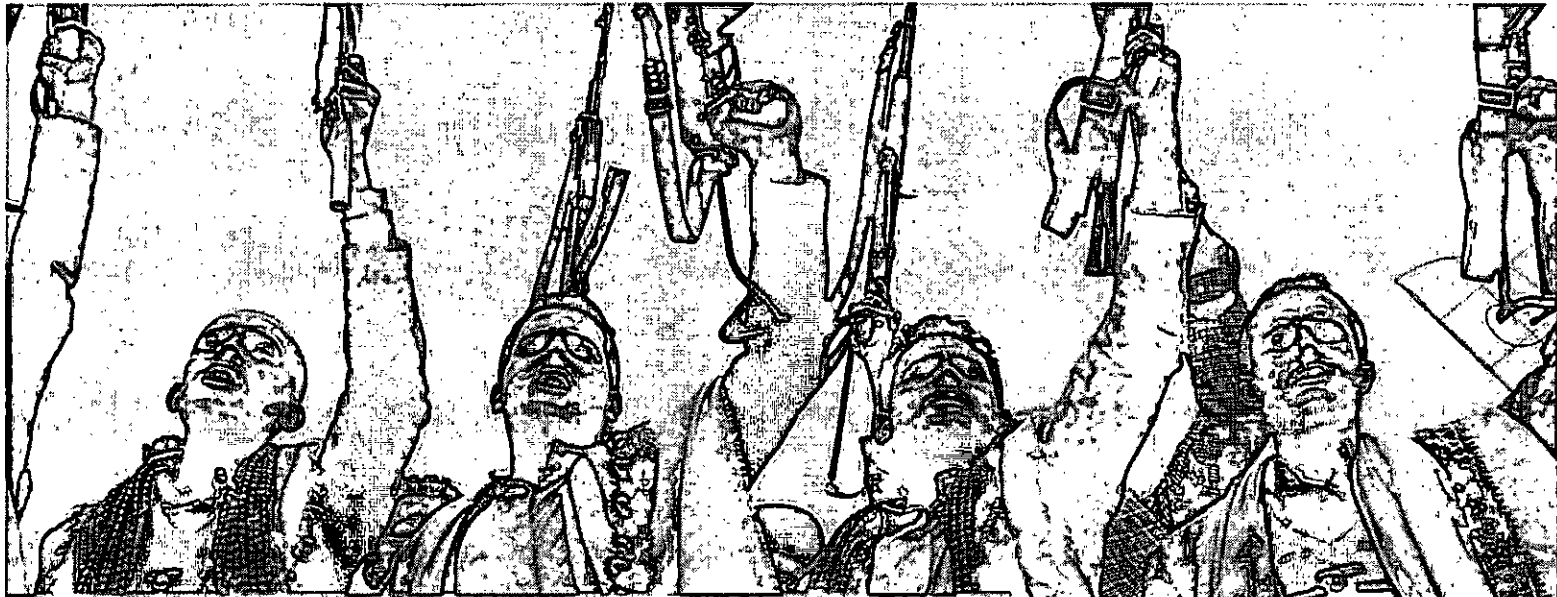
Finally, there is the Kingdom's interest in safeguarding regional security. Yemen is of considerable geopolitical importance. The country, with its 1,184-mile coastline, is strategically located next to the Bab al Mandab strait, through which commercial oil tankers carry an estimated 3.4 million barrels per day (3.5% to 4% of the global oil supply).<sup>4</sup>

United States foreign policy, as articulated by President Donald Trump, places a greater emphasis on U.S. allies taking greater responsibility for their own regional security. Saudi Arabia is in full agreement with this policy. Indeed, Saudi efforts to stabilize Yemen are an effort to assert the Kingdom's role as a guarantor of regional stability. These areas of agreement were further outlined by Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir in remarks to the Munich Security Conference on February 19, 2017: "[President Trump] believes in destroying Daesh; so do we. He believes in containing Iran; so do we. He believes in working with traditional allies; so do we. And when we look at the composition of the Cabinet and the personalities that he appointed: Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Treasury. These are very experienced, highly skilled, highly capable individuals who share that worldview."

With respect to fighting terrorism, containing Iranian aggression, and promoting regional stability and cooperation, the interests of the United States and Saudi Arabia run parallel.

---

<sup>4</sup> Congressional Research Service. "Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations", Jeremy M. Sharp, February 11, 2015. For information on the geostrategic position of Yemen, see also: The United States Energy Administration, "World Oil Transit Chokepoints", 2012, available at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov)



Iran actively supported members of the Houthi tribe in northern Yemen, including activities intended to build military capabilities, which could pose a greater threat to security and stability in Yemen and the surrounding region. In July 2012, the Yemeni Interior Ministry arrested members of an alleged Iranian spy ring, headed by a former member of the IRGC.

COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM 2012  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE MAY 30, 2013

Tribal gunmen loyal to the Houthi militia brandish their weapons, March 2015

## 04

## The Houthis and Iran

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have provided the Houthis with money, training, and sophisticated weaponry for more than a decade, according to the U.S. State Department. The Revolutionary Guard is believed to have transferred rocket and missile capability as well.

"Iran continues to provide arms to the Houthi forces, despite a U.N. Security Council resolution prohibiting such actions," said Senator Bob Corker to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on March 9, 2017. "Houthis have used these weapons to attack U.S. ships off of the Yemeni coast, and they are launching missiles across the border into Saudi Arabia."



A Houthi sniper trains his sights on San'a'a. Iran has supplied the Houthis with weaponry, financial support and training.

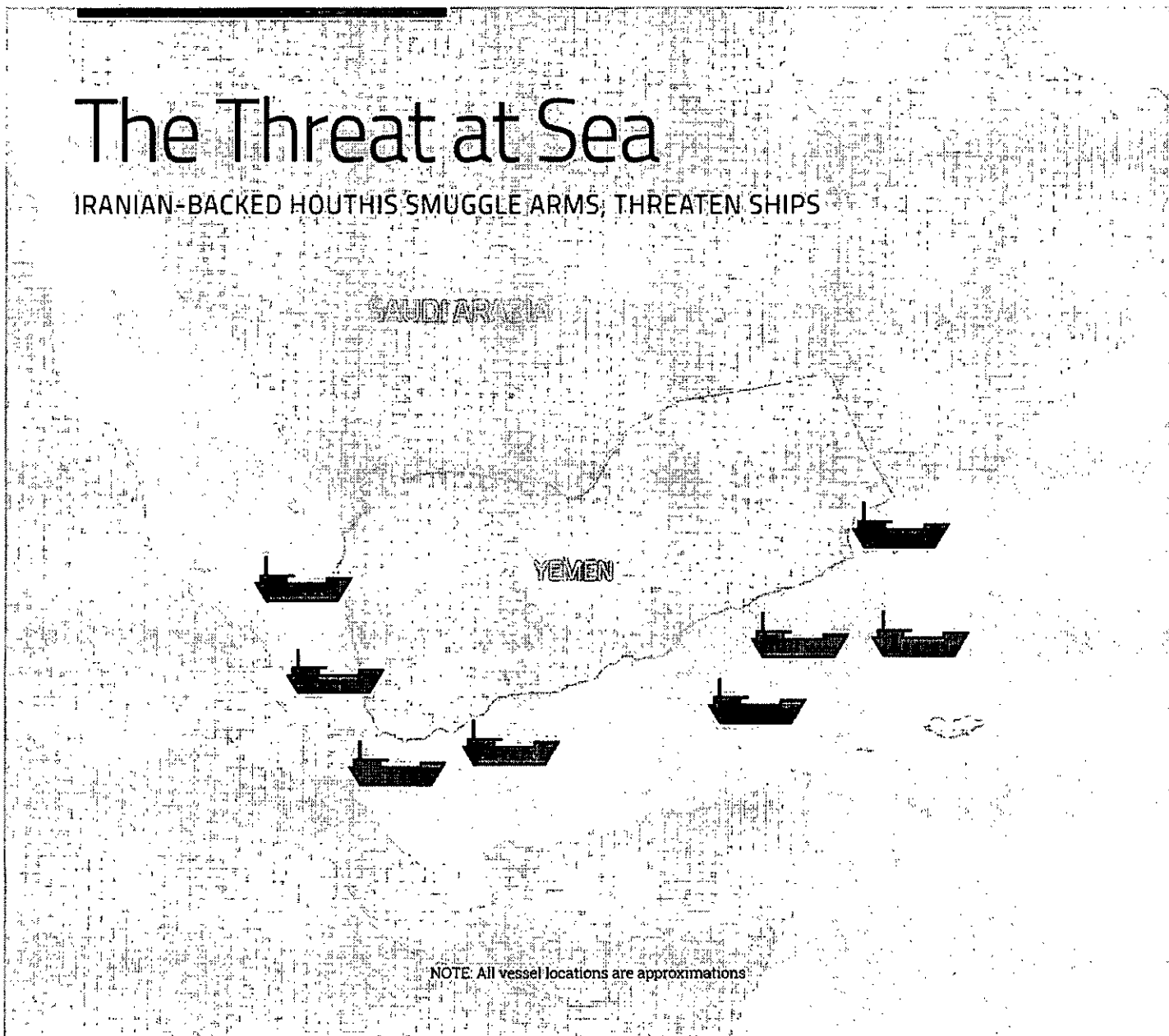
Thomas Joscelyn of the Foundation of the Defense of Democracies at the same hearing added, "There is no question that Iran and the Houthis are allies." He continued: "It is in Iran's interest to work with the Houthis against Saudi-backed forces in Yemen, while also encouraging Houthi incursions into the Saudi kingdom". These statements sum up the general U.S. government view of the Iranian relationship with the Houthi forces as well as that of the Gulf and other Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen

The U.S. Government has long recognized Iran as one of the Houthis' two key backers, the other being former President Saleh and his network. In its Country Reports on Terrorism 2012, the State Department noted.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Country Reports on Terrorism: 2012; U.S. Department of State; May 30, 2013

"Iran actively supported members of the Houthi tribe in northern Yemen, including activities intended to build military capabilities, which could pose a greater threat to security and stability in Yemen and the surrounding region. In July 2012, the Yemeni Interior Ministry arrested members of an alleged Iranian spy ring, headed by a former member of the IRGC."





The U.S. and its allies have intercepted multiple shipments from Iran to the Houthis that have included coastal defense systems, according to senior U.S. officials. Tehran has stepped up its assistance since May 2016, sending anti-ship missiles, explosives, and personnel.

### Interdiction of vessels smuggling arms to Iranian-backed Houthi militias in Yemen have been ongoing for years.

- **JANUARY 23, 2013:** Yemeni naval forces seize Jihan 1, carrying surface-to-air missiles and 16,716 blocks of C4 explosive.
- **MARCH 7, 2013:** Yemeni naval forces seize Jihan 2 in Bab al Mandab strait while unloading weapons onto a Yemeni fishing boat.
- **SEPTEMBER 26, 2015:** Coalition naval forces seize Iranian-registered fishing boat southeast of Salalah, carrying 18 Konkurs anti-armor missiles and 54 BGM-17 anti-tank missiles.
- **FEBRUARY 27, 2016:** Australian frigate HMAS Darwin of the Royal Australian Navy seized a cache of arms from a vessel 313 km off the coast of Oman, including machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and mortars.
- **MARCH 20, 2016:** The French frigate FS Provence stopped a vessel off the Yemeni island of Socotra, seizing AK-47s, sniper rifles and anti-tank missiles.
- **MARCH 28, 2016:** USS Sirocco, operating as part of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, intercepted and seized the shipment of weapons hidden aboard a small, stateless vessel. The arms cache included 1,500 AK-47s, 200 RPG launchers and 21 .50-caliber machine guns.
- **OCTOBER 9, 2016:** Iranian-backed Houthi militias fire missiles at the USS Mason, patrolling in the Red Sea.
- **JANUARY 31, 2017:** Houthi suicide boats attack Saudi patrol frigate off coast of Hodeidah, killing two Saudi sailors.



On February 21, 2012, Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi was elected president in a momentous vote that marked a new chapter of optimism for legitimate governance in Yemen.

05

## A Recent History of Yemen

Yemen has always been a fragile state, one that hostile foreign actors have used as a proxy for their own regional ambitions. Throughout Yemen's history, the United States and Saudi Arabia have partnered with the legitimate government of Yemen to fight transnational terrorist groups and promote regional stability. Hostile actors such as Iran, however, have preyed upon internal political divisions in the country to destabilize Yemen and use it as a base to threaten Saudi territory, as well as disrupt vital commercial shipping lanes.

Meanwhile, transnational terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Daesh have taken advantage of internal divisions in Yemen to carve out a safe haven for terrorist activities. The Al-Qaeda bombing of the USS Cole in October 2000 in Aden harbor was the first of many attacks on Western targets in Yemen in recent years. In September 2004, a Yemeni court sentenced two men to death and four others to prison terms for orchestrating the suicide bombing of the USS Cole.

### **Continuous Counterinsurgency: 2004-2011**

In June 2004, Houthi rebels began a revolt in the northern province of Saa'da. On August 5, 2004, Yemeni officials announced a major offensive to quash this rebellion in these northern mountains. In the six-week conflict that ensued, 500 people were killed—the first large-scale death toll in the conflict.

By 2007, the Yemeni government seized bases belonging to the Houthis in northern Yemen, following fighting that claimed 4,000 lives and drove approximately 2,500 civilians from their homes. On June 16, 2007, representatives of both sides announced a ceasefire in that three-year fight. The ceasefire was broken on January 10, 2008 when Houthis attacked military bases near Jabal

Marran. On September 17, 2008, the U.S. Embassy was attacked with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades.

In 2009, the conflict began to escalate on the border, with Houthi fighters infiltrating Saudi Arabia. In response, Saudi Arabia launched a large-scale military incursion into northern Yemen in November to address the infiltration of Houthi militias and stop attacks targeting Saudi border areas. By January 2010, this cross-border fighting had claimed the lives of 133 Saudi soldiers.

### **Peaceful Political Transition: 2011-2014**

On February 2, 2011, facing a Tunisia-style "Arab Spring" national uprising, President Saleh announced that he would not seek re-election in 2013, but would serve out the remainder of his term. This decision came after the start of demonstrations that drew people from all interest groups, including Houthis, to protest the poor governance and corruption that had marred Yemeni political institutions under Saleh. Over 16,000 protestors participated in the early demonstrations of January 2011, urging an end to the 33-year presidency of Saleh, who had failed to adequately improve the welfare of Yemen's people during his rule.

The youth of Yemen played an instrumental role in the protests as leading activists and civil society representatives calling for a prosperous future for all Yemenis. For years, stagnant development and widespread poverty were significant aggravators of unrest in Yemen. After decades of political and economic frustration, opposition groups put forth a proposal to have Saleh peacefully step down from power. Saleh rejected all popular demands for political change, instead resorting to a crackdown on demonstrators that lasted for more than a year. Protests were met with relentless violence by Saleh-backed forces that targeted crowds of civilians and left countless demonstrators wounded.

Finally, the contentious political turmoil in Yemen reached its culmination with a power transfer agreement to remove Saleh from office. By November 2011, the Government of Yemen, alongside allied neighboring states in the Gulf Cooperation Council, introduced the GCC Initiative to prevent the country's descent into civil war. Despite attempts by Saleh to impede the GCC Initiative and the transitional phase that followed, a national unity government emerged with the unprecedented guarantee of transparent and free elections. On February 21, 2012, Abd-Rabbuh

Mansour Hadi was elected president in a momentous vote that marked a new chapter of optimism for legitimate governance in Yemen.

As part of the GCC Initiative, a National Dialogue Conference, structured by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2051, began in 2013. The details of the accord were worked out by the United Nations, led by Special Envoy Jamal L. Benomar. President Hadi had managed to bring together all the nation's political factions—including the Houthis—in an attempt to reach consensus on governance.



A Saudi soldier patrols the Saudi-Yemeni border. Houthi militias have fired over 55,000 projectiles into Saudi territory.

The NDC started its sessions on March 18, 2013, and all parties agreed on a political “road map” following the conclusion of the NDC on January 24, 2014. The NDC called for Aden and Hadramawt to be the south's two new federal regions, with the remaining four federal regions to be in the north. The capital, Sana'a, would have a special status. The next step was drafting the constitution. The Houthis, who had initially agreed to support the outcome of NDC, obstructed its implementation.

### **Houthi Destabilization: 2014-2015**

The promise of progress and stability arising from Yemen's political transition began to erode throughout 2014 and early 2015. When the NDC concluded in January 2014, Yemen's political transition was not yet complete. The National Dialogue worked to modify the government structure and the rights of citizens. Still, a constitution was yet to be drafted, a referendum on its approval had to be held, and subsequent presidential and parliamentary elections were still on hold.

Many international observers were concerned that the momentum in Yemen would shift from the positive gains made by President Hadi to those opposed to the internationally-backed transition process—namely, former president Saleh and his Houthi allies who sought to redraw Yemen's internal boundaries in their favor.

Within weeks, the Houthi movement, at war with the government on-and-off since 2004, launched another military offensive against various local allies of President Hadi. In February 2014, days after the conclusion of the National Dialogue Conference, the Houthis launched an attack against tribal forces in Amran province. Forces aligned with former President Saleh reportedly joined the Houthis. In May, a brigade of the Yemeni Army with ties to former General Ali Mohsen (who had fought the Houthis in previous rounds of conflict) engaged Houthi fighters in Amran. By July, Houthis had seized the province and city of Amran, killing the leader of the brigade that had been dispatched to stop the Houthis.

Beginning in August, Houthi protestors surrounded the capital, demanding that the government resign and fuel subsidies be reinstated. (Yemen has the highest level of energy subsidies in the region). Government security forces clashed with Houthis encamped around the capital, killing several people. By September, Houthis had taken control of Sana'a, gaining control of principal government buildings and forcing the resignation of the Yemeni prime minister, Mohammed Basindawa.

On September 21, 2014, the United Nations brokered a ceasefire agreement known as the Peace and National Partnership Agreement. Under the terms of the deal, the Houthis and a separatist movement in the southern part of the country were to be granted greater representation in a new government. The deal also called for the reinstatement of fuel subsidies. An annex to the deal, which the Houthis did not sign, called on that group to abide by the ceasefire, disarm their militia, and leave the capital.

On November 7, Yemeni officials announced the formation of a new government consistent with the terms of the Peace and Partnership Agreement. However, the Houthis and the General People's Congress refused to participate in the new government. On the same day, the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions under UN Security Council Resolution 2140 (asset freeze and travel ban) on former president Saleh and Houthi leaders Abd al Khaliq al Huthi and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim.

The United States, which had sought the sanctions, announced that "As of fall 2012 Ali Abdullah Saleh had reportedly become one of the primary supporters of the Houthi rebellion. Saleh was behind the attempts to cause chaos throughout Yemen." A day after the formation of the new government and the imposition of



Yemeni protestors in Aden  
condemn Houthi ballistic  
missile attacks on Saudi Arabia.

OCTOBER 2016

As of fall 2012, Ali Abdullah Saleh had reportedly become one of the primary supporters of the Houthi rebellion. Saleh was behind the attempts to cause chaos throughout Yemen.

U.S. Letter to United Nations Security Council, October 31, 2014

---

sanctions, the former ruling party headed by ex-president Saleh ousted President Hadi from his role as the party's Secretary General. In addition, AQAP claimed that it tried to assassinate U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Matthew Tueller, but its bombs were detected "minutes before their detonation."<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the winter of 2014, the Houthis continued to circumvent the authority of President Hadi. The group unilaterally appointed regional governors and rejected the appointment of a new army chief of staff. Despite political efforts, the Houthis continued to retain armed militiamen in the capital. Houthi militiamen detained President Hadi's chief of staff, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, one of the primary figures involved in the drafting process of the new constitution.

Houthi aggression continued in early 2015, led by troops loyal to Abdul Malik al Houthi. The Presidential Palace was seized on January 20, 2015 and Houthi militias attacked the private residence of President Hadi in Sana'a. This Houthi leader was praised by Mohsen Rezaei, former senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) commander, claiming "Congratulations to you, the heroic resistance of the people and the glorious victory of you the children of Islam."<sup>7</sup> The Houthis placed President Hadi under house arrest, and Prime Minister Khaled Bahah and his cabinet resigned.

---

6 Agence France Presse, "Qaeda kills 'dozens' in Yemen as government formed," November 8, 2014

7 "Iran's Mohsen Rezaei Writes Open Letter to Yemen's Abdul Malik al Houthi," Tasnim News Agency, March 30, 2015.

English translation at <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/irans-mohsen-rezaei-writes-open-letter-to-yemens-abdul-malik-al-houthi>



On February 6, the Houthi movement illegally disbanded Parliament and attempted to establish the appointive Supreme Revolutionary Committee as the highest governing authority. By this time, the Houthi-Saleh coup controlled elements of the Yemeni Army, including its air forces and ballistic missile capabilities. President Hadi fled Sana'a and moved to Aden.

### **Regional Intervention: 2015-Present**

Following the failure among political factions to produce a consensus government in the wake of the coup against Hadi, the Houthis unilaterally announced an extra-constitutional governance plan, while the United States, United Nations, and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) called for President Hadi's return to office. On February 10, the U.S. State Department announced that it would suspend embassy operations in Sana'a and was relocating U.S. personnel elsewhere.

In March 2015, the Houthi militias, in an alliance with former president Saleh, continued their offensive and seized Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, including the international airport. They advanced to Aden, where they surrounded the Presidential Palace and threatened to kill or capture President Hadi. On March 8, 2015, Saudi Arabia, in response to a request by President Hadi, invited Yemeni factions to hold a conference under the umbrella of the GCC in Riyadh. The Houthis and their allies declined. Houthi militias bombed the Presidential Palace using seized aircraft from the Yemeni air forces on March 19, 2015.

On March 25, 2015, the Houthis expanded their control over most cities in Yemen, seizing the southern capital, Aden. The Kingdom had by then clearly communicated that any move to capture Aden would trigger military action. The Saudi government then announced that it would intervene in Yemen with a coalition consisting of nine other nations: United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Sudan, Senegal and Kuwait. On March 26, Saudi Arabia, leading the Coalition, launched Operation Decisive Storm.

The Coalition's March 2015 operations in Yemen came in response to an appeal for assistance by the legitimate president of Yemen, Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, based upon the principle of self-defense contained in Article 51 of the UN Charter. A coup d'état by an extremist militia supported by Iran had resulted



Operations in Yemen came in response to an appeal for assistance by the legitimate president of Yemen, Abid-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, based upon the principle of self-defense in Article 51 of the U.N. Charter.

in the occupation of several cities (including Sana'a), the seizure of government posts, and the bombing of the Presidential Palace. The Houthis and forces loyal to former president Saleh occupied major cities in violation of international law, the GCC Initiative, and the outcomes of the National Dialogue, to which the Houthis had given their consent.

### **Operation Decisive Storm: March 2015**

On March 26, 2015, Saudi Arabia deployed its armed forces at the request of President Hadi to help resist Houthi aggression. The Houthis were advancing toward the southern city of Aden, where the Yemeni government was based, in order to remove him from power in another attempted coup.

The 10-country Coalition joined the military campaign in order to protect and defend the legitimate government of Yemen. Saudi Arabia pledged to protect the people of Yemen and its legitimate government from a takeover by the Houthis. Gulf officials also stated that the operation was intended to deter the strategic threat against Gulf states posed by the Houthi advance and Iran's growing strategic designs in the region.

Several Gulf states joined Saudi Arabia in military operations. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar all contributed air support. Non-Gulf states of Jordan, Morocco, and Sudan also showed their support for Operation Decisive Storm. These Coalition members lent their support out of a desire to preserve the legitimate government of Yemen under President Hadi.

### **Operation Renewal of Hope: April 2015-Present**

On April 20, 2015, Saudi spokesman for the Coalition forces, Brigadier General Ahmed Asiri announced that Operation Decisive Storm had ended and would be replaced by a new campaign, Operation Renewal of Hope. The new operation was to mark the start of a more limited military campaign aimed at preventing the rebels from operating. Speaking at a news conference in Riyadh that day, Asiri said that Decisive Storm's

The United States stepped up its efforts to prevent Iranian interference in Yemen and Tehran's supplying of weapons to the Houthis. The U.S. Navy sent the USS Theodore Roosevelt to Yemen on April 20, 2015 to join other American ships prepared to intercept vessels carrying weapons.

---

heavy airstrikes would be scaled down. Asiri maintained that the goals of the coalition's new phase, Renewal of Hope, are to prevent Houthi rebels from "targeting civilians or changing realities on the ground."

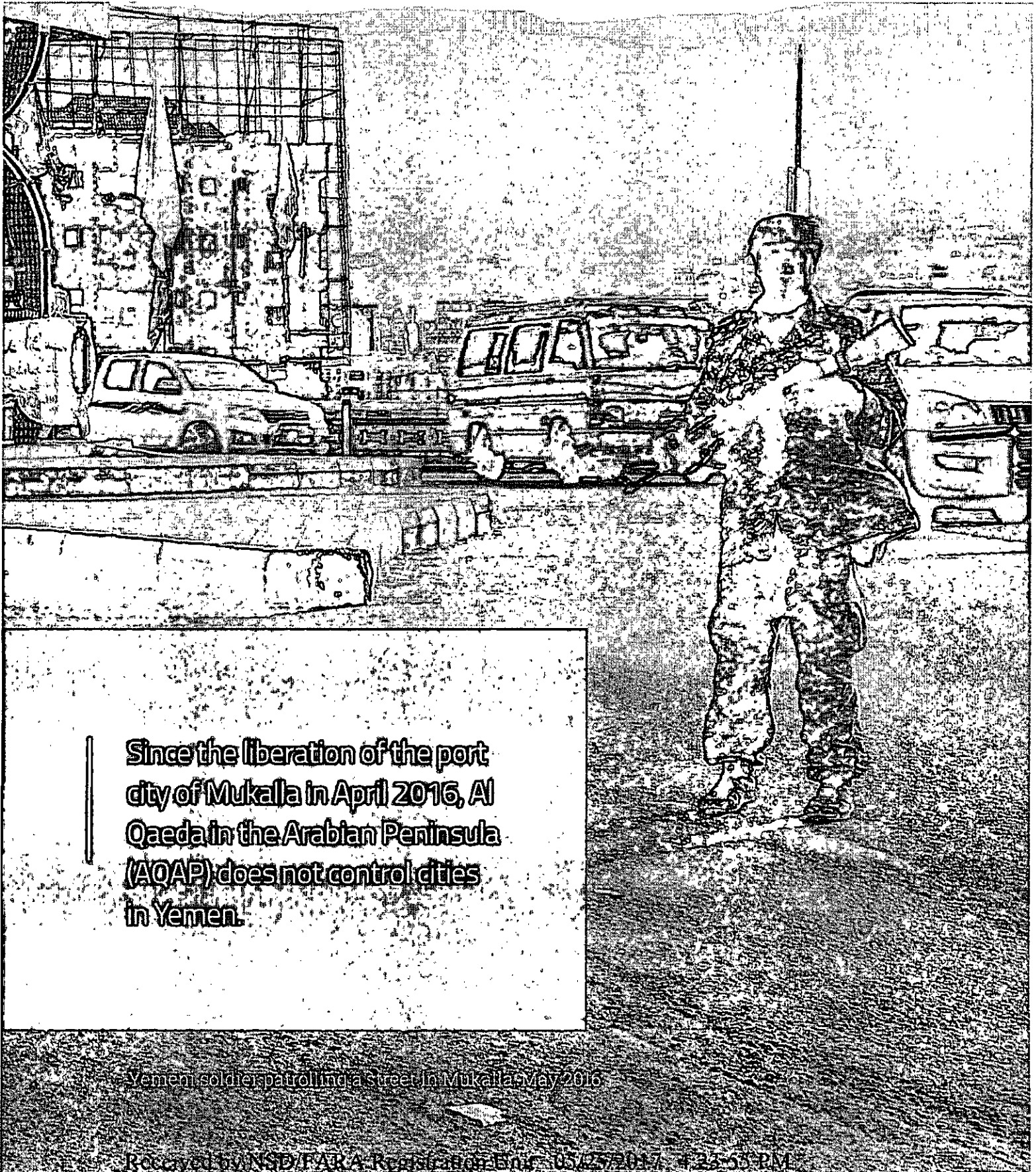
At this time, the U.S. stepped up its efforts to prevent Iranian interference in Yemen and Tehran's supplying of weapons to the Houthis. White House spokesperson Joshua Earnest announced at a press conference on April 20, that Iran was seeking to supply weapons to that rebel group, in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2216, which authorized an arms embargo against the Houthis. The U.S. Navy sent the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt to Yemen on April 20, 2015 to intensify security and join other American ships prepared to intercept any Iranian vessels carrying weapons to the Houthis.

In March 2016, Yemeni President Hadi declared that Yemen's national army and popular resistance forces had liberated more than 85 percent of the Yemeni territories from Houthi militia control and from the Houthi-allied forces of the ousted former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

President Hadi also said during those interviews that Yemen would have "fallen in four days" and would have been "an Iranian state" had it not been for the launch of Operation Decisive Storm by the Arab military coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Saudi Gazette, "Over 85% of Yemen liberated: Hadi," March 3, 2016



Since the liberation of the port city of Mukalla in April 2016, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) does not control cities in Yemen.

Yemeni soldier patrolling a street in Mukalla, May 2016

06

## AQAP and Daesh in Yemen

Both Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Daesh have been able to exploit the political and security vacuum left by the civil war in Yemen to expand their presence and influence in the country. Saudi Arabia and its military allies have undertaken a campaign to combat and dismantle the dangerous terrorist organizations throughout Yemen. While the rise of terrorism in parts of Yemen has been rapid, Saudi Arabia and the legitimate Yemeni government have forced dangerous terrorist cells to retreat from key coastal cities of Mukalla, Aden and others.

### **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula**

Al-Qaeda has deep roots inside Yemen. Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri's men first began to lay the groundwork for Al-Qaeda's organization inside Yemen in the early 1990s. Several different terrorist organizations, including the Army of Aden Abyan and Al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY), both considered predecessors of AQAP, have been able to take advantage of decades of political instability in the country to become serious terrorist threats to both Saudi Arabia and Western countries.

AQY and its affiliates made terrorism against Western countries a top priority and successfully carried out several attacks against Western targets, including the bombing of the USS Cole in October 2000 that killed 17 U.S. service members. After the Al-Qaeda-orchestrated attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. became more involved in countering the terrorism in Yemen by deploying special forces on the ground and executing drone strikes targeted at Al-Qaeda leadership. These counterterrorism campaigns were successful in weakening the organizations and diminishing the groups' members, however, several groups were able to exploit the lack of consistent pressure to form AQAP in the late 2000s.

After forming AQAP, the group quickly became one of the world's most-dangerous terrorist organizations. The group was formally designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department in January 2010. Over the past decade, the group has been responsible

for some of the most-notable terrorist attacks in the region and throughout the world. AQAP inspired or orchestrated the January 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, the failed bombing on a Detroit-bound plane in December 2009, and attacks on the U.S., Italian and British embassies in Yemen. In 2009, an AQAP suicide bomber attempted to assassinate Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, then serving as deputy interior minister, in Jeddah.

Saudi Arabia has been an international force in combatting the rise of terrorism in the Middle East, including AQAP in Yemen. For example, Saudi intelligence was crucial in foiling a 2010 AQAP plot to detonate a bomb lodged in a printer on a Chicago-bound cargo plane. Today, Saudi Arabia, along with the military coalition in Yemen and Western allies, are focused on defeating AQAP and determined to prevent Yemen from being a safe haven for terrorists.

The expansionist goals and tactics of the Houthis militias in Yemen have been a boon for AQAP recruitment efforts. Since the Houthis overthrew President Hadi, AQAP terrorists have expanded their presence in the country, specifically the southern and eastern regions. AQAP was able to take advantage of the security vacuum in the country and establish bases across a large stretch of Yemen's southern coast.

In April 2015, AQAP fighters attacked the port city of Mukalla and were able to seize control of the city's key buildings and infrastructure. AQAP fighters in Mukalla stormed a prison during the attack, reportedly freeing approximately 300 imprisoned terrorists. The practice of freeing inmates has become a regular tactic for AQAP since the Houthis consolidated power.

A few weeks after AQAP gained control of Mukalla, the Yemeni armed forces, in collaboration with Saudi and Emirati special forces, conducted a multi-faceted attack on AQAP in Mukalla in order to retake the city. The campaign, which included airstrikes and ground forces, was successful in driving AQAP from the city and is estimated to have killed up to 800 terrorist fighters.<sup>9</sup> Since the liberation of Mukalla in April 2016, Al Qaeda in the Arabia Peninsula does not control cities in Yemen.

## Daesh

In November 2014, after AQAP was weakened by the counterterrorism campaign led by Saudi Arabia and its allies, Daesh established a foothold in Yemen and formally announced a branch in the country. As of 2015, at least eight sub-groups have operated under the banner of Daesh in Yemen, though the activity of each geographic cell is

inconsistent across the country. Daesh in Yemen has made opposition to both Saudi Arabia and Houthi militias a large part of its ideology. In response to the progressive loss of AQAP forces in U.S. airstrikes, Daesh fighters presented itself as an alternative to attract a new cadre of followers, some of whom defected from AQAP. Through 2016, analysts estimated that Daesh in Yemen had hundreds of followers.

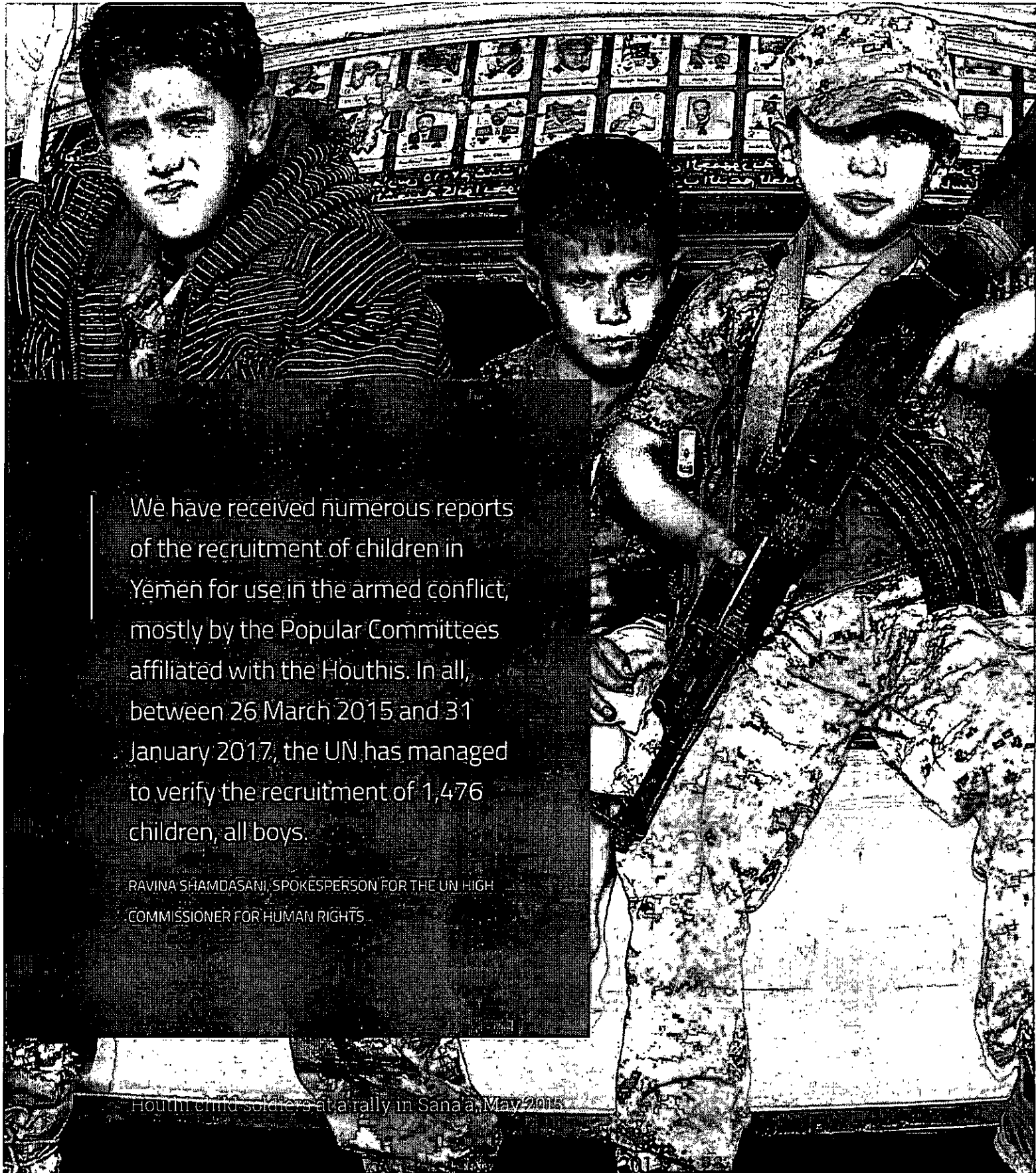
The group gained international attention in March 2015 with the execution of its first attack in Yemen. Daesh claimed responsibility for two suicide bombings on mosques in Sana'a. The attacks, which killed 137 and wounded 357, marked the beginning of an ongoing series of executions and bombings targeting mosques, Houthi headquarters, and Yemeni army bases.

Daesh has played an increasingly antagonistic role in Yemen's civil war. The group has exploited instability and the country's power vacuum to wage war against the legitimate Yemeni government. In October 2015, Daesh launched its first attack against Yemeni government installations through coordinated suicide bombings in Aden, targeting Yemeni forces under President Hadi and the Saudi-led military coalition. In December 2015, Daesh called for attacks against Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the Kingdom's participation in the 68-member Global Coalition Against Daesh and conducting airstrikes against Daesh targets in Syria. Daesh has directly targeted coalition forces in revenge for their coordinated efforts to degrade the terror group's operational bases in Syria. In particular, Daesh fighters have placed Saudi forces in their crosshairs as the coalition has successfully liberated areas of Yemen from Houthi and AQAP control.

The expansion of military coordination between the Saudi-led coalition and Yemeni government forces has prompted an uptick in violent terror from Daesh-affiliate militants. As Saudi Arabia has increased its support to the Yemen air campaign, forces allied with the legitimate government have faced targeted attacks on their security installations. In August 2016, Daesh forces carried out a suicide car bomb attack in northern Aden, killing over 70 Yemeni army recruits. In December 2016, Daesh claimed responsibility for the death of 35 Yemeni soldiers at a military camp in Aden. As the Coalition forces continue to regain control over Yemeni territory, the long-term viability of Daesh is under significant threat.

---

9 Statement by General Asiri, Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, April 25, 2016



We have received numerous reports of the recruitment of children in Yemen for use in the armed conflict, mostly by the Popular Committees affiliated with the Houthis. In all, between 26 March 2015 and 31 January 2017, the UN has managed to verify the recruitment of 1,476 children, all boys.

RAVINA SHAMDASANI, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Houthi child soldiers at a rally in Sana'a, May 2015



07

---

## Houthi Violations

In addition to violating UN resolutions, the Houthis have committed many other serious acts, including:

On October 1, missiles from Yemen struck HSV Swift, a UAE civilian logistics ship carrying humanitarian aid while it transited the Bab al Mandab strait. The ship was transiting the Red Sea near the port of Mokha. Houthi-Saleh forces are believed to have used Chinese-built C-802s in the attack. The UN Security Council condemned the attack, saying that "Members take threats to shipping around Bab al Mandab, a strategically important shipping passage, extremely seriously."

On October 7, a Houthi ballistic missile was fired at the Saudi city of Khamis Mushait;

On October 9, a ballistic missile landed near the Saudi summer capital of Taif, near Makkah;

Another missile was launched at the ancient Yemeni city of Marib on October 9, on the same day two missiles were fired at U.S. Navy ships in the Bab al-Mandab and deflected by defensive systems.

On October 27, the coalition intercepted and destroyed missiles that were targeting Makkah, one of Islam's most sacred sites.

A 105-page, declassified report to the United Nations Security Council published in August 2016, documented violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights committed by the Houthi-Saleh forces. The report on the implementation of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on Saleh and four Houthi leaders was submitted to the 15-member Security Council Sanctions

Committee, which had imposed an arms embargo on those rebels and soldiers loyal to Saleh. Resolution 2216 of April 14, 2015 demanded that the Houthis withdraw from all seized areas and that they relinquish all seized arms. It also established an arms embargo on the Houthis and on forces loyal to former president Saleh.

The UN report, in addition to other reports of late 2016, details the following such violations by the Houthi rebels:

The concealment of fighters and equipment in or close to civilians in Mokha in the Taiz governorate "with the deliberate aim of avoiding attack" and in violation of international humanitarian law;

The diversion of approximately \$100 million a month from Yemen's central bank to support the group's war effort and that the foreign reserves of the central bank had dropped to \$1.3 billion in June 2016 from \$4.6 billion in November 2014;<sup>10</sup>

The recruitment of children, and for the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals;<sup>11</sup>

The usage of fishing vessels for alleged weapons' transfers, as described by the 2410 Committee of the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM). This latter body was established in May 2016 to facilitate the flow of commercial goods into Yemen, while ensuring compliance with the targeted arms embargo set up in Resolution 2216. This Committee received accounts from member states of such fishing vessels that were intercepted while transferring arms, believed to be for the Houthis.

---

10 Please see the following list of reports on the conflict in Yemen and Houthi violations at the UN Security Council publications site at: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>

11 Reuters, "Exclusive: UN Report on Yemen Says Houthis Used Human Shields, Islamic State Got Cash," August 4, 2016

# By the Numbers

BETWEEN MARCH 2015 AND JANUARY 2017

Projectiles (missiles and mortar rounds), including more than 40 ballistic missiles, launched into Saudi territory by the Houthis.

55,138

Civilians in Saudi Arabia killed by the Houthis.

80

Civilians in Saudi Arabia injured by the Houthis.

630

Civilian locations in Saudi Arabia, including homes, mosques and schools, impacted by Houthi attacks.

2,724

Saudi relief worker from the King Salman  
Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center

(KS RELIEF)  
تowards an Unrestricted Humanity

Saudi humanitarian assistance  
funded 124 projects totaling  
\$347 million — offering food,  
shelter, health and education to  
the people of Yemen.

08

---

# Humanitarian Aid to the People of Yemen

The Coalition and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continue to make the protection of civilians the priority in its efforts to restore safety and stability to Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has been the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, providing more than \$847 million in humanitarian assistance. In April 2015, in response to an appeal by the United Nations Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz ordered the donation of \$274 million to the UN to support its humanitarian efforts in Yemen. In May 2015, the Kingdom established the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) to more effectively deliver aid to the people of Yemen. The Kingdom then donated an additional \$267 million.

KSRelief is providing aid to all areas of Yemen, including areas controlled by Houthi militias. In fact, 70 percent of all humanitarian aid to Yemen arrives through the Port of Hodeidah. The city of Hodeidah is one of the major population concentrations under Houthi control and at very high risk of famine.

KSRelief, cooperates with a number of international humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, the UN, and Doctors Without Borders, to facilitate their efforts in Yemen.

KSRelief is also working closely with the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in training 3,153 health workers on the social management of acute malnutrition and opened 854 centers for therapeutic nutrition program. The program also provided medical treatment and follow up cases of acute malnutrition. KSRelief mobile health teams have treated over a quarter of a million children suffering from

acute malnutrition and provided immunization and postnatal care to over 1.2 million children throughout Yemen. The teams also provided services for pregnant women and post-delivery care for over 220,000 women.

KSR relief has also provided funding to the World Health Organization to assist with the organization's life-saving health care services in Yemen. As of May 2016, funding from KSR relief has allowed WHO to deploy 14 mobile teams to five governorates in Yemen. Additionally, WHO has sent several health facility teams to Yemen, including seven surgical teams, to provide trauma care in the governorates of Aden, Abyan, Hajjah, Sada'a and Amran. Funding from KSR relief have allowed the WHO to provide life-saving medicines and supplies to hospitals serving more than 2 million patients.

Since its establishment, KSR relief has been an active force for providing aid to the people of Yemen.

In March 2017, KSR relief sent 58 trucks carrying medical supplies and equipment to a number of provinces in Yemen. Of these, 11 trucks delivered supplies to Republic Hospital in Aden and six trucks to Mareb Hospital. KSR relief has entered into a number of agreements with private hospitals in Aden and Taiz aimed at providing full medical care for more than 750 wounded in these provinces. KSR relief seeks to activate the role of government hospitals to treat the injured inside Yemeni territories by providing medical services and treatment devices.

KSR relief has launched 51 projects in health, nutrition, water and environmental sanitation in Yemen totaling more than \$208 million and benefiting 24.5 million Yemeni citizens, in addition to programs providing medical care and treatment for people inside Yemeni territory.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), KSR relief provided basic services such as diabetes and cancer medicines, and support the operation of emergency rooms by providing 350,000 gallons of fuel to 88 hospitals and 19 health facilities in Yemen. KSR relief has provided more than 12 million vaccines, to date, for Yemeni children against measles, rubella, tetanus and whooping cough.

In January 2017, KSR relief distributed 300,000 food baskets in the Hodeidah Province of Yemen. The baskets are expected to benefit more than 460,000 Yemenis in need.

## Humanitarian Assistance in Yemen

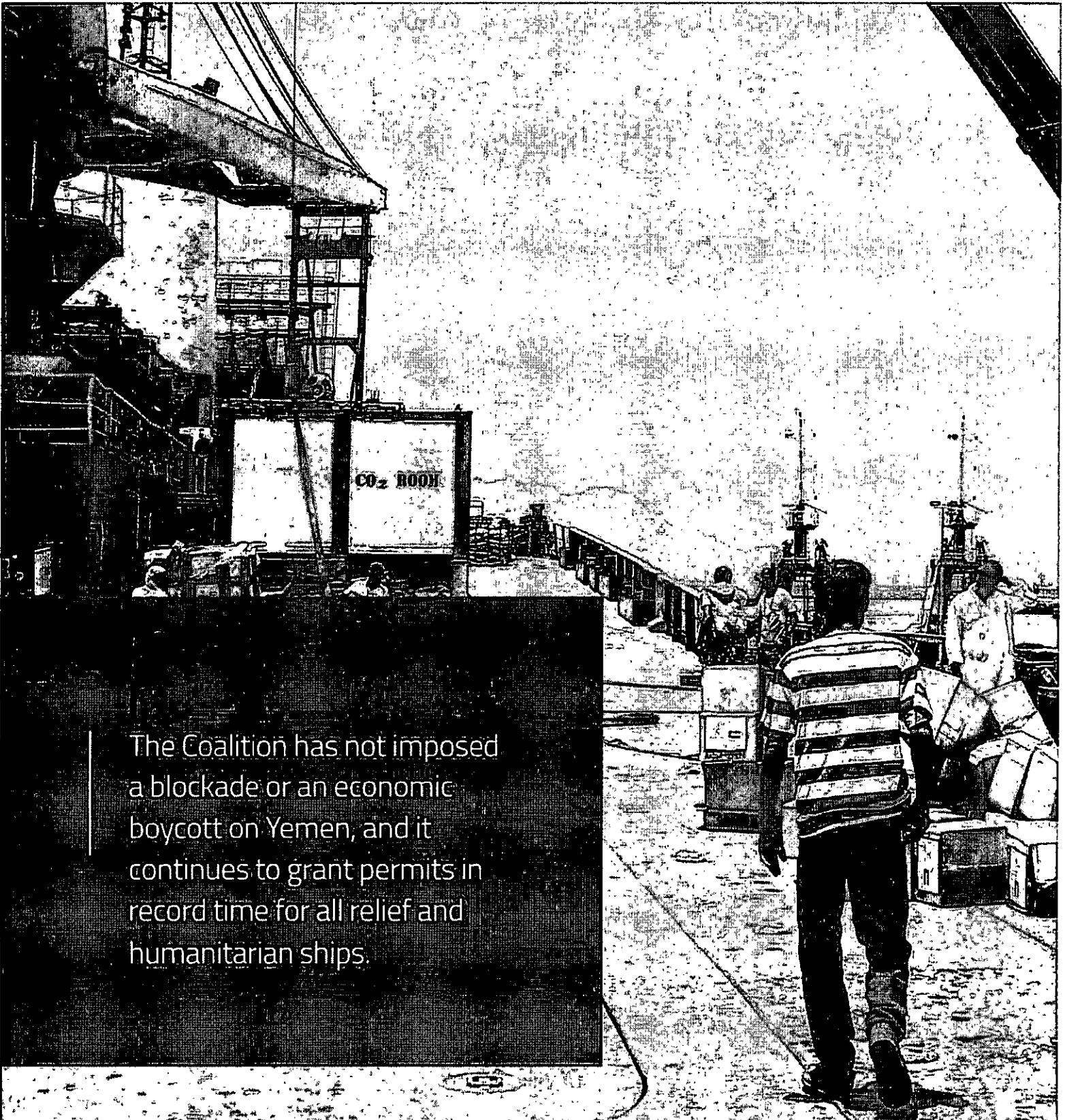
- Saudi Arabian remains by far the largest donor of aid to Yemen.
- \$847 million in humanitarian assistance through King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center.
- Legal residency inside the Kingdom to 600,000 Yemeni refugees fleeing the civil war.
- 12 million vaccines for Yemeni children.



In July 2016, KSRelief distributed more than 900 tons of medicine and medical supplies as part of its continuing support of health care services in Yemen.

In another major humanitarian effort, Saudi Arabia has allowed Yemenis who fled the civil war and entered the Kingdom illegally to adjust their status and become legal residents. This initiative has enabled more than 600,000 Yemenis to obtain medical care, education, and jobs.

The U.S. and the U.K. also helped form the Friends of Yemen Group, a multilateral forum of 31 concerned countries that was launched at a January 2010 conference in London in order to raise funds for Yemen's development and increase donor coordination.



The Coalition has not imposed a blockade or an economic boycott on Yemen, and it continues to grant permits in record time for all relief and humanitarian ships.

Humanitarian aid from the United Arab Emirates at the Port of Aden, May 2015



09

## Blockade Accusations

The obstruction of the flow of commercial and humanitarian shipments in Yemen is confined to ports in areas controlled by Houthi militias and forces loyal to former President Saleh. These parties have deliberately obstructed the entry of shipments in order to deepen the humanitarian crisis and arouse international public opinion against the Coalition.

In order to ensure that maritime commerce to Yemen complies with the UN Security Council arms embargo, the Government of Yemen authorized the creation of the the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) on May 2, 2016. Based in Djibouti, UNVIM provides fast and impartial clearance services for shipping companies transporting commercial imports and bilateral assistance to Yemeni ports outside of the authority of the Government of Yemen. Ships bound for Yemen are cleared expeditiously. For example, in March 2017, the most recent month for which data is available, 34 certificates of clearance were issued expeditiously. These ships transported 636,810 metric tons of cargo to Yemeni ports, including 254,690 metric tons of food.<sup>12</sup>

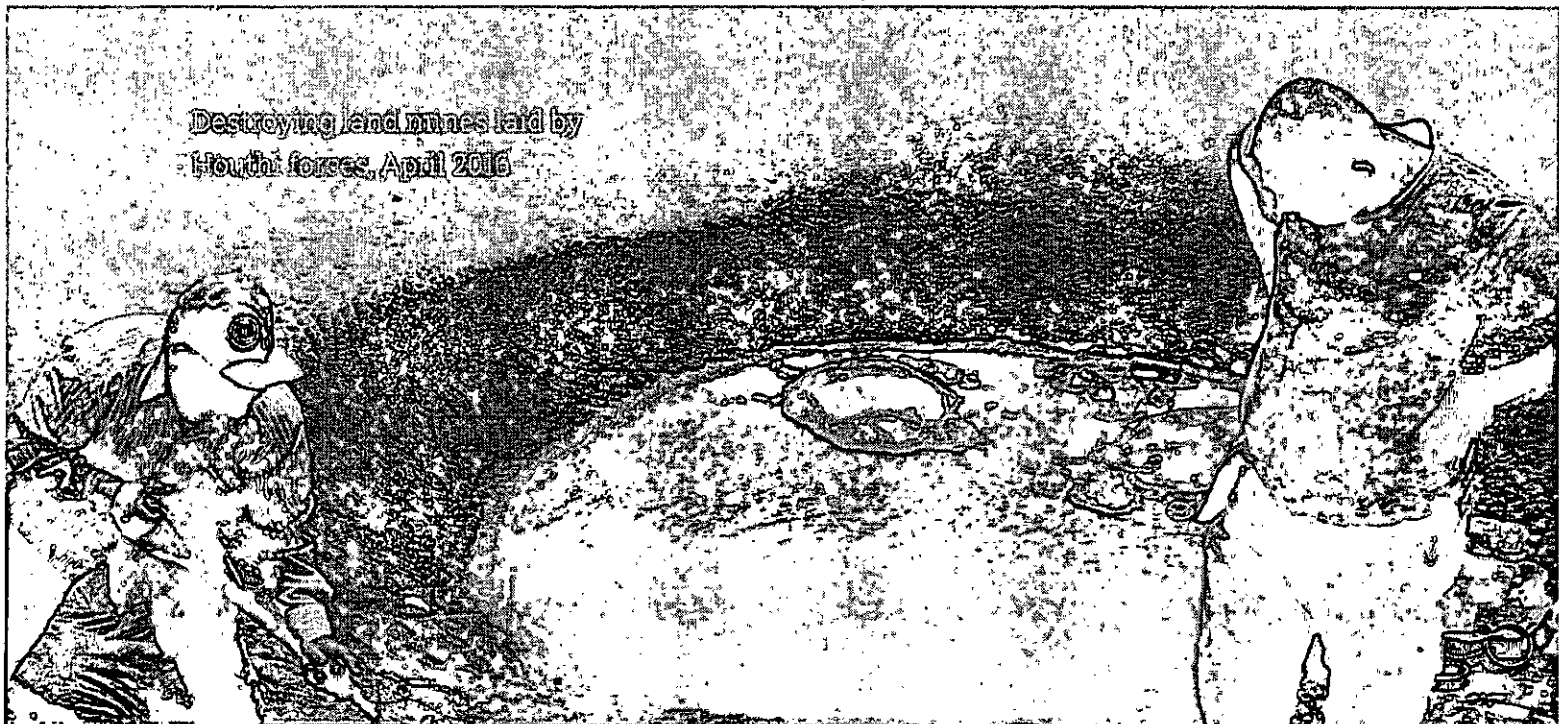
In addition to hindering humanitarian and trade shipments, Houthi militias and forces loyal to former President Saleh have exploited their control over Yemeni ports, including the Port of Hodeidah, by engaging in smuggling activities. This has created a black market for petroleum, goods, and humanitarian supplies. Houthi militias have used the proceeds to finance their operations and raise the profile of their leaders. They have similarly used their control of ports as a political bargaining chip by imposing sieges and starvation on provinces and cities.

The Coalition has not imposed a blockade or an economic boycott on Yemen, and it continues to grant immediate and periodic permits in a record time for all relief and humanitarian ships. In the case of commercial ships, the UNVIM, in cooperation with the Coalition and the legitimate government of Yemen, issues permits on a neutral basis to ships entering all Yemeni ports.

---

12 UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen: Statement by the Secretary-General, May 3, 2016. Operational Snapshot: March 2017. Available online at <https://www.unvym.org/media>

Destroying land mines laid by  
Houthi forces, April 2016



The Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT), tasked with assessing claims of violations and accidents as a result of the Coalition's military operations in Yemen, continues to display a strong commitment to independent investigations by releasing its findings to the public.



## 10

---

# Steps to Reduce Civilian Casualties

## **Safeguard Civilians**

The Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen is committed to protecting civilians in Yemen and has taken steps to avoid casualties in an ongoing war zone. Among these steps, the Coalition launched an independent assessment team, fostered active partnerships with relief organizations and focused on safeguarding Yemen's urban centers as part of a concerted effort to protect civilians and uphold international humanitarian law.

Saudi Arabia established an independent Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) and tasked it with assessing claims of violence against civilians by Coalition forces, including violations and accidental fire incidents. The Coalition's JIAT is composed of military members, weapons experts and legal specialists in the laws of war. The independent group reviews reports of Coalition activities that are known to have led to civilian casualties, and offers recommendations for ways to avoid future incidents.

One of the JIAT recommendations adopted by the Coalition is the policy to issue repeated warnings to Houthi militias and Saleh forces so that they can evacuate cities prior to a Coalition air strike. The Coalition also has heightened its emphasis on safeguarding critical infrastructure and, as a result, civilian lives in Yemen's urban centers.

The Coalition is working alongside UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross as part of a collaborative approach to minimize the possibility of harm to civilians, medical personnel, journalists and relief organizations.

## **JIAT Findings**

### **GREAT HALL INCIDENT**

With respect to the unfortunate Great Hall incident in Sana'a on October 8, 2016, the Coalition expressed its deepest condolences and support to the victims' families, and for all those affected by violence in Yemen. After conducting immediate investigations, the JIAT concluded that a party affiliated to the Yemeni Presidency of the General Chief of Staff passed inaccurate information that there was a gathering of armed Houthis leaders in a known location in Sana'a, and insisted that the location be targeted immediately as a legitimate military target.

The JIAT found that because of non-compliance with Coalition Rules of Engagement and Procedures (ROEs), and the release of inaccurate information, a Coalition aircraft wrongly targeted the location, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries.

The Coalition, tasked with supporting the legitimate government of Yemen, has publicly affirmed that it accepts the results of the investigations conducted by the JIAT and is committed to implementing its recommendations.

### **ABS HOSPITAL**

In response to the alleged bombing carried out by the coalition forces on Abs Hospital in the Yemeni city of Abs in the province of Hjjah on August 8, 2016, which resulted in killing seven people and injuring 13 others, the official spokesperson for the JIAT confirmed that the Coalition was unaware of the presence of the hospital that was inadvertently struck.

Intelligence reports confirmed that Houthi militia leaders were gathered in the northern part of the city of Abs. The Coalition forces then targeted the location of that gathering. As a result, air forces monitored a moving vehicle from the targeted site heading southwards, pursued and shelled it immediately. The vehicle was next to the building that had no signs of a hospital before the bombing. It was later proved to be Abs Hospital.

### **KHALEQ MARKET**

On February 28, 2016, the UN Secretary General strongly condemned the airstrike in Nahem District in Sana'a on February 27 that killed at least 32 civilians and injured at least 41. The Joint Incidents Assessment Team found after reviewing

the facts that one of the Coalition's warplanes was on a humanitarian mission close to the Popular Resistance and the army loyal to the legitimate government. It observed two heavily armed transport vehicles and armed Houthi militia stopped near a small market beside some small buildings and canvas tents on a road linking the Directorate of Naham with Sana'a. These transport vehicles and Houthi militia were considered to be high-value military targets and a laser-guided missile was deployed.

#### **ASMAA SCHOOL, HODEIDAH**

Refuting allegations by the Amnesty International that Asmaa school, located in the city of Al-Mansouriya in the Yemeni province of Hodeidah was subject to air shelling on August 24, 2015, JIAT spokesperson Al-Mansour said that the site was targeted based on surveillance information showing armed Houthi militias were using it as a headquarters, storage facility and distribution post for weapons smuggled through the Hodeidah port. The site was classified as a military target of high value.

Based on the laws of war, the legal protections of civilian sites are dropped when that site is being used for a military purpose. Considering this fact, as well as the fact that students had vacated the school for some time, the Coalition forces targeted the site. The investigation showed that no human life was lost and the building only sustained partial damage (less than 25 percent.) The Joint Incidents Assessment Team reached the conclusion that the procedures followed by the Coalition forces targeting the site were correct.

#### **MOKHA COMPLEX**

Human Rights Watch alleged on July 27, 2015 that the Coalition forces bombed a compound in the Directorate of Mokha, Taiz governorate three days earlier, resulting in the deaths of 65 civilians. The Joint Incidents Assessment Team found, after reviewing the intelligence information, that there were four targets in the areas controlled by the Houthi militia and forces of the former President Saleh. These included coastal defense missile batteries, which pose an immediate danger to ships and the Coalition's naval forces in the Red Sea.

It was later found that a residential compound was erroneously targeted due to inaccurate information from the intelligence source. The Joint Incidents Assessment Team informed the Coalition forces about these findings, and the coalition has expressed its deep regret at this unintentional error. Coalition forces



## Foreign Minister Adel Bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir

CHATHAM HOUSE | SEPTEMBER 7, 2016

"There is a fault with how information is gathered in Yemen, which is not accurate. People say this is a school. Well, it may have been a school a year ago, but was not a school when it was bombed, and then they say the Coalition hit a school, not true.

People accuse us — the Coalition — of bombing a wedding party in which 120 people died. We had no planes the day of the wedding, or the day after the wedding. But I do not see anyone retracting the charges.

We were accused of bombing the old city of Sana'a, common heritage of mankind, when we had no fliers anywhere near the old city."

are committed to observing the rules laid down in international conventions of humanitarian law. In particular, the Coalition maintains its commitment not to target civilians during military operations and to take all measures to preserve their safety. The Coalition confirmed its readiness to make financial reparation to the victims' families in accordance with international law once the supporting documentation has been submitted to the Reparation Commission.

### **HAYDAN HOSPITAL**

According to the claims of Doctors Without Borders, the Haydan Hospital in Saa'da Province was bombed by the Coalition forces. The Joint Team found after reviewing the facts that the Coalition forces had accurate intelligence information that there

was a military gathering of Houthi militia in the Directorate of Haydan. A warplane was ordered to strike the military gathering. After verification of the incident from the Joint Incidents Assessment Team, it became clear that the building was a medical facility that the armed Houthi militia was using as a military shelter in contravention of international law [under Article 52, Paragraph 2, Annex Protocol I]. This fact made it a legitimate target after coalition forces warned the persons in charge under Article 19 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The team has confirmed that Coalition forces were unable to warn Doctors Without Borders because of the immediate threat posed by the armed Houthi militia using the medical facility located on the borders of the Kingdom. Although the Coalition bombed the installations as a military target, it acknowledges that it should have warned Doctors Without Borders that they would lose international protection before carrying out the air strike. However, the Houthi militia had already fled the building, which was empty—there were no medical staff and no patients at the facility. There were no casualties.

#### **MOBILE CLINIC OF DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS, TAIZ**

The Joint Incidents Assessment Team found that Coalition forces targeted hostile militant gatherings at the request of Yemeni forces loyal to the legitimate government and local popular resistance forces in Directorate of Hoban, Taiz Province. This was considered a high-priority target whose destruction would deliver military advantage.

The tent of the Doctors Without Borders organization was not bombed, but was affected by these bombings due to its proximity to the target. There were no civilian casualties. Coalition forces expressed its regrets about this unintentional error.

The Joint Incidents Assessment Team established that the clinic was not a direct target and concluded that Doctors Without Borders should have set up its facility away from military targets in order to avoid the risk of casualties. JIAT also established that the Coalition coordinates with the humanitarian organizations and works with them to assist with their humanitarian missions. JIAT is satisfied that all safety procedures implemented by Coalition forces were observed and that they adhered to international law.

# Appendix

---

## Main Actors in the Yemen Crisis

### 2011 - Present

#### **President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour al Hadi**

President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour al Hadi is a former military officer, having served in the Yemen armed forces as a field marshal.

Hadi's rise as President of Yemen began with his role as Acting President between June 4 and September 23, 2011 following the attacks on the Presidential Palace in Sana'a in the wake of the 'Arab Spring' protests—a period referred to as the "2011 Yemeni Uprising"—in which then-President Saleh went to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. Hadi became Acting President again on November 23, 2011 after Saleh moved into a non-active role pending the results of the next presidential elections. Hadi was chosen as a president for a two-year transitional period on February 21, 2012.

In a September 2012 interview<sup>19</sup>, Hadi warned that his country, still reeling from the popular uprising that ousted Saleh, risked a descent into a civil war "worse than Afghanistan" should an upcoming months-long national dialogue fail to resolve the state's deep political and societal rifts. Hadi warned that Yemen was facing three separate enemies, which he believed were extremist terrorists Al Qaeda, pirates in the Gulf of Aden and Houthi rebel militias. He stated his strong belief that Iran was supporting these adversaries.

#### **Ali Abdullah Saleh al Sanhani al Humairi**

As of the early 2000s, the Houthis fought against the national government of former Yemeni President Saleh. This radically changed in May 2015, when Saleh confirmed his alliance with that group. Saleh is not Houthi, but is Zaydi and a part of the Sahan tribe of northern Yemen. Traditionally, the Houthis and/or 'Ansar Allah,' the political organization of the Houthis, distrusted Saleh and saw him as corrupt. These views



were not unfounded: In February 2015 a panel of UN experts released a report, alleging that, during his time in power, Saleh amassed a fortune worth between \$30 billion to \$62 billion.<sup>14</sup>

The background to his political career and that arc of development vis-à-vis the Houthis is as follows:

From 1978 to 1990 Saleh served as President of North Yemen until its unification with South Yemen in 1990. The South accepted Saleh as president of the newly unified country. A former soldier, he had participated in the 1962 coup against Yemeni King Mohammad al Badr which saw the establishment of the establishment of the Republic of Yemen that year.

From 2004, a sporadic civil war in the country has been underway with the security forces of the Yemen government battling "the Believing Youth" (Al-Shabab al Mumin), the pro-Zaydi Houthi-led movement based in the mountains west of Saa'da, the capital of Yemen's northwestern most province.

On February 2, 2011, facing a Tunisia-style, "Arab Spring" national uprising, Saleh announced that he would not seek re-election in 2013, but would serve out the remainder of his term. In response to government violence against unarmed protesters, 12 MPs of Saleh's party resigned on February 23. By March 5, this number had increased to 13, as well as the addition of two deputy ministers. On November 23, 2011, Saleh agreed to legally transfer the office and powers of the presidency to his deputy, Vice President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. On February 27, 2012, Saleh formally ceded power to Hadi and stepped down as the President of Yemen.

Since that time, Saleh has been a behind-the-scenes ally of the Houthi movement in Yemen. Tribesmen and government forces loyal to Saleh have joined the Houthis in their ambitions to take over the government. On July 28, 2016, Saleh and the Houthi rebels announced a formal alliance to the fight Saudi-led military coalition, to be run by a political council of 10 members—made up of five members from Saleh's General People's Congress, and five from the Houthis.

---

13 Blake Hounshell, 'Yemen's president warns of a civil war 'worse than Afghanistan'', Foreign Policy, September 29, 2012

14 BBC, 'Yemen ex-leader Saleh 'amassed up to \$60 billion' - UN probe' February 25, 2015

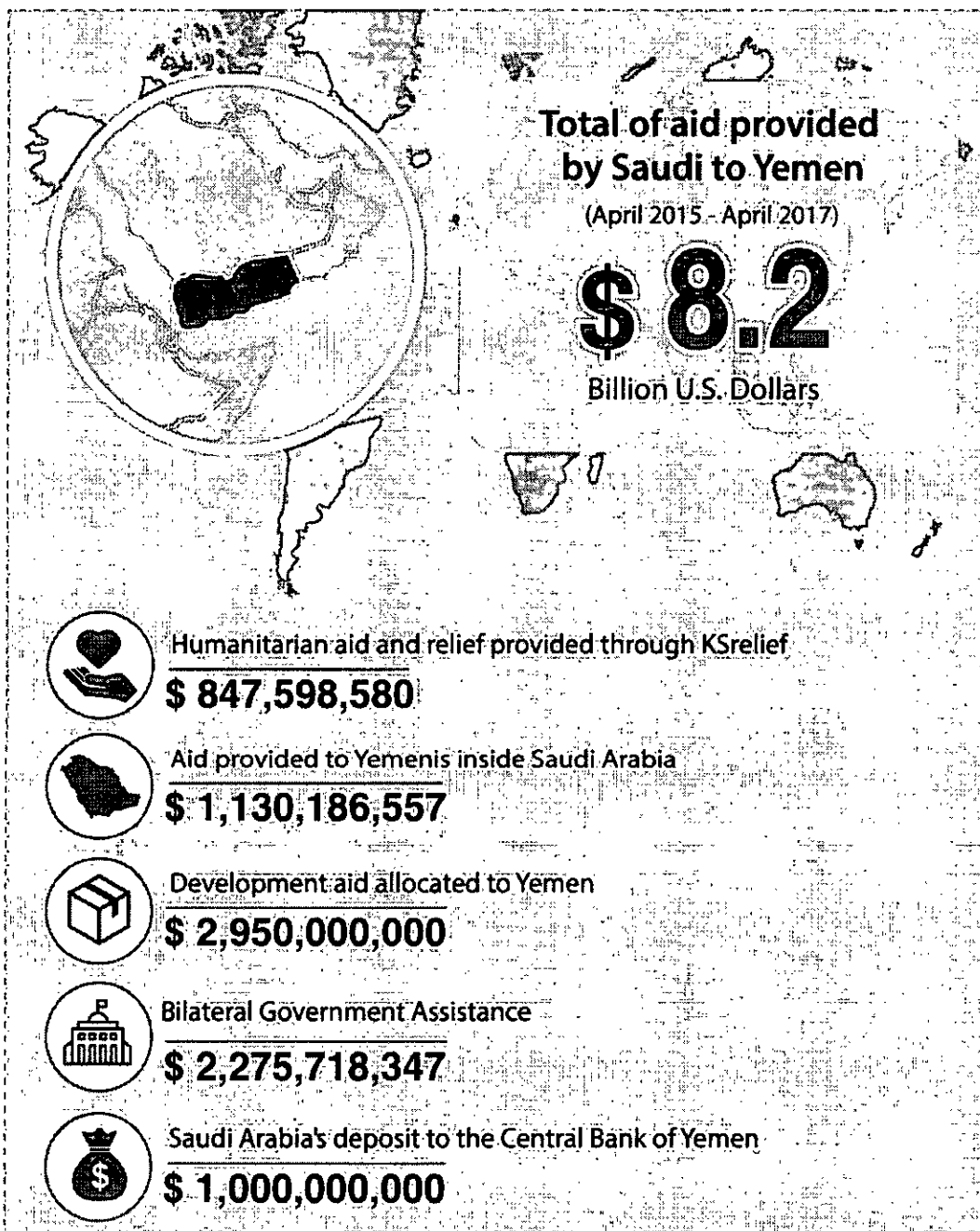
## The Houthis

Houthi is the name of an ancient and powerful Yemeni dynasty, in turn named after a town known as Houthi or "Huthi" that is located about halfway between Saa'da in the north and Yemen's capital Sana'a to the south. The al Houthi family is a "sayyid" family—that is, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and who played key theological and political roles in north Yemen. This family, and the political-rebel movement whose adherents collectively refer to themselves by "the Houthis," adhere to what is known "Zaidism" or "Zaydism"—the Zaidi school of jurisprudence which emerged in the 8th century as a moderate interpretation of the Shia branch of Islam. Approximately 35 to 40 percent of Muslims in Yemen adhere to Zaidism.

Zaydis ruled parts of Yemen for almost 1,000 years until 1962 and were even supported by Saudi Arabia in the 1970s. But then the Houthis, who emerged as a Zaidi revivalist movement in the 1990s, fought a series of wars between 2004 and 2010 against the Saudi-supported central Yemeni state led by then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

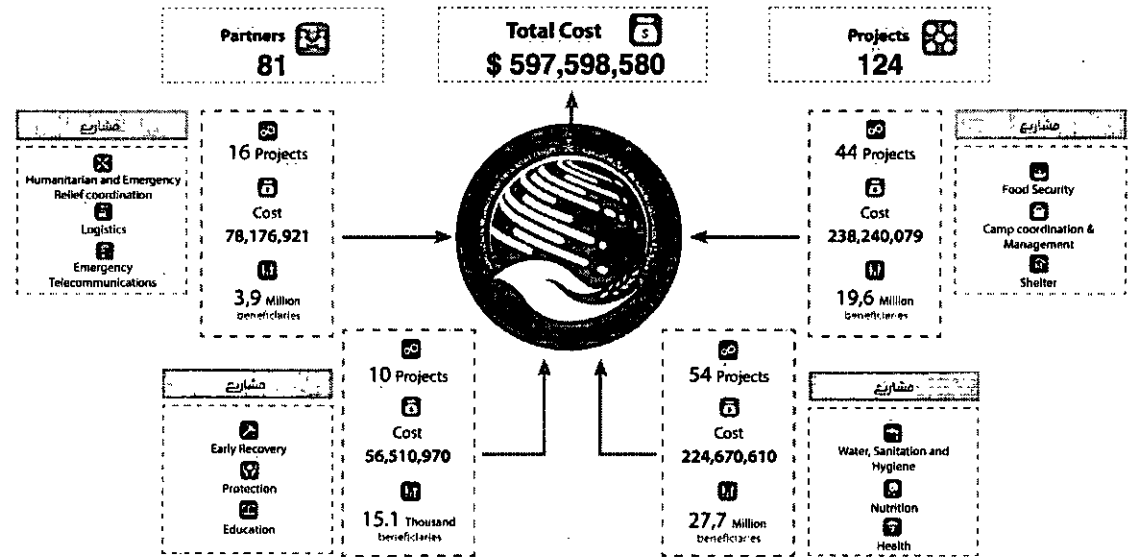
Leadership in the movement has rested in various al Houthi family relatives. At present, Abdul Malik Badreddin al Houthi is the leader. He leads this group with his brothers Yahia Badreddin al Houthi, Abdul Karim Badreddin al Houthi, and the late Hussein Badreddin al Houthi. Abdul Malik al Houthi is the leading figure in an insurgency in the Saa'da province in northern Yemen, which has been continuing from 2004 to the present day.

# Summary of Saudi Aid to Yemen

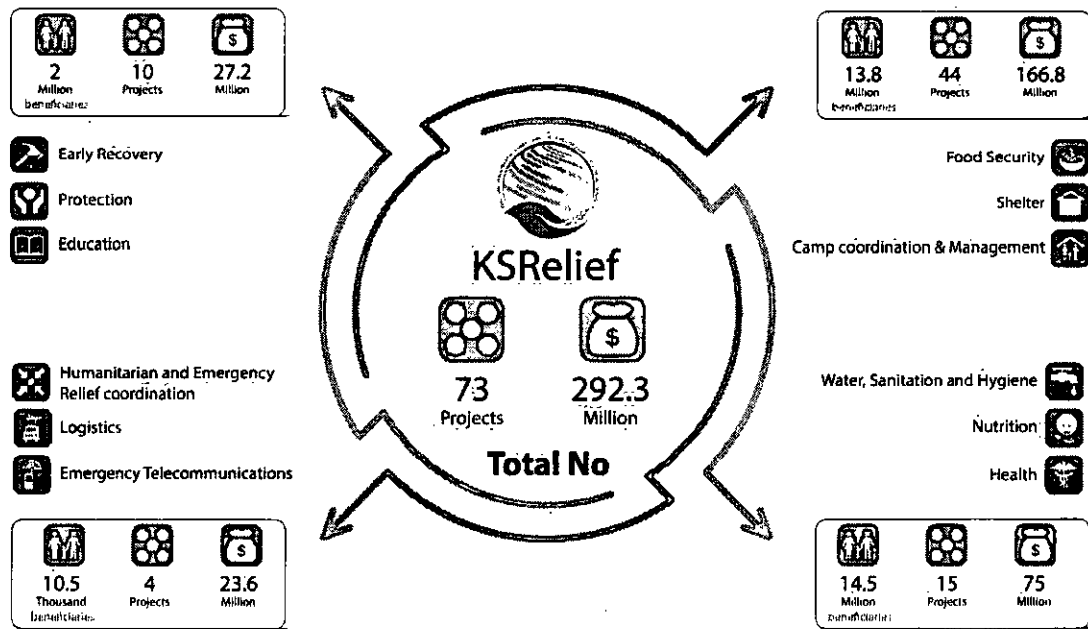




### KSRelief's Projects in Yemen



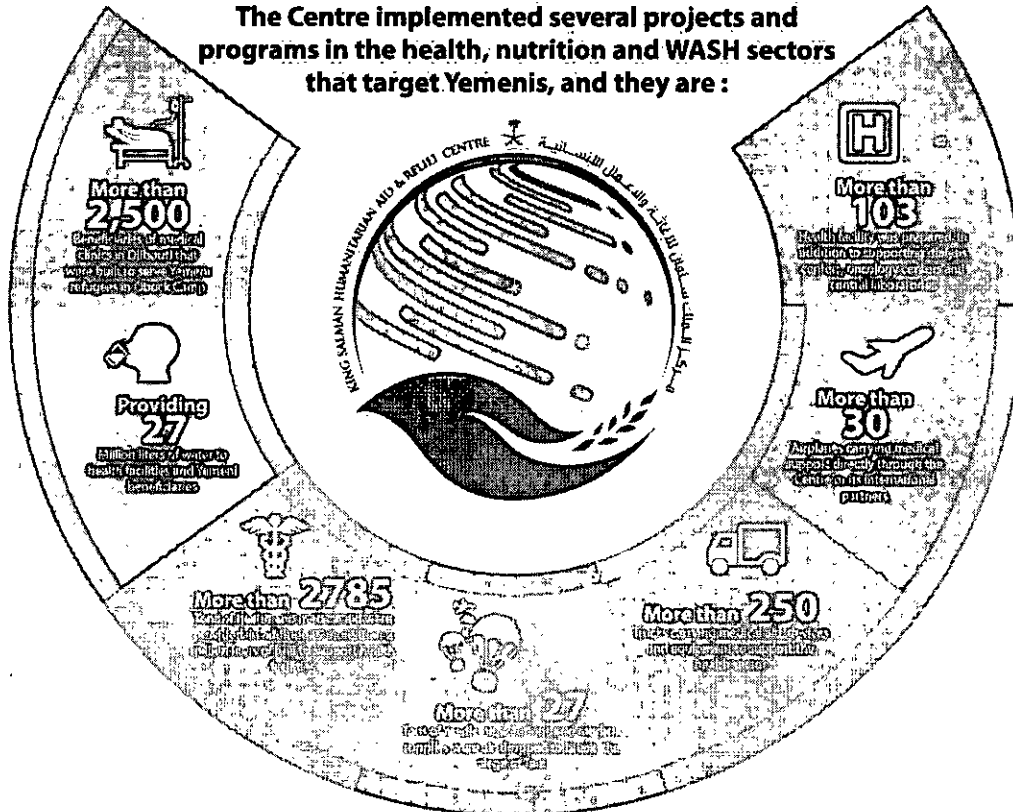
### KSRelief's Projects for women & children in Yemen



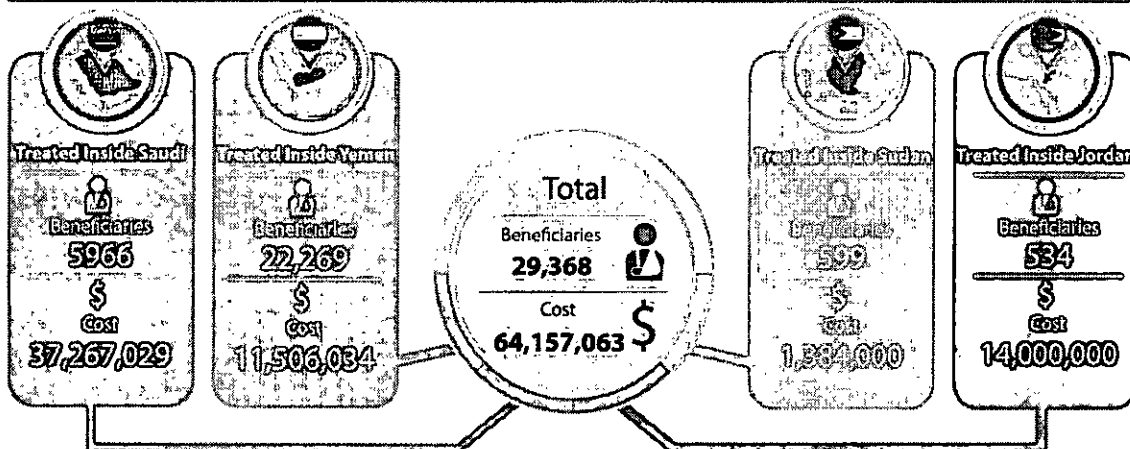


**Health Sector Projects in Yemen**

The Centre implemented several projects and programs in the health, nutrition and WASH sectors that target Yemenis, and they are :



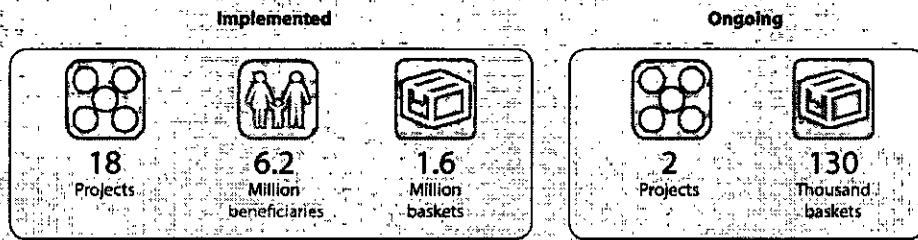
**Saudi's Aid to Wounded Yemenis**



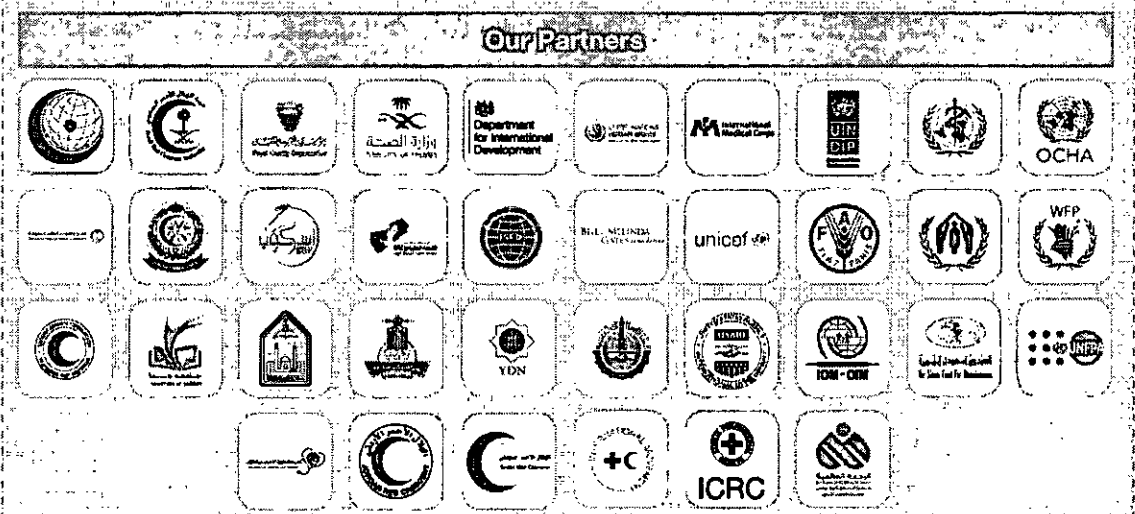
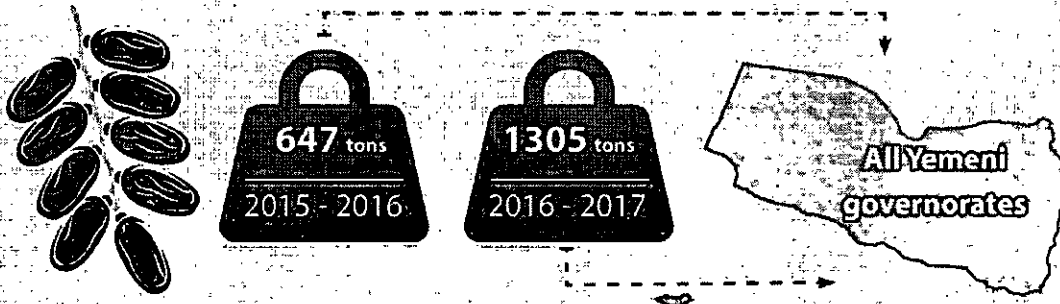


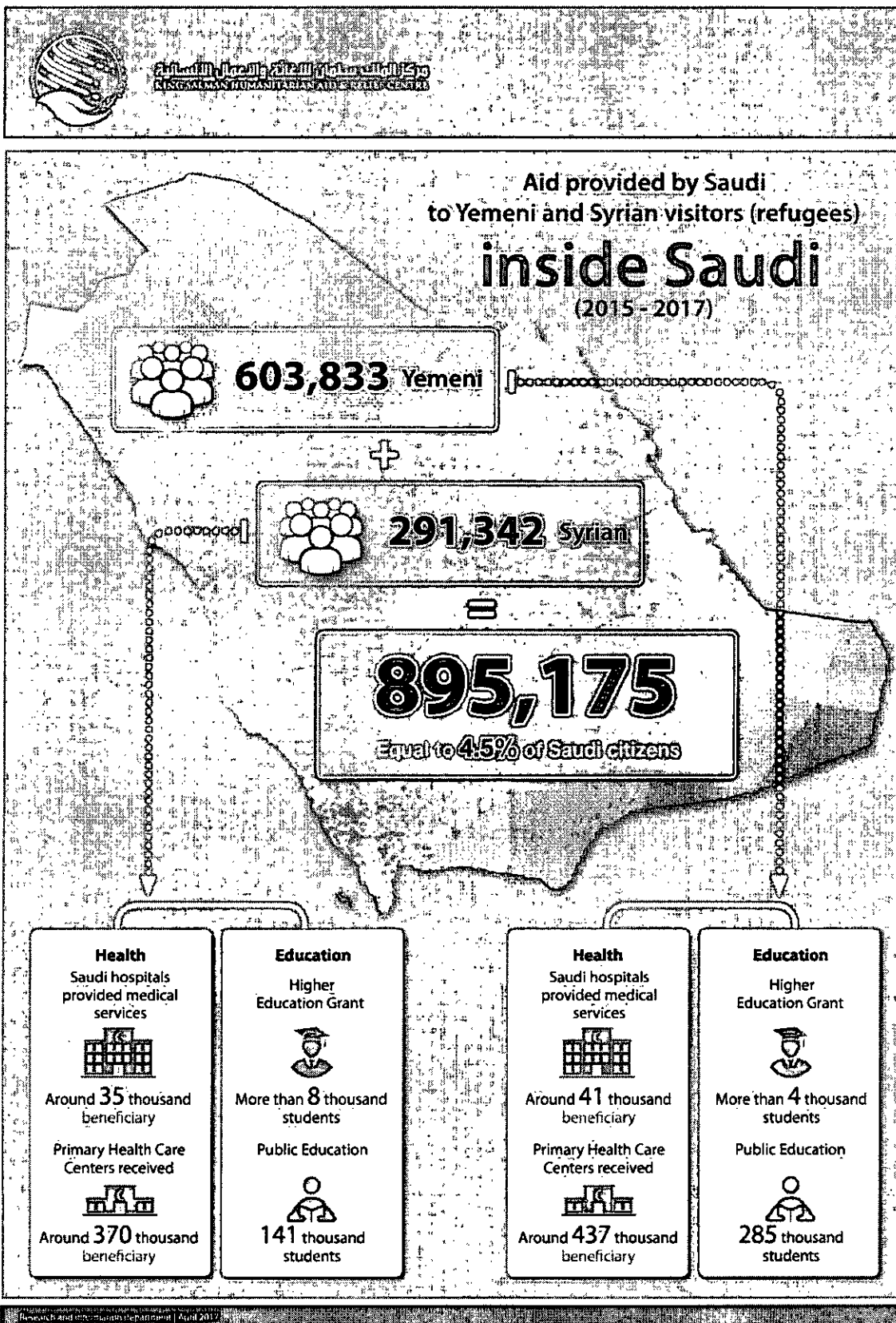
**Food Security Projects in Yemen**

**Implemented Food Baskets Projects**



**Dates Project**











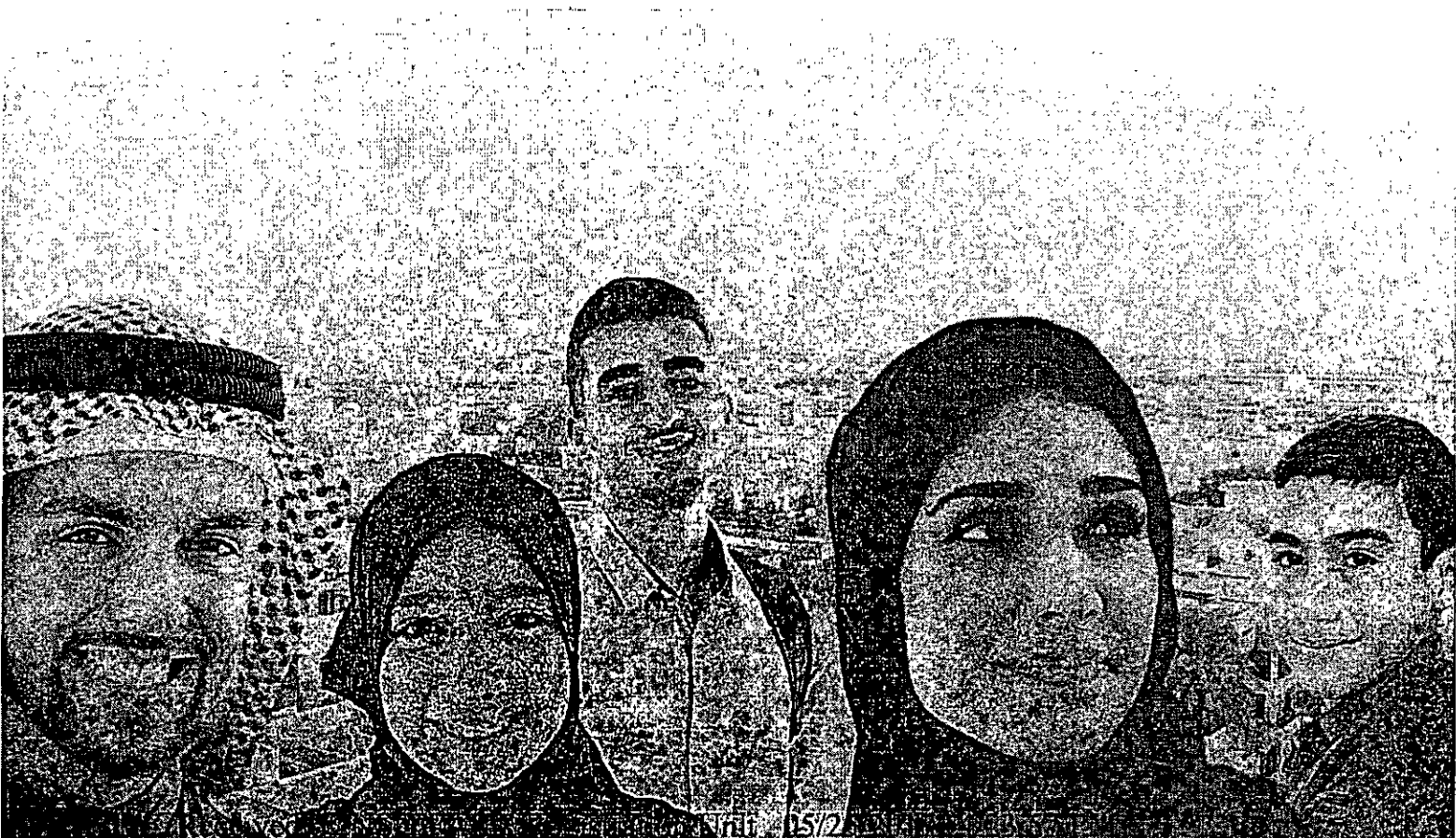


# SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

# POLITICAL, ECONOMIC & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MAY 2017 REPORT



These efforts will provide opportunity to all Saudi citizens – unlocking the talent, potential, and dedication of our young men and women.

# Contents

---

01	Executive Summary	5
02	A Legacy of Continuous Modernization	9
03	Vision 2030	13
04	Economic Development	25
05	Political Development	41
06	Cultural and Social Development	49
	Appendix	54

"My first objective is for our country to be a pioneering and successful global model of excellence, on all fronts, and I will work with you to achieve that"

CUSTODIAN OF THE TWO HOLY MOSQUES

KING SALMAN BIN ABDULAZIZ



01

---

# Executive Summary

The development of Saudi Arabia is not a recent phenomenon. It is a steady project of modernization, in which each generation builds on the progress of its antecedents. For decades, Saudi Arabia has made an effort to improve the lives of its citizens – using the wealth generated from the Kingdom’s natural resources to fund the social and economic development of the nation. Every measure of human development – life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy, per capita income, etc. – has improved dramatically in the span of a single generation.

Nevertheless, a new generation brings new challenges and opportunities – and a new impetus for development. In April 2016, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman unveiled Vision 2030, an ambitious program of development for the Kingdom. Vision 2030 seeks to build on Saudi Arabia’s strengths as an investment powerhouse situated in the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds, with strong geographic connections to Europe, Asia and Africa.

With respect to Vision 2030, the Deputy Crown Prince noted, “Our Vision is a strong, thriving, and stable Saudi Arabia that provides opportunity for all. Our Vision is a tolerant country with Islam as its constitution and moderation as its method. We will welcome qualified individuals from all over the world and will respect those who have come to join our journey and our success.”

Vision 2030 outlines 24 specific goals for the Kingdom to achieve in economic, political and societal development. Vision 2030 further articulates 18 commitments to achieve these goals – with specific initiatives in renewable energy, manufacturing, education, e-governance, entertainment and culture.

In the economic sector, regulations have been streamlined to encourage foreign investment. A renewed emphasis has been placed on small- and medium-sized enterprises. The Saudi education system is focused on closing the skills gap and training students for the job market. Vision 2030 has led to a major surge in international investment in the Kingdom. Investors have long viewed the Kingdom as an attractive place to conduct business due to the emergence of key opportunities for partnership in a number of industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. The economic growth associated with these initiatives has led to increased employment opportunities for Saudi women.

Foremost among these economic initiatives is the ambitious effort to transform Aramco from an oil producing company into a global industrial conglomerate. Partial privatization of Aramco will transform the Kingdom's Public Investment Fund into the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, which will invest in the world's leading technologies.

Political and governmental development is essential to building an ambitious nation. The responsibilities of governance have grown significantly since the Kingdom was founded. These responsibilities must continue to keep pace with the rising expectations of a new generation of citizens. The Kingdom has initiated a program of restructuring at all levels of government. Such initiatives are focused on building a government that is effective, transparent, and accountable. Furthermore, such a government is more inclusive, as more and more women become part of the project of governance.

At the heart of Vision 2030 is a society in which all enjoy a good quality of life, a healthy lifestyle, and expanded cultural opportunities. The initiatives currently underway also recognize the role of Saudi women in the economic, political and social development of the Kingdom. Over 50 percent of Saudi university graduates are women, and the Kingdom will continue to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy.

Development in Saudi Arabia is a continuous process. The initiatives now being enacted in Saudi Arabia are part of an ambitious long-term agenda, one that goes beyond replenishing sources of income that have weakened, or preserving what

the Kingdom has already achieved. These efforts will move the Kingdom beyond oil – creating a diversified economy that will not be subject to commodity price volatility. These efforts will provide opportunity to all Saudi citizens – unlocking the talent, potential, and dedication of our young men and women. These efforts will provide world-class government services which effectively and efficiently meet the needs of our citizens. Together, Saudi Arabia will continue building a better country. As Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stated at the unveiling of Vision 2030, “We have all the means to achieve our dreams and ambitions. There are no excuses for us to stand still or move backwards.”



**Kingdom Tower, Riyadh**

Development in Saudi Arabia is not a recent phenomenon. It is a steady project of modernization, in which each generation builds on the progress of its antecedents.

02

---

# A Legacy of Continuous Modernization

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has witnessed incredible transformation in the span of a single generation. The government has dedicated vast resources to enhance the wellbeing of the Saudi people. As a result of this strategic vision, quality of life indicators in health, education, and economic growth have shown rapid advancement that places Saudi Arabia in the highest category of human development according to metrics developed by the United Nations. This astounding progress has been lauded by international partners, whose engagement with Saudi Arabia has established the Kingdom as a wellspring of innovation and prosperity.

## Life Expectancy

The Saudi Arabian government recognizes that a flourishing nation depends on the health of its people. Officials have responded to the challenges of development by committing to build medical infrastructure that is unmatched in the region. Due to major improvements in healthcare, the life expectancy of the Saudi people has dramatically increased from 52.7 years in 1970 to 75.05 years in 2015. Over this 45-year period, the government prioritized the modernization of medicine and quality of physician training. The Saudi healthcare system has swiftly increased the number of hospitals and clinics by 9.5 percent in the last five years. Annually, the Ministry of Health organizes the construction of 150 new medical centers to serve the Saudi people, in line with its 10-year plan to offer nation-wide integrated healthcare.

In addition to caring for its own citizens and residents, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has gained prominence as an international leader in healthcare. Individuals seeking

specialized care regularly visit Saudi Arabia, where male and female doctors train as experts in the fields of surgery, psychotherapy, pharmacology, and anesthesiology. Cutting-edge research and treatment of heart and liver diseases have contributed to a national reputation of excellence in medicine.

### **Infant Mortality**

The government of Saudi Arabia has undertaken targeted campaigns to spread awareness of disease, promote healthy habits for child-bearing women, and supplement the care of infants. In 55 years, the infant mortality rate plummeted in Saudi Arabia as a result of far-reaching improvements in health practice. In 1960, there were 292 deaths per 1,000 live births in Saudi Arabia. By 2015, that number fell to 13 deaths per 1,000 live births.

New parents in Saudi Arabia are increasingly educated on the care of newborn children. Literacy campaigns on child nutrition have reduced common health complications. Without exception, families can have their children fully vaccinated throughout governmental programs that provide free and comprehensive healthcare to mothers and children. Saudi Arabia now boasts a low infant mortality rate that underscores governmental efforts to ensure that residents enjoy long and healthy lives.

### **Adult Literacy**

Few countries have undergone the spectacular rise in adult literacy that Saudi Arabia has experienced. Now considered a pioneer in global education, the Kingdom is a model of successful and inclusive educational strategy. In 1970, only 8 percent of the adult population of Saudi Arabia was literate. By 2014, over 94.4 percent of Saudi citizens were considered literate by United Nations standards.

The Saudi government developed literacy plans sensitive to each region's unique demographic and geographic characteristics. Officials recognized that a female young adult in the Northern Borders Region has different educational needs than her counterpart in the metropolitan Riyadh Region. By offering enhanced financial and

employment prospects, Ministry of Education personnel encouraged a significant enrollment increase in basic reading and writing classes.

### **Gross Domestic Product and Per Capita Income**

While many international observers have watched the fluctuations of the oil market with unease, Saudi Arabia has crafted economic strategies that have led to constant, unyielding growth. The IMF praised the Kingdom for playing "a key stabilizing role in the global oil market" by leading oil-producing nations in supplying oil during worldwide delays. The remarkable jump from a \$42 billion GDP in 1970 to the astounding \$753.8 billion in 2014 is evidence of the Saudi success story.

The Saudi people have been the primary beneficiaries of this massive increase in national wealth. Whereas a \$927 per capita income was symptomatic of the 1970 economy, the rise of this figure to \$54,000 in 2016 demonstrates the forward-thinking plans that the Saudi government has implemented to raise living standards.

### **UN Human Development Index**

As proof of the government's dedication of financial and material resources in service to the Saudi public, one must only examine the nation's ranking within the same category of human development as major European and North American countries. In 1980, Saudi Arabia maintained a Human Development Index value of 0.575, in comparison to its 2014 value of 0.837. In this period, Saudi Arabia moved through multiple categories of advancement to reach its current ranking. Among Arab nations, Saudi Arabia stands out through its extraordinary increase in human development. Since 1970, Saudi Arabia has been deemed a "Top 10 Mover" out of 135 studied countries.



**"Our Vision is a strong, thriving and stable Saudi Arabia that provides opportunity for all. Our Vision is a tolerant country with Islam as its constitution and moderation as its method."**

**DEPUTY CROWN PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISION 2030  
APRIL 25, 2016**

## 03

---

## Vision 2030

On April 25, 2016, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced Vision 2030. This ambitious package of economic, political and social development is built around three pillars – a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation. It builds on the strengths of the Kingdom – an investment powerhouse, located in the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds, acting as a regional hub connecting three continents.

Vision 2030 outlines 24 specific goals for the Kingdom to achieve in economic, political and societal development. Vision 2030 further articulates 18 commitments to achieve these goals – with specific initiatives in renewable energy, manufacturing, education, e-governance, entertainment and culture.

### **A Vibrant Society**

Saudi Arabia has enormous untapped opportunities and a rich blend of natural resources, but our real wealth lies in our people and our society. The happiness and fulfillment of citizens and residents are important to us. This can only be achieved through promoting physical, psychological, and social well-being. At the heart of our vision is a society in which all enjoy a good quality of life, a healthy lifestyle, and an attractive living environment. Our goal is to promote and reinvigorate social development in order to build a strong a productive society.

## **A Thriving Economy**

Diversifying the Saudi economy is vital for sustainability. Although oil and gas are essential pillars of its economy, Saudi Arabia has begun expanding investments into additional sectors. There are complicated challenges ahead, but the Kingdom has long-term plans to overcome them. In the past 25 years, the Saudi economy has grown by an annual average rate of more than 4 percent, contributing to the creation of millions of new jobs. Although Saudi Arabia is already among the 20 largest economies in the world, our ambitions are even greater. We aspire to have an even higher ranking by 2030, despite the headwinds of the global economic slowdown and the expected impact of our structural economic reforms. This requires us to invest all our resources in order to diversify the economy, unleash the capabilities of promising economic sectors and privatize some government services.

## **An Ambitious Nation**

The roles and requirements of government have grown significantly since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's founding. Government – any government – needs to evolve and improve continuously, if only to keep pace with rising expectations and challenges. This requires us to meet high standards of transparency and accountability. We are committed to managing its finances efficiently and effectively, creating agile public organizations, and tracking both their own performance and that of the government

## **Goals of Vision 2030**

For each of the three pillars of Vision 2030 – a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation – the Kingdom has charted 18 measurable goals to be achieved by the year 2030.

### **VISION 2030 GOALS TO PRODUCE A VIBRANT SOCIETY**

- More than double the number of Saudi heritage sites registered with UNESCO
- Increase capacity to welcome Umrah visitors from 8 million to 30 million per year

- Increase household spending on cultural and entertainment activities from 2.9 percent to 6 percent
- Increase the share of individuals exercising at least once a week from 13 percent to 40 percent
- Have three Saudi cities be recognized among the Top 100 cities in the world
- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking on the Social Capital Index from 26th to 10th
- Increase average life expectancy from 74 to 80 years

**VISION 2030 GOALS TO PRODUCE A THRIVING ECONOMY**

- Increase private sector contributions to Gross Domestic Product from 40 percent to 65 percent
- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking on the Global Competitiveness Index from 25th to among the Top 10 nations
- Increase foreign-direct investment from 3.8 percent of GDP to the international average of 5.7 percent of GDP
- Rank Saudi Arabia among the Top 15 largest economies in the world from its current position of 19th
- Increase the assets of the Public Investment Fund from SAR 600 billion to over SAR 7 trillion (\$160 billion to over \$2 trillion)
- Increase localization of oil and gas sectors from 40 percent to 75 percent
- Increase women's participation in the workforce from 22 percent to 30 percent
- Lower rate of unemployment from 11.6 percent to 7 percent
- Increase contributions of small and medium enterprises from 20 percent to 35 percent of GDP
- Increase share of non-oil exports from 16 percent to 50 percent of non-oil GDP
- Raise Saudi Arabia's global ranking in the Logistics Performance Index from 49th to 25th place

**VISION 2030 GOALS TO EMPOWER AN AMBITIOUS NATION**

- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking on the E-Government Survey Index to among the Top 5 nations from its current ranking of 36th
- Increase non-oil government revenue from SAR 163 billion to SAR 1 trillion
- Raise Saudi Arabia's ranking in the Government Effectiveness Index from 80th to 20th
- Raise the non-profit sector's contribution from less than 1 percent of GDP to 5 percent of GDP



- Rally 1 million volunteers per year, compared to 11,000 volunteers in 2016
- Increase household savings from 6 percent to 10 percent of total household income

### **Commitments of Vision 2030**

In order to achieve these clearly articulated and measurable goals of Vision 2030, the Kingdom has made 18 specific commitments surrounding each of the three themes. These commitments are sector-specific, and outline detailed plans of action in order to achieve the ambitious goals the Kingdom has set for itself.

### **Commitments for a Vibrant Society**

#### **EFFICIENT AND HIGH QUALITY HEALTH CARE**

The Kingdom's goal is to enhance the standard and quality of health care services. Our aim is a health care sector that promotes competition and transparency among providers. This will enhance the capability, efficiency, and productivity of care and treatment, as well as increase the options available to our citizens.

To achieve this goal, Saudi Arabia will introduce corporatization into the sector by transferring the responsibility for health care to a network of public companies that compete both against each other and against the private sector. This will provide our citizens with the highest quality of health care, while at the same time allowing the government to focus on its legislative, regulatory, and supervisory roles. Corporatization shall also promote and prioritize specialization in health care services and enable citizens to choose their preferred service provider.

#### **IRTIQAA: A MORE PROMINENT ROLE FOR FAMILIES IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN**

The engagement of parents in their children's education is one of the main principles of success. Our goal by 2020 is for 80 percent of parents to be engaged in school activities and the learning process of their children. The Kingdom will launch the "Irtiqaa" program, which will measure how effectively schools are engaging parents in their children's education.

Saudi Arabia will establish parent-led boards in schools to open discussion forums and further engage with parents. Teachers will receive training to raise their awareness of the importance of communicating with parents and equip them with effective methods to do so successfully. We will also collaborate with private and non-profit sectors to offer innovative educational programs and events that can improve this academic partnership.

#### **DAEM: MEANINGFUL ENTERTAINMENT FOR CITIZENS**

Saudi Arabia will increase the number and variety of cultural and entertainment activities with the aim of opening dedicated venues to showcase our citizens' myriad talents. The Kingdom will review our regulations to simplify the establishment and registration of amateur, social, and cultural clubs.

Saudi Arabia will launch and provide the necessary financial support for "Daem," a national program to enhance the quality of cultural activities and entertainment. The program will create a national network of clubs, encourage the exchange of knowledge and international experiences, and promote better awareness of a wide range of hobbies and leisure activities. By 2020, there will be more than 450 registered and professionally organized amateur clubs providing a variety of cultural activities and entertainment events.

#### **WORLD'S LARGEST ISLAMIC MUSEUM**

Saudi Arabia will build an Islamic museum in accordance with the highest global standards, equipped with the latest methods in collection, preservation, presentation, and documentation. It will be a major landmark for our citizens and visitors, where they will learn about the history of Islam, enjoy interactive experiences and participate in cultural events. Using modern technology, visitors to the museum will take an immersive journey through the different ages of Islamic civilization, as well as its science, scholars and culture. It will also be an international hub for erudition, and include a world-class library and research center.

#### **SERVE THE INCREASING NUMBER OF UMRAH VISITORS**

Saudi Arabia is honored to attend to pilgrims and Umrah visitors' needs, fulfilling a role bestowed on us by Allah. Our expansion of the Two Holy Mosques has led to a tripling in the number of foreign Umrah visitors over the last decade, reaching eight million in

2015. By increasing the capacity and by improving the quality of the services offered to Umrah visitors, we will by 2020 make it possible for over 15 million Muslims per year to perform Umrah and be completely satisfied with their pilgrimage experience.

The Kingdom will achieve this by improving visa application procedures which will smooth the visa process with the aim of full automation. We will also further integrate e-services into the pilgrims' journey, which will enrich their religious and cultural experience. Both the public and private sectors will play a crucial role in this project as we work to upgrade accommodation, improve hospitality, and launch new services for pilgrims

## **Commitments for a Thriving Economy**

### **DEVELOPED DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

A sophisticated digital infrastructure is integral to today's advanced industrial activities. It attracts investors and enhances the fundamental competitiveness of the Saudi economy. We will partner with the private sector to develop telecommunications and information technology infrastructure, especially high-speed broadband, expanding its coverage and capacity within and around cities and improving its quality. Our specific goal is to exceed 90 percent housing coverage in densely populated cities and 66 percent in other urban zones.

### **FLOURISHING RETAIL SECTOR**

The Kingdom aims to provide job opportunities for an additional 1 million Saudis by 2020 in a growing retail sector that attracts modern, local, regional, and international brands across all regions of the country. We also aim to increase the contribution of modern trade and e-commerce to 80 percent of the retail sector by 2020. This will be achieved by attracting both regional and international retail investors and by easing restrictions on ownership and foreign investment. To this end, we will facilitate local and regional flow of goods, and develop necessary sectoral regulations. We will also increase financing of small retail enterprises to stimulate their growth and development.

**RESTRUCTURED KING ABDULLAH FINANCIAL DISTRICT**

The Kingdom will seek to transform the district into a special zone that has competitive regulations and procedures, visa exemptions, and direct connections to the King Khalid International Airport. We will also seek to repurpose some of the built-up areas and change the real estate mix, increasing the allocation for residential accommodation, services and hospitality areas. We will seek to build and create an integrated and attractive living and working environment. The district will be the headquarters of the Public Investment Fund, the largest sovereign wealth fund, which will contribute to creating an environment attractive to financial services and other corporations.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Saudi Arabia possesses an impressive natural potential for solar and wind power, and local energy consumption will increase threefold by 2030. The Kingdom has set an initial target of generating 9.5 gigawatts of renewable energy. We will seek to localize a significant portion of the renewable energy value chain in the Saudi economy, including research & development, and manufacturing. From inputs such as silica and petrochemicals, to the extensive expertise of our leading Saudi companies in the production of different forms of energy, the Kingdom has all the raw ingredients for success. We will put this into practice with the forthcoming launch of the King Salman Renewable Energy Initiative. We will review the legal and regulatory framework that allows the private sector to buy and invest in the renewable energy sector.

**EXPANDED MINING SECTOR**

Saudi Arabia has been blessed with rich mineral resources such as aluminum, phosphate, gold, copper, uranium, and other raw materials. Although the mining sector has already undergone improvements to cater to the needs of our industries, its contribution to GDP has yet to meet expectations. As such, we are determined to ensure it reaches SAR 97 billion by 2020, creating 90,000 job opportunities in the process. We are planning a number of structural reforms, which include stimulating private sector investments by intensifying exploration, building a comprehensive database of the Kingdom's resources, reviewing the licensing procedures for extraction, investing in infrastructure, developing funding methods and establishing centers of excellence. We will also form strategic international partnerships and raise the competitiveness and productivity of our national companies.

**LOCALIZED DEFENSE INDUSTRIES**

Although the Kingdom is the world's third biggest military spender, only 2 percent of this spending is within our Kingdom. The national defense industrial sector is limited to only seven companies and two research centers. Our aim is to localize over 50 percent of military equipment spending by 2030. We have already begun developing less complex industries such as those providing spare parts, armored vehicles, and basic ammunition. We will expand this initiative to higher value and more complex equipment such as military aircraft. We will build an integrated national network of services and supporting industries that will improve our self-sufficiency and strengthen our defense exports, both regionally and internationally. Localization will be achieved through direct investments and strategic partnerships with leading companies in this sector. These moves will transfer knowledge and technology, and build national expertise in the fields of manufacturing, maintenance, repair, research and development.

**BIGGER ROLE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contribute only 20 percent of Saudi GDP. In other nations, this contribution can reach up to 70 percent. The Kingdom will facilitate enhanced access to funding and encourage Saudi financial institutions to allocate up to 20 percent of overall funding to SMEs by 2030. The recently established SME Authority plans to review laws and regulations, remove obstacles, facilitate access to funding, and enable youth and entrepreneurs to market their ideas and products. At the same time, we will establish additional new business incubators, specialized training institutions, and venture capital funds. These will aid entrepreneurs in developing their skills and networks. We will also support SMEs in marketing and help export their products and services, by leveraging e-commerce and collaborating with international stakeholders.

**EDUCATION THAT CONTRIBUTES TO ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Saudi Arabia will close the gap between the outputs of higher education and the requirements of the job market. By the year 2030, the Kingdom intends to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in international rankings. We shall help our students achieve results above international averages in global education indicators. To this end, we will prepare a modern curriculum focused on rigorous standards in literacy, numeracy, and character development. We will track progress and publish a sophisticated range of education outcomes, showing year-

on-year improvements. We will work closely with the private sector to ensure higher education outcomes are in line with the requirements of the job market.

#### **BUILDING A UNIQUE REGIONAL LOGISTICAL HUB**

Saudi Arabia has already invested heavily in the construction of ports, railways, roads and airports. To take full advantage of these investments, we plan to work with the private sector and enter into a new series of international partnerships to complete, improve and link our infrastructure internally and across borders. We will also unlock our "hard" infrastructure with systems that can drive higher performance, including more rigorous governance, leaner processes and a more efficient customs system. We will improve and implement existing laws and regulations. Air, maritime, and other transport operators will be encouraged to make the most of their capacity, achieving durable links between existing trade hubs, as well as opening new trade routes. This will reinforce our position as a distinctive logistical gateway to three continents.

#### **INTEGRATING REGIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY**

With a GDP of SAR 2.4 trillion, our economy is already the largest in the Middle East. We enjoy close economic ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council and other Arab countries, as well as constructive relations with Islamic and foreign countries. We will seek to establish new business partnerships and facilitate a smoother flow of goods, people and capital. Among our top priorities is to fortify and extend our interconnectivity and economic integration with other Gulf Cooperation Council countries. We will strive to complete the process of implementing the GCC common market, unifying customs, economic and legal policies, and constructing shared road and railway networks. We will seek to effectively link with other countries in the region, through enhanced logistics services and new cross-border infrastructure projects, including land transport projects with Africa through Egypt. Logistical and trade exchanges will be streamlined, further cementing our pre-eminent position as a major trade hub.

#### **SUPPORTING NATIONAL COMPANIES**

Rather than competing generically across the board, Saudi Arabia will concentrate on our comparative advantages, national strengths, and the areas that will assure leadership status. Initially, our priority will be to fully support major national companies, which have already gained a leading market share, by promoting their products and

services regionally and globally, especially in the fields of oil, petrochemicals, banking, telecommunications, food, health care, and retail.

## **Commitments for an Ambitious Nation**

### **QAWAM: INCREASING SPENDING EFFICIENCY**

Saudi Arabia is committed to making public spending radically more efficient, using our resources more effectively, and limiting waste. The Kingdom will launch the "Qawam" program as a reflection of the Qur'anic verse that calls for moderation in spending between excess and parsimony. This program will comprehensively review financial regulations in all government agencies. The program is intended to move away from a narrow reliance on process auditing, and move towards a more integrated approach with effective and efficient spending controls. Government agencies will reward a culture of efficient spending throughout all administrative levels. Specialized training for employees and other key stakeholders will be provided as required, boosting the performance of finance departments and internal auditing.

### **EFFECTIVE E-GOVERNMENT**

Saudi Arabia has made remarkable progress in e-government. The scope of online services has already been expanded over the last decade to include employment programs, online job searches, e-learning services, traffic, passports and civil affairs, online payment services, and online issuance of commercial registers. This has improved Saudi Arabia's ranking on several global indicators. In the UNE-Government Index, for instance, Saudi Arabia ranked 36th in 2014, up from 90th in 2004.

Saudi Arabia will expand the scope of current online services further to include areas such as geographic information, health care and education. Quality will be improved by streamlining processes, and diversifying communication channels. The Kingdom will also support the wider use of online applications in government agencies, such as cloud applications, data sharing platforms and HR management systems.

### **SHARED SERVICES ACROSS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Saudi Arabia is working towards shared services across government agencies. Shared services in our government will also aim to increase quality, cut costs, unify our efforts, and provide a suitable work environment for all parties at the lowest cost. Shared services can be applied globally and locally in many sectors. The Kingdom

will examine the status of support services in government sectors, set the scope of work and develop comprehensive priorities and implementation plans. We will follow best practices in employing shared services, with a robust set of performance indicators that will measure quality, workflow improvement, cost reduction and knowledge transfer.

#### **KING SALMAN PROGRAM FOR HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

By 2020, the Kingdom aims to have trained 500,000 government employees through distance learning. All ministries and government institutions will be required to adopt best practices in human capital development. The King Salman Program for Human Capital Development will establish HR centers of excellence in every government agency, and provide training.

Saudi Arabia will continue to hire individuals according to merit and work towards building a broad talent base, so they may become leaders of the future. The Kingdom will raise the productivity of employees to the highest levels possible, by implementing proper performance management standards, providing continuous training for professional development, and sharing knowledge. Targeted policies will identify and empower future leaders, and will furnish a stimulating environment that provides equal opportunities and rewards for excellence.

#### **MORE IMPACTFUL NON-PROFIT SECTOR**

Today, Saudi Arabia has fewer than 1,000 non-profit and charitable foundations and associations. They contribute just 0.3 percent of our GDP, much less than the global average of 6 percent. Currently, just 7 percent of projects are focused on generating social impact or are aligned with the long-term national priorities. By 2020, more than one-third of Saudi non-profit organizations' projects should have measurable social impact.

Saudi Arabia will accelerate this shift by supporting projects and programs with high social impact. The Kingdom will facilitate the establishment of non-profit organizations by high net worth families, which will promote rapid growth of the non-profit sector. It will create a supportive and cooperate environment in which the sector's institutions and government agencies can collaborate. At the same time, Saudi Arabia will encourage the non-profit sector to apply proper governance standards, facilitate high quality training to staff and promote a culture of volunteering and full-time careers in the sector.



# تداول Tadawul

# Status Market Open

تداول  
Tadawul

BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES  
PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRIES  
CEMENT

UTILITIES  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION

CONSTRUCTION  
DEVELOPMENT

The Kingdom has relaxed restrictions on qualified foreign investors, allowing them to buy up to 10 percent of a listed company on the Saudi stock exchange.

Tadawul, the Saudi Stock Exchange

04

## Economic Development

Located in the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds, Saudi Arabia stands at the intersection of trade between Africa, Asia, and Europe. Vision 2030 has led to a major surge in international investment in the Kingdom. Investors have long viewed the Kingdom as an attractive place to conduct business due to the emergence of key opportunities for partnership in a number of industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, and technology.

Distinguished by its centrality and technological supremacy, the Kingdom provides duty-free access to other GCC and MENA economies and enjoys reliable transport and infrastructure links. As one of the world's 25 largest economies and the largest economy in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has demonstrated a high level of growth. In addition, investors in Saudi Arabia enjoy increasingly well-developed business clusters and value chains that differentiate the nation from emerging economies. In response to the concerted incubation of business hubs and increasing emphasis on international partnership, American businesses continue to establish a foothold in the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia maintains substantial cost advantages because of the low domestic cost of energy and industrial land resulting from generous subsidies and incentives.

### **Growing Interest in the Saudi Stock Exchange**

Increasing foreign participation in Saudi Arabia's stock exchange is among the key provisions of the National Transformation Program. Recently, senior executives from Saudi companies, including Sabic, Saudi Telecom, and insurer Tawuniya, together with representatives from Tadawul and the Capital Markets Authority (CMA),

organized highly attended investment forums. These forums, based in London, New York, and Hong Kong, featured major international sponsors ranging from J.P. Morgan to HSBC.

In response to this investor interest, the Kingdom has gradually introduced significant changes over the course of 2016. These include relaxed requirements for foreign investors, plans for a secondary index and changes to settlement cycles, and regulations for trading REITs (real estate investment trusts) for the first time. An IPO for Tadawul is expected to be launched in 2018. The Tadawul has recently been one of the world's best-performing stock indexes following Saudi Arabia's record \$17.5 billion bond issue in October 2016.

As Western analysts have noted, one of the most striking features of the Saudi exchange is that its listed companies reflect the vast range of economic activity taking place in the Kingdom. Equities are divided into 15 sectors: banks and financial services, petrochemical industries, cement, retail, energy, utilities, agriculture, food industries, telecommunications & IT, insurance, construction, real estate development, transport, media, publishing, and hotel tourism.

### **Mega Industrial Projects with Renowned International Partners**

The localization of industry under Vision 2030 offers promising opportunities for global public-private enterprises. Two new projects in the Kingdom represent some of the largest endeavors in their industries worldwide. In November 2016, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz inaugurated the Sadara Chemical Company and the Saudi Aramco Total Refining and Petrochemical Co. (SATORP) with international partners Dow Chemical and the French multinational conglomerate Total to create the largest facilities worldwide in the refining and petrochemicals industries in line with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

### **SAGIA: Streamlining Regulations on Foreign Investment**

In recognition of the logistical requirements of international partnership, Vision 2030 and preceding trade policy set out to streamline investor entrance into Saudi markets. In 2015, the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) announced that it would allow full foreign ownership of retail and wholesale businesses in the Kingdom, thereby removing the former 25 percent local ownership requirement. Foreign investors are no longer required to adopt local partners in many sectors and may own real estate for company activities. They are allowed to transfer money from their enterprises outside of the country and can sponsor foreign employees, provided that "Saudization" quotas are met. Minimum capital requirements to establish business entities range from zero to SR 30 million (\$8 million) depending on the sector and the type of investment. SAGIA's Investor Service Center (ISC) offers detailed information on the investment process, provides licenses and support services to foreign investors, and coordinates with government ministries to facilitate investment.

SAGIA has traditionally issued foreign investment licenses for seven broadly defined activities: 1) industrial, 2) trading, 3) agricultural, 4) contracting, 5) real estate, 6) specialized and non-specialized services and 7) consulting. In a bid to streamline the process, SAGIA announced plans in early 2016 to reduce the number of documents needed to obtain and renew foreign investment licenses. According to SAGIA, the ISC must grant or refuse a license within five days of receiving an application and supporting documentation from the prospective investor. Foreign investors report increased efficiency over the last year in obtaining a license, with an approval time averaging at one week compared to over a month in the past.

### **Renewed Focus on Sustainable Development**

Environmental sustainability cannot be divorced from economic prosperity. Leading Saudi institutions and enterprises have honored their commitment to reducing their environmental footprint through resource conservation campaigns and preparations for greener company operations.

As it transitions toward cutting-edge environmental and technological consciousness, Saudi Aramco has been developing an extensive carbon management strategy for

the Kingdom that includes: supporting the Kingdom's efforts in energy efficiency that focus on all end-user sectors, expanding gas supplies, focusing on developing renewables, and boosting research and development of "win-win technologies" that could dispose of carbon while turning it into beneficial products.

The King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) has undertaken efforts to advance the existing body of knowledge on climate change and intensify the attractiveness of the Kingdom as an investment hub through heavier R&D investment in energy studies. Meanwhile, the world-renowned King Abdulaziz City for Science & Technology (KACST), in cooperation with the University of California at Los Angeles, is researching the development of "green nanotechnologies" to enhance sustainability goals.

### **Nurturing Human Capital and Talent Promotion**

While Vision 2030 and its National Transformation Program aim to diversify the economy and strengthen a variety of industries in the country, it also lays out the future of relations between the Saudi state and its citizens. In the context of a global landscape characterized by increasingly competitive entrepreneurship, Saudi Arabia prioritizes its growing youth population and outlines plans to bolster education and employment. Its efforts aim to empower young Saudi citizens to carve out a path for the Kingdom in line with traditional cultural values and an increasingly interconnected world. The Kingdom is also investing massively in research and development to strengthen the country's world-class technological universities. This will encourage and promote the finest entrepreneurial ideas among future generations. Moreover, the Kingdom's social development has led to an increase in women's participation in the workforce. Political and institutional restructuring are a significant component to Saudi Arabia's vision as it reaches into all aspects of society to continue on its path of progress.

### **Aramco IPO**

The principal challenge in the implementation of Vision 2030 concerns the diversification of the economy away from its dependence on oil and the efficient promotion of the private sector. Under the National Transformation Program, a

systematic outline launched in 2016 that falls within the scope of Vision 2030, the Kingdom has articulated its aim to divest 5 percent of the national petroleum and natural gas company Saudi Aramco and channel funds into the sovereign Public Investment Fund (PIF), valued at \$2 trillion. Revenue from the sale will be strategically reinvested into a number of diverse industries to balance out the Kingdom's economic portfolio.

The proposed initial public offering (IPO) of Saudi Aramco has generated massive interest among potential buyers and investors. By 2018, shares of Saudi Aramco are expected to be listed on the Saudi stock exchange, Tadawul, in what is believed to be the largest IPO in history. Raising the allure of the sale is the strong track record of profitability within Aramco and the high reserves under its purview. Valuations of Aramco have provided a positive outlook for the future's sales potential to deliver record dividends to shareholders and improve capital investments across the Saudi economy.

In the words of Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, "The objective is to diversify income. This is the main objective. Therefore, IPO-ing Aramco and transferring its shares to PIF will technically make investments the source of Saudi government revenue, not oil."

With its unwavering history of international partnership and American organizational past, Aramco represents the brightest minds in decision-making who are committed to transforming the country's economic direction and maximizing its social impact.

### **Public Investment Fund**

Saudi Arabia aims to achieve long-term financial returns from its domestic and international investments and is working in tandem with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy to diversify the Saudi economy. In order to apply revenue earned from the IPO of Aramco to sectors that will benefit from large-scale promotion, the Government of Saudi Arabia has identified the Public Investment Fund (PIF) as a conduit for investment flows.

Vision 2030 aims to increase assets held by the PIF from SR 600 billion to over 7 trillion within the span of less than two decades and invest 50 percent of PIF funds abroad. Returns on investments, among others, will help the Kingdom meet its goal of reducing oil dependence by 2020.

Since the release of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has been party to various agreements that piqued significant international interest. One of the largest investments came in the announcement of a \$3.5 billion injection into the Silicon Valley giant Uber in June 2016, highlighting the increasing internationalization of the Saudi financial profile through strategic partnerships. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia and Japan's SoftBank Group are slated to create a technology investment fund that is projected to grow as large as \$100 billion, positioning it as one of the world's largest private equity investors. The Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia is set to contribute up to \$45 billion to the Softbank Vision Fund. Rather than compete with the private sector, the PIF will instead unlock key non-oil areas in need of development and pursue innovative avenues of investment.

Leveraging the economic tools of the PIF and structural changes championed by Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia will see a rise in job opportunities that suit market needs and capitalize upon the unique talents of Saudis, particularly women and youth. Such growth is a product of partnership explored out of mutual gain and maintained by shared prosperity. On the first anniversary of the release of Vision 2030, the leadership of Saudi Arabia celebrated the remarkable gains in efficiency, transparency, and global engagement that the national strategy plan has produced in its wake. With each year that will pass, Vision 2030 stands as a reminder of the Kingdom's humble beginnings and drive to serve society by improving on past successes.

### **Women in the Workforce**

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 sets the target of increasing women's participation in the workforce from 22 to 30 percent. Since 2010, the number of Saudi women in the workforce has increased 48 percent. U.S. and international companies are working with partners in the Kingdom to realize this goal by unlocking positions in key sectors that benefit from the expertise, training, and experience of Saudi women.

Women have been energetic leaders and participants in economic and civil society initiatives that bring together unparalleled thought leaders who have a hand in driving the direction of the Kingdom under Saudi Vision 2030. By setting records and challenging assumptions in their diverse fields, Saudi women continue to inspire a new generation of qualified professionals. Some highlights of this participation in the professional sphere include:

From March 7-9, 2017, Ford Motor Company Saudi Arabia held its first workshop exclusively for women in technology at Effat University in Jeddah. The workshop discussed the impact of women on business in Saudi Arabia and the importance of ensuring that women in the Kingdom are equipped with the necessary tools to make their mark on the local economy. Effat University is the first private institution of higher education for women in Saudi Arabia, standing as a center of educational excellence and innovation in the Kingdom.

In March 2017, the Rezidor Hotel Group appointed the company's first Saudi female general manager as the country gears up for increased activity in the tourism sector. Maram Kokandi was appointed the first Saudi female general manager in the hospitality sector of a new Park Inn by Radisson hotels in Jeddah, which is set to open this year. The Rezidor Hotel Group has appointed the company's first Saudi female general manager as the country gears up for an active hospitality sector.

On February 27, 2017, the Pearl Initiative released a report sharing best practices in female inclusion and strong governance as a collaboration between a UAE-based non-profit organization, the Sharjah Business Women Council, and the U.S. multinational company PepsiCo.

In January 2017, GE was recognized with the Award for Corporate Excellence (ACE) by the U.S. Department of State for showcasing the talent of Saudi women. GE successfully localized a business operations center in Riyadh alongside its partners Saudi Aramco and TCS. The business alliance celebrated groundbreaking success by employing 1,000 women in March 2016, with a target of hiring 3,000 women in the years to come. Dr. Amal Fatani was chosen as the center's head after decades of success in establishing and running women's departments in Saudi Arabia's most prestigious educational institutes.



In April 2016, six young Saudi women launched the SnapJobs mobile application to match qualified Saudis with employment opportunities in the public and private sectors. Ala Al-Qawaei, the project's joint founder, noted that the app will address unemployment in the Kingdom and enable Saudi citizens to engage their educational experience in a range of suitable open positions.

Glowork, a female-only recruitment tool to connect women with work, launched in 2011. Supported by the Saudi Ministry of Labor, Glowork has negotiated opportunities for women in the private sector and opened up positions for women in nonurban areas to work remotely. By 2015, Glowork had placed over 20,000 women throughout Saudi Arabia in jobs.

The Olayan Group, an international investment company started and owned by one of the oldest families in Saudi Arabia, has increased the number of women in managerial and executive roles more than threefold, establishing itself as a pioneer of female employment in the country. Since 2013, the company has witnessed a 181 percent increase in the number of female employees and a six-fold surge in female promotions.

### **Strengthening the Kingdom's Economic Sectors**

Creating the conditions for a strong and sustainable private sector is the central component of the Vision 2030 development strategy. The strategy aims to increase the private sector's contribution to GDP from its current rate of 40 percent to 65 percent. It also targets small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by boosting their contribution from 20 percent to 35 percent while increasing women's participation in the workforce from 22 percent to 30 percent. Non-oil exports are expected to make up half of non-energy GDP by 2030, more than three times present levels.

The Kingdom has relaxed restrictions on qualified foreign investors (QFI), allowing them to buy up to ten percent of a listed company on the Saudi stock exchange (Tadawul). The country's banking sector has also undergone an overhaul. In September 2016, the IHS Banking Risk Service, which monitors frontier and emerging market banking, praised the Saudi sector's "resiliency" to the current shocks from depressed oil prices. Zurich-based Credit Suisse maintains that the Kingdom's capital market

initiatives support the country's prospective upgrade to Emerging Market (EM) status by the MSCI World Index, a common benchmark for global stock funds.

Underscoring the Kingdom's economic development strategy on the basis of sound fiscal fundamentals, the IMF noted in 2016 that Saudi Arabia confronted the global financial crisis "from a position of strength," and has taken "decisive steps to manage its impact." According to the IMF, "The banking sector as a whole is well-capitalized and appears able to withstand severe temporary shocks." Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries that has never had a banking default.

The government is expediting liberalization of the financial sector, including easing restrictions on foreign participation in the Saudi stock market from 2017 onwards. This strategy is backed by a broader "buy Saudi" effort. In particular, the government is aiming for 50 percent domestic production by 2020 of all goods consumed in the Kingdom. That is up from approximately 33 percent at present. Pharmaceuticals and renewables were among several sectors highlighted to reduce unemployment from 11.6 percent in 2015 to seven percent by 2030.

Growth of the non-hydrocarbon sector of the economy is taking place at an unprecedented rate. High-speed rail; the privatization of public utilities, airports and commercial ports; the development of nuclear and solar energy; the rise of the country's tourism industry alongside the easing of visa requirements; breakthroughs in pharmaceutical research; and world leadership in environmental technology, including cogeneration and desalination, are all components of the motor driving this change.

## **Energy**

The Kingdom's most prominent sector is poised for unprecedented growth, diversification, and profitability. The high oil revenue environment has spurred a boom in both oil and non-oil development projects. Unlike previous investment cycles, the current round of investment projects is marked by heavy private sector participation with USD 79 billion in private sector energy projects under development.

Saudi Arabia is seeking to use non-oil means to generate a significant portion of its additional future energy needs. At the 2016 World Future Energy Summit in Abu

Dhabi, Saudi Minister for Energy, Industry and Resources Khalid Al-Falih addressed the Kingdom's plans to launch projects by 2023 to enable 9.5 gigawatts in power generation from a combination of solar, wind, and geothermal energy. Under the Vision 2030 renewable energy program, the country expects to launch the first round of bidding for up to \$50 billion worth of projects.

The Gulf Battery Company (GBC), a local business with approximately 40 employees located in Dammam, is one of the first local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to qualify as a GE global supplier for gas turbine components. The company is a specialist manufacturer of high-tech energy storage systems, providing backup control batteries for GE gas turbines. It currently provides GE with 100 percent of its battery needs in the Kingdom. As a qualified GE global supplier, GBC plans to export its products and services to Iraq, Nigeria, and several countries in North Africa.

On May 30, 2016, Siemens AG, the Munich-based global electronics and energy giant, launched the first gas turbine "Made in KSA." The launch highlighted the young Saudi engineers who participated in the development of its technology and who were trained at the Dammam Energy Hub on the country's east coast. The Energy Hub was built in 2011 as a joint venture between Siemens, Aramco, and the Saudi Electricity Company.

Following the relaxation of restrictions on foreign investment, Chevron signed a new agreement with Saudi Arabia to operate the Kingdom's 50 percent interest in the hydrocarbon resources of the onshore zone between Kuwait and the Kingdom. The agreement expires in 2039. Chevron is the only global energy company with exploration and production operations in Saudi Arabia, holding 50 percent of the Wafra onshore oil and natural gas fields in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In December 2016, Jacques Brent, the head of Ford Motor Company for Middle East and North Africa, announced that Saudi Arabia had emerged as the company's largest market in the region, and that it is pursuing ventures in the Kingdom in the fields of shared mobility and alternative fuels.

## Tourism

Tourism is set to take on a pivotal role in the Saudi economy, with business, leisure, and faith-based travel recognized as prime opportunities to raise the industry's profile. Under Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has committed to easing certain visa requirements and renovating local historical and heritage sites.

"Post-Umrah" tourism will see an easing of limits on visits, allowing pilgrims to extend their stays and travel to a wider variety of destinations in Saudi Arabia instead of being restricted to holy sites. The government is reviewing proposals to ease visa limitations on Hajj pilgrims in an effort to bolster investment in tourism-related services and infrastructure.

For foreign and/or Western visitors, the planned privatization of certain sectors of the economy will prompt overseas investors to visit the country. Direct access to the Saudi stock exchange will also ease restrictions on foreign ownership, thus encouraging greater business travel to the Kingdom. To keep pace with projected increases, over 49,000 new hotel rooms are either under construction or at the final planning stage.

## Construction

Saudi Arabia represents the largest construction market in the Middle East and one of the fastest growing construction markets in the world. Key development areas include improving infrastructure, transport, education, and real estate, all of which will require construction-related activity. According to the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA), a \$100 billion planned investment in transport projects will occur over the next ten years.

The Kingdom's construction market is set to more than double, reaching a record high of \$96.52 billion in 2025 from \$45.33 billion in 2016, according to a recent report by BMI Research. Advanced construction technology, such as open-source 4D Building Information Models (BIM), will help Saudi Arabia's architects, engineers, and contractors to enhance collaboration and productivity while reducing costs across design, concrete and steel rebar installation, and facilities management projects.

Vision 2030 calls for public-private partnerships to stimulate infrastructure projects and economic growth. One of the leading Saudi BIM projects is the Abdullah Arif Intersection Bridge in Makkah Municipality. Contractors used Trimble's Tekla Structures to design its 340-meter span with a superstructure arch that can be dismantled and re-erected for a planned third lane. Additional innovative Saudi projects include the Dora Dora Food Processing Plant, the Maaden Mine and Refinery Project, Qassim University's Sports Facilities Building, the Riyadh Metro Depots, Samba HQ, and the Titanium Sponge Plant in Yanbu.

### **Manufacturing**

The Saudi Industrial Property Authority (MODON) and General Electric will partner to enhance the digital capabilities of ten Saudi factories using GE's Brilliant Manufacturing Software Suite. This process will strengthen the operational efficiency and productivity of these factories – all located in MODON industrial cities – thereby increasing cost savings. Through a "digital thread" that links design, product engineering, manufacturing, supply chain, and distribution that serves one integrated system, MODON factories will eliminate information silos, identify opportunities to improve procedural efficiency, and gain insight into equipment optimization. This project will mark the start of the digital transformation of the Kingdom's manufacturing sector. It supports several key objectives of Saudi Vision 2030: enhancing productivity and competitiveness while building local industrial and manufacturing bases.

On January 31, 2017, Honeywell entered into a multi-billion dollar deal with Saudi Arabia's Al Waha Petrochemicals Company to explore the maximization of propylene production. Propylene is the second most important starting product in the petrochemical industry. A press statement from the company notes that the deal "falls in line with Honeywell's ongoing commitment to support Saudi Arabia with its diversifications plans and Saudi Vision 2030." The deal is part of Honeywell's Connected Plant initiative that helps manufacturers "improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of operations across a single plant or several plants across an enterprise."

Dow Chemical is one of the largest foreign investors in Saudi Arabia. On November 30, 2016, the Kingdom announced that the Sadara Chemical Company Project would

become the largest integrated chemicals complex in the world to be built in one phase after the company's initial establishment in October 2011. Located in the Jubail Industrial City in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, the facility – a joint venture between Saudi Aramco, Dow Chemical and the French multi-national conglomerate Total – will produce more than three million ton of plastics and chemical products annually. This venture will further stimulate Saudi Arabia's economic growth, creating an environment hospitable to investment and job creation. The project, inaugurated by King Salman in 2016, will create the largest global facilities in the refining and petrochemicals industries.

Dow participates in several joint ventures in the region, including with E.A. Juffali & Brothers and Saudi Acrylic Monomer Company (SAMCO). Additional strategic investments and joint ventures in the country include Saudi Aramco, agreements with King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) to construct a new Dow Middle East Research and Development Center, and a reverse osmosis manufacturing facility – the first unit of its kind outside of the United States. Reverse osmosis is a water purification process that uses a special kind of membrane to remove ions, molecules, and larger particles from drinking water.

Furthermore, Chevron helped organize the Kingdom's first privately financed basic-petroleum enterprise, the Saudi Chevron Phillips Company based in Al Jubail. The company is working on a new venture to create advanced forms of benzene and cyclohexane, cutting-edge chemicals with a wide range of production capabilities. The plant is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

## Health Care

Health care is a thriving sector as the government continues to finance healthcare for its rapidly growing population. Saudi Arabia is the largest market for medical equipment and healthcare products in the Middle East, with the opportunity to cater to unmet demand across the healthcare value chain, including medical education, research, facilities, provision, and reimbursement.

The Kingdom places a high priority on health care with the understanding that people are the country's most valuable asset. In 2030, the population of Saudi Arabia

will reach 39.1 million, an increase of 24.1 percent from 2015. Therefore, medical research is a pivotal component of industrial development, and the pharmaceutical market is a key industry for future growth in the Kingdom. To support it, the Saudi government has improved regulatory guidelines and initiatives to help develop the domestic pharmaceutical market, one of the largest in the Middle East and the largest of the GCC members, estimated at \$4.5 billion in 2015 and expected to reach \$6 billion by 2020. Diabetes affects 25 percent of the population, and asthma affects 15 percent of the population. Health expenditure in the Kingdom has more than doubled in the past decade to match the Kingdom's 400 hospitals, 2,075 primary health centers, and 850 private clinics. The government's plan is to proceed with the construction of 56 new and 51 replacement hospitals and 750 primary health centers in the coming five years.

Launched in December 2013 in conjunction with the King Abdulaziz City for Science & Technology (KACST), the Saudi Human Genome Project (SHGP) will target the sequencing of 100,000 human genomes over the next five years to conduct world-class genomics-based biomedical research in the Saudi population. The SHGP mission is to identify the genetic basis of severe and commonly inherited diseases in the Saudi population using state-of-the-art genome sequencing and bioinformatics.

The exceptional growth of the Saudi market has led Pfizer to join efforts with SAGIA to set up a legal company entity and establish a manufacturing plant in the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC).

### **Information Technology**

Saudi Arabia represents the region's largest IT market, with strong growth in consumer and enterprise end markets. Massive public investments in infrastructure, health, and education have paved the way for advanced technology and security systems in the country with the government planning for the industry to raise its contribution to the GDP by 20 percent by 2020. The IT market in the country was valued at \$3.6 billion in 2011 and was expected to reach \$4.9 billion after 2014. Liberalization is occurring across the telecommunications industry, driving increases in competition, service levels, and usage. Significant unmet demands for web-based and mobile services and increased enterprise and government commitments for web-based services provide

large-scale opportunities for contractors and service providers, with massive public investments in connectivity for Economic Cities, extending unique opportunities for greenfield projects covering millions of users.

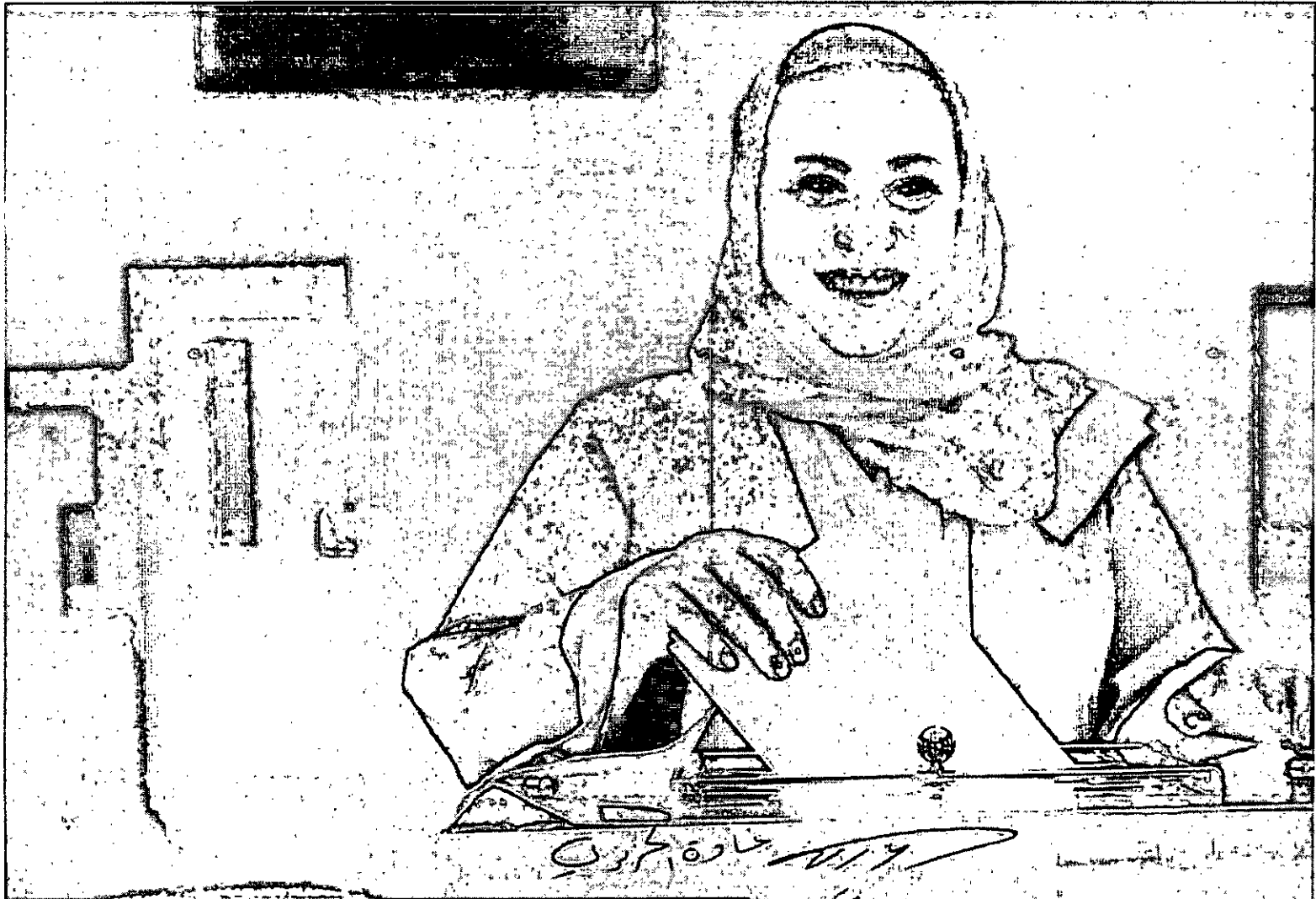
On March 9, 2017, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology signed a memorandum of understanding with IBM for the training and qualification of more than 38,000 individuals over the next four years through 30 new educational institutions in information and communication technology (ICT) programs. By 2020, about 19,000 trainees are expected to acquire certification in the field. The agreement with IBM will address core challenges identified by the ministry, namely, "the shortage in specialized human capital" and "poor user skills in the communication and information technology field." The Kingdom will organize five new initiatives through the ministry involving the training, qualification, and recruitment of ICT experts.

## **Defense**

Saudi Arabia is among the world's largest defense and security spenders. By December 2016, Saudi defense spending stood at \$48.68 billion. This figure is expected to grow with an increase in imports over the coming decade. The industry is projected to raise local military equipment manufacturing to 50 percent, a significant increase dependent on new contracts with foreign defense firms. American companies were advised by Saudi Arabia to fulfill local requirements and invest in human capital and manufacturing capabilities in order to win contracts in this competitive industry in the Kingdom.

On January 24, 2017, the U.S.-Saudi Arabian Business Council (USSABC) held a defense and security luncheon in Saudi Arabia. The event featured Alex Barrasso, Counselor for Political and Military Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh. The discussion centered on changes to the Saudi defense market under Vision 2030. As an extension of these improvements in the defense market, Saudi Arabia has started manufacturing Ukrainian Antinov aircraft in accordance with the Vision. This plan relies on the Military Industries Corporation (MIC), which oversees the development of the local defense industry.





**Electoral participation among female Saudi voters in the December 2015 municipal elections was 82 percent.**

وزارة الشؤون البلدية والقروية  
 اللجنة العامة للانتخابات البلدية  
 اللجنة المحلية لمحافظة جدة ١٤٣٦ - ١٤٣٧ هـ

أمانة ٢ بلدية	الجنة المحلية للانتخابات
أمانة محافظة جدة	أمانة محافظة جدة

**الدائرة / الشاوية**

**مركز رقم / ٩٨٨**

Saudi woman voting in December 2015 municipal elections.

05

# Political Development

## Government Restructuring

The role of the government in Saudi Arabia has grown significantly since the founding of the Kingdom. It is imperative that government evolves and improves continuously to keep pace with rising expectations, challenges and needs of its citizens. The Saudi government reiterated its commitment to transparency and accountability in Vision 2030.

At the foundation of Vision 2030 are recent political initiatives implemented by King Salman in the first half of 2016. On May 7, 2016, the royal court released fifty decrees outlined by the King that sought to reorganize the government consistent with Saudi Vision 2030 to "focus and clarify responsibilities, and ease procedures to offer better services. The decrees included the merger of several ministries, the creation of new governmental bodies and appointments, and the replacement of various governmental entities with a fresh vision and new leadership.

Vision 2030 outlined several areas for improvement in government efficiency, and the restructuring sought to drive progress toward ensuring that ministries and departments are running at maximum capacity. The elimination, integration and rearrangement of dozens of ministries, authorities, public commissions and government departments aimed at clarifying responsibilities and facilitating procedures to provide the best government services possible.

Under the Strategic Directions program, the government approved the strategic directions determined by a variety of Saudi government agencies. Existing roles were reviewed to align with future economic and social needs, and decisions were

laid out based on benchmarks and detailed studies that included a comprehensive analysis of each agency's programs, plans and relevant performance indicators:

Two councils linked with the Council of Ministers were created: the Council of Political and Security Affairs, headed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif, and the Council of Economic Affairs and Development, headed by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The introduction of these Councils have helped to speed development of strategy and decision-making, while simultaneously enhancing performance.

The restructuring included the following:

- The oil ministry became the Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, and Khalid Al-Falih – former head of the health ministry – was appointed as minister;
- The water and electricity ministry was abolished and its responsibilities split. Activities related to electricity are under the purview of the Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources;
- Saudi Arabia's top central banker, Fahad Al Mubarak, was replaced by Ahmed Alkholifey, a former deputy governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency;
- The commerce and industry ministry was renamed the Ministry of Commerce and Investment, and Majed Al-Qasabi, formerly social affairs minister, was named its head;
- The labor and social affairs ministries were merged and established as the Ministry of Labor and Social Development;
- The agriculture ministry was renamed the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture;
- The hajj ministry was renamed the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah;
- The Department of Zakat and Income Tax was renamed the General Authority of Zakat and Tax and was linked to the finance ministry;
- The General Authority for Entertainment and the General Authority for Culture were established;
- New royal advisers were appointed.

Furthermore, the King issued an order that abolished several departments in order to streamline bureaucracy in the government, including: the Higher Committee for Education Policy, including the Higher Committee for Administrative Organization,

the Civil Service Council, the supreme body of King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, the Higher Education Council, the Supreme Education Council, the Council of Petroleum and Mineral Affairs, the Supreme Economic Council, the National Security Council, the Supreme Council for the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, and the Supreme Council for Disabled Affairs.

As the Saudi government moves toward comprehensive implementation of Vision 2030, it is also working to promote shared services across government agencies to increase productivity and raise the efficiency of government spending. To begin this long-term initiative, leadership will examine the status of support services in governmental sectors, set the scope of work, and development comprehensive priorities and implementation plans. This move is aimed to provide insight into the best practices to streamline government services, ensuring that it works as it should for all citizens – the ultimate goal of good governance.

Integral to Vision 2030 will be the continuous review and assessment of performance in programs. To support decision-making through analytical and evidence-based information and reports, a Decision Support Center will be established at the Royal Court.

## **Fiscal Reform**

The Fiscal Balance Program (FBP) is one of the Executive Programs laid out in Vision 2030 and is a key component of balancing the budget and boosting governmental performance by increasing efficiency. The benefits of the FBP program extend beyond the betterment of bureaucratic performance: the initiative will ultimately open up space in the budget to make long-term investments critical to the successful implementation of Vision 2030.

With the decline in oil prices, the Kingdom faced the highest deficit in its history. In response, the government quickly accelerated fiscal reforms, reducing spending by 26 percent by taking several steps: rationalizing government expenditure, restructuring government wages, partially reforming energy product prices, and approving initiatives to increase non-oil revenues.

This rapid response improved the ability of the government to decrease the deficit. Reforms underway are projected to save the Kingdom as much as \$97 billion annually by 2020, leading to a yearly surplus of \$43 billion, according to a recent analysis by Jadwa Investment, a Riyadh-based firm.

Moving forward, the FBP centers on several themes, all focused on achieving fiscal balance by 2020. As identified in the plan, the themes are the following:

- Enhancing sustainability of government revenue by growing non-oil revenues;
- Optimizing governmental capital and operational expenditures while focusing spending on the most strategic areas;
- Eliminating misdirected subsidies and empowering citizens to choose and consume responsibly;
- Sustaining economic growth in the private sector.
- Other fiscal reform programs and policies include the debt management program and the budgeting process and policy reform.

In December 2016, King Salman outlined Saudi Arabia's 2017 budget, which was estimated to reach \$237.3 billion, an eight percent increase from 2016. It was projected to reduce the deficit by 33 percent, a record for the Kingdom and a testament to the rapid pace of its fiscal reforms.

"We have sought through this budget and its programs to improve the efficiency of capital and operational expenditures in the state, strengthen the situation of public finances, enhance their sustainability, give priority to developmental and service projects and programs that serve citizens directly, contribute to activating the role of the private sector and increase its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product," said King Salman during the announcement. These comments demonstrate the nation's commitment to fiscal reform, and the projection of the massive budget deficit reduction for 2017 highlights the significant progress already achieved.

The International Monetary Fund has also recognized Saudi Arabia's progress on fiscal reform. Following an IMF staff mission to Saudi Arabia for a series of economic discussions, leader of the mission Tim Callen remarked, "Fiscal policy is appropriately adjusting to the drop in oil prices. IMF staff welcome the control of government spending that is underway and the energy price adjustments that have

been implemented." Callen also praised mechanisms that strengthen efficiency and accountability in government spending.

The initiatives in place for the Kingdom to achieve economic equilibrium by 2020 include roadmaps to enhance spending efficiency, reform energy prices, and promote non-oil revenue as part of the Fiscal Balance Program (FBP 2020) and Vision 2030 plan. Saudi Arabia has already begun its course correction; Jadwa Investment reported that it estimates that FBP 2020 initiatives will result in \$26 billion in gross savings in 2017 alone.

### **Women in Politics**

Women in Saudi Arabia have steadily gained political power. In recent years, a number of laws and decrees have empowered women, reaching from the highest consultative levels to the polls on the local level.

History was made in the Kingdom in December 2013, when King Salman issued a royal order appointing 30 women to the Majlis Al-Shura, the Kingdom's Consultative Council. The new mandate instructed that no less than 20 percent of the Council's members will be women moving forward, stating "Women, selected as members of the Shura Council, will enjoy full rights of membership, be committed to their duties, responsibilities and assume their jobs."

The Shura Council was established in 1992 with 60 members, but has since been expanded to 150 members, each serving their nation for 4-year terms. The King Abdullah first announced that Saudi women would be appointed to the Council in 2011, signaling progress on women's political empowerment. The women appointed are lauded as leaders in their respective fields, bringing with them to the Shura Council new perspectives and expertise to help push their country forward.

Dr. Selwa Al-Hazzaa became the first female member of the Council. Educated at King Saud University and John Hopkins University, she is known for her work on genetically inherited eye diseases in Saudi Arabia. In addition to her responsibilities on the Council, is head of the ophthalmology department at King Faisal Specialist Hospital.

Dr. Khawla Al Khuraya was appointed alongside Dr. Al-Hazzaa. A distinguished physician and leader in genomic cancer research, she famous for identifying a gene that prompts the formation of cancer cells in the human body. As Director of the Research Center at King Fahad National Center for Children's Cancer, Al Khuraya also holds the title as the first woman to receive the King Abdulaziz Award for Excellence for her work in the field of cancer research.

In December 2016, as part of the larger-scale political restructuring, the Shura Council was reshuffled – of the new appointments, 29 of which were women. As a testament to the educational achievements of Saudi women as a whole, a majority of the women appointed to the Council hold doctorates across a range of fields.

Among these women was Lina Al Maeena, one of the youngest Saudi women to ever serve on the Shura Council and a prominent voice advocating for the importance of sports for women and girls. Mody AlKhalaf was another appointee, known previously for making history as the first woman appointed assistant attaché for social and cultural affairs at the Saudi embassy in the United States.

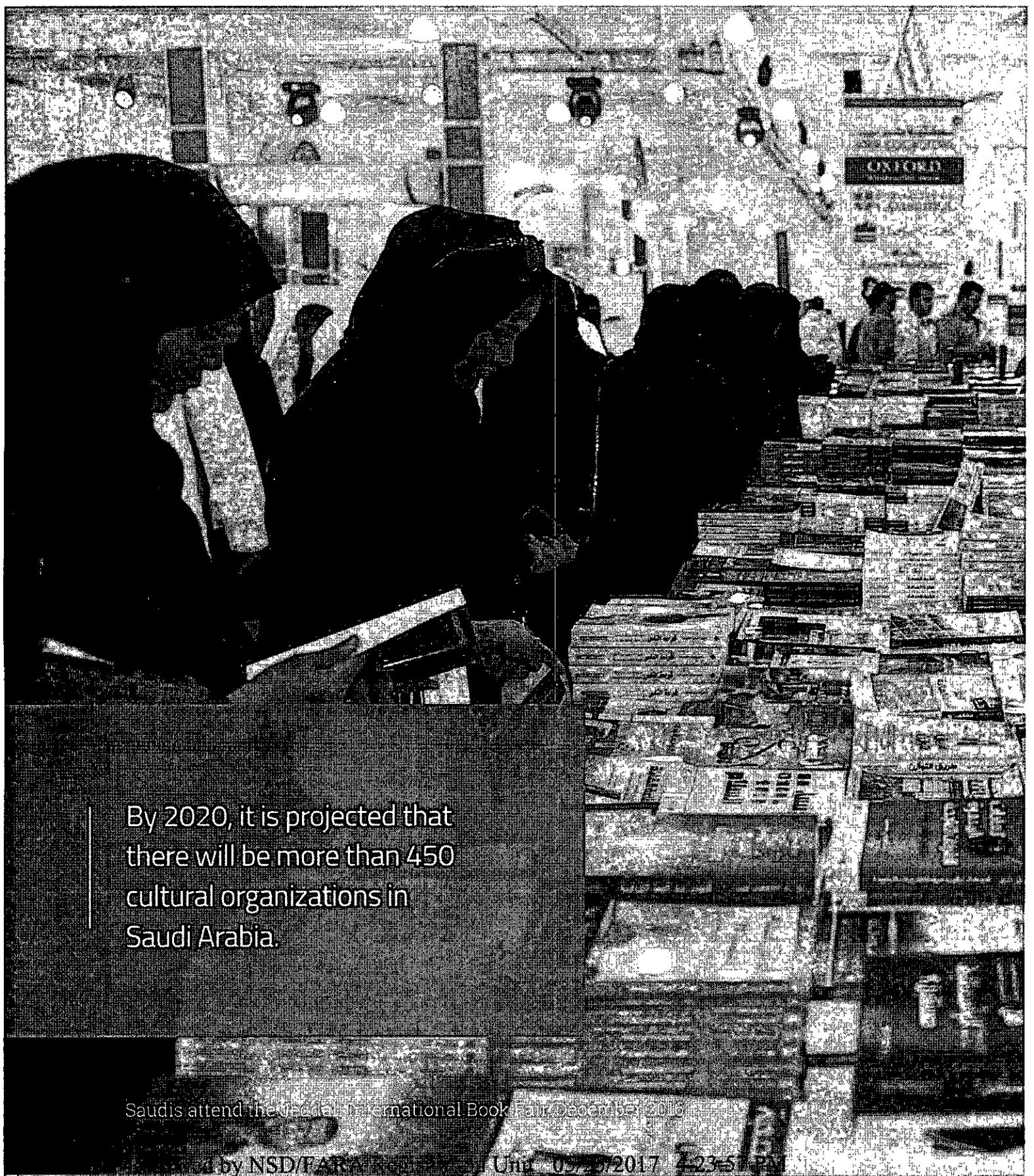
In another historic development, 21 women won seats in municipal council elections across the country in December 2015. This election was also notable as the first time Saudi women voted in elections, using their voices as part of the growing tide of change in the Kingdom. Women in Saudi Arabia stepped up to the task – while over 130,000 women registered to vote, over 900 ran as candidates, demonstrating the enthusiasm and commitment they have to participating in transforming their country.

As Najla Harir, a female voter in the December 2015 elections, put it, "I exercised my electoral right. We are optimistic about a bright future for women in our homeland."

Rasha Hefzi was among the 21 women elected in 2015, voted onto the municipal council in Jeddah. Hefzi exemplifies an educated generation in the Kingdom, eager to take on the mantle of leadership to push forward political, economic and social changes to help transform her country. She made her name as a businesswoman and public relations professional, participating over the course of her career in a number of civil society organizations, aiming to make a maximum impact on her society.

Saudi women have begun to make their mark on politics, and if rates of education are any indication, they are not yet done shaping the history of the Kingdom alongside the laundry list of political and economic changes transforming the lives of Saudi citizens from all backgrounds.





By 2020, it is projected that there will be more than 450 cultural organizations in Saudi Arabia.

Saudis attend the United International Book Fair, December 2016

06

## Cultural and Social Development

Saudi Vision 2030 recognizes the rich cultural and social heritage that distinguishes the Kingdom as a nation rooted in its identity as the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds. The comprehensive initiatives outlined in Vision 2030 have identified numerous areas that will benefit from the concerted investment of government resources and the engagement of the Saudi people.

It is through this plan that the leadership of Saudi Arabia will secure a sustainable economy and widen access to social programs, all with the ultimate aim of building a vibrant society, thriving economy, and ambitious nation.

### Education

Education is widely regarded by Saudi social and political analysts as the single most important and most challenging area for change. Saudi Arabia is the world's eighth-highest education spender and recently initiated a complete review of the education system, which will include building new educational institutes in addition to funding overseas degrees and training programs for Saudi students in alignment with Vision 2030 objectives. It remains vital for Saudi Arabia to attract a substantial amount of foreign investment in education to meet the country's rapid growth demands. The primary aim of the education initiatives is to enable young Saudis to fill jobs in industries currently dominated by expatriates.

The new plan aims to more than double enrollment of children ages three to six years old in education at a cost of \$660 million and to provide new training opportunities for large numbers of teachers. In addition, the plan seeks to improve average math and science scores for students by 15 percent by the early 2020s.

Vision 2030 seeks a more prominent role for families in the education of their children. The engagement of parents in their children's education is one of the main principles of success. The Kingdom will launch the "Irtiqaa" program, which will measure how effectively schools are engaging parents in their children's education. Its goal by 2020 is for 80 percent of parents to be engaged in school activities and the learning process of their children.

Saudi Arabia will establish parent-led boards in schools, to open discussion forums and further engage with parents. Teachers will receive training to raise their awareness of the importance of communicating with parents and equip them with effective methods to do so successfully. The Kingdom is collaborating with private and nonprofit sectors to offer innovative educational programs and events that can improve this academic partnership.

Saudi Arabia will close the gap between the outputs of higher education and the requirements of the job market. By the year 2030, the Kingdom intends to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in international rankings. This will help Saudi students achieve results above international averages in global education indicators. The Kingdom is preparing a modern curriculum focused on rigorous standards in literacy, numeracy, skills and character development. Saudi Arabia is now tracking progress and will publish a sophisticated range of education outcomes, showing year-on-year improvements.

Education is linked to employment opportunities. The Kingdom has partnered with the private sector to ensure higher education outcomes are in line with the requirements of the job market. By investing in strategic partnerships with apprenticeship providers, new skills councils from industry, and large private companies, Saudi Arabia is developing the job specifications of every education field. Furthermore, the Kingdom has begun to build a centralized student database tracking students from early childhood through to K-12 and beyond into tertiary education (higher and vocational) in order to improve education planning, monitoring, evaluation, and outcomes.

### **Changes to the Mutaween**

Members of the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (CPVPV) represent a select group of government officials who promote public

decency within the framework of the Sharia legal system in the Kingdom. In recent years, the CPVPV has been criticized over a number of high-profile controversies that were the unfortunate result of professional transgressions, some of which were addressed through the formal court system.

In April 2016, the Kingdom's leadership curtailed the ability of the CPVPV to arrest and interrogate individuals. As part of the regulation limiting the operations of the CPVPV, employees can no longer pursue or request identification from suspects. Its members are instead required to refer suspected crimes to the police, who maintain sole authority to enforce the law. In addition, those employed by the CPVPV must carry identification that details each individual's name, post, jurisdiction, and working hours. Employees of the CPVPV are also blocked from working outside of office hours.

This development came in response to public criticism that the CPVPV overstepped its professional mandate while handling cases in which violations of the law were suspected. The Saudi Press Agency announced the changes, noting that the CPVPV aims to "[carry] out the duty of promoting virtue and preventing vice in a gentle and humane way, after the model set in this regard by the Prophet [Muhammad] and his rightful successors."

Efforts to increase accountability to public will and welfare have been praised by Saudi citizens and members of the international community. The edict limiting the powers of the CPVPV reflected increasing responsiveness on the part of the government to the people of Saudi Arabia, many of whom had expressed discontent at the tactics of the CPVPV. With his 2016 edict, King Salman further enhanced regulatory oversight over an oft-scrutinized governmental agency and underlined the importance of social development that facilitates an environment flexible to the needs of its people.

### **Entertainment and Cultural Offerings**

Vision 2030 recognizes that culture and entertainment are indispensable to maintaining a high quality of life. Historically, Saudi Arabia has long-emphasized the importance of the arts to social development and culture. With the release of the national strategy plan, the Saudi leadership has pinpointed avenues by which culture and entertainment will contribute to long-term economic growth and bring about wider civil benefits.

Nationwide, the government-funded Daem initiative will enhance the quality and range of cultural activities available to those residing in the Kingdom. In order to expand these offerings, spaces accessible to the public and available throughout all regions of Saudi Arabia will receive official backing. As part of the Vision, the number of venues dedicated to the promotion of the arts will increase in tandem with the simplification of regulations governing the establishment of social and cultural clubs. A growing emphasis on cultural promotion aims to capitalize on the active participation of Saudi citizens and international partners. By 2020, it is expected that there will be more than 450 cultural organizations in Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom plans to attract international talent, including performers, artists, and creative professionals, all of whom will have a hand in raising awareness of leisure activities and cultural pursuits.

Vision 2030 also addresses entertainment initiatives, calling for new commissions on culture and entertainment. The establishment of the General Authority for Entertainment (GAE) in 2016 introduced a series of live performances and shows to the Kingdom, raising the international profile of entertainment offerings that previously required governmental funding. The GAE is expected to significantly reduce outbound tourism as an increasing number of Saudi citizens choose to stay in the Kingdom for vacation and recreation. Cultural activities that will benefit from the boost in official support include festivals, museum exhibitions, circus performances, and interactive scientific shows that blend intrigue and education. The creation and development of the GAE is part of an ongoing positive debate in Saudi Arabia about cinemas, concerts, and entertainment complexes that is responsive to the needs of Saudi citizens and international stakeholders.

Moreover, the establishment of the General Authority for Culture in May 2016 marked a historic moment in the Kingdom's acknowledgement of the arts as one pillar of a well-rounded society. Organizing events that uphold the value of literature and the fine arts have been well-received by the Saudi public, which has welcomed the congruence of Islamic values and enhanced appreciation for the arts and learning.

Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman described the need for new entertainment options in Saudi Arabia as follows: "We consider culture and entertainment indispensable to our quality of life. We are well aware that the cultural and entertainment opportunities currently available do not reflect the rising aspirations of our citizens and residents, nor are they in harmony with our prosperous economy. We will seek to offer a variety

of cultural venues - such as libraries, arts and museums - as well as entertainment possibilities to suit tastes and preferences. These projects will also contribute to our economy and will result in the creation of many job opportunities.”

### **Public Health and Well-Being**

As a complement to intellectual and cultural pursuits in developing a vibrant society, the Kingdom's leadership has identified physical wellbeing as a national priority. Currently, the ratio of individuals exercising at least once per week stands at 13 percent, a figure that has been deemed unsatisfactory by international standards. Vision 2030 aims to dramatically increase the number of Saudi citizens engaged in weekly physical activity to 40 percent. In order to inspire Saudis to exercise on a regular basis, the Government of Saudi Arabia announced in November 2016 plans to shift state ownership of sports clubs to private companies. The campaign elevated the public's ability to use sports venues while directing the launch of a fund under the Council of Economic and Development Affairs (CEDA) that will provide loans and material support to private sports clubs. This fund is expected to create 40,000 jobs and widen opportunities for Saudis to enjoy sports as part of a wholesome lifestyle.

Vision 2030 has extended development within the social sector to female athletes and aspirants. Following the release of Vision 2030, the General Sports Authority formed a women's division under the leadership of Princess Reema bint Bandar to generate large-scale participation in physical activity throughout the Kingdom. Under its mandate, the Authority issues licenses to new sports centers and promotes youth registration in sports. By early 2017, the women's division announced a broad campaign to license women's gyms in an effort to boost public health and create up to 250,000 jobs within the burgeoning sports sector. Women in the Kingdom will enjoy facilities where swimming, running, and weightlifting are all options that were once limited to exclusive health clubs inaccessible to the average Saudi citizen.

# A young prince is reimagining Saudi Arabia. Can he make his vision come true?

DAVID IGNATIUS | THE WASHINGTON POST | APRIL 20, 2017

Two years into his campaign as change agent in this conservative oil kingdom, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman appears to be gaining the confidence and political clout to push his agenda of economic and social reform.

The young prince outlined his plans in a nearly 90-minute conversation Tuesday night at his office here. Aides said it was his first lengthy on-the-record interview in months. He offered detailed explanations about foreign policy, plans to privatize oil giant Saudi Aramco, strategy for investment in domestic industry, and liberalization of the entertainment sector, despite opposition from some religious conservatives.

Mohammed bin Salman said that the crucial requirement for reform is public willingness to change a traditional society. "The most concerning thing is if the Saudi people are not convinced. If the Saudi people are convinced, the sky is the limit," he said, speaking through an interpreter.

Change seems increasingly desired in this young, restless country. A recent Saudi poll found that 85 percent of the public, if forced to choose, would support the government rather than religious authorities on policy matters, said Abdullah al-Hokail, the head of the government's public opinion center. He added that 77 percent of those surveyed supported the government's "Vision 2030" reform plan, and that 82 percent favored music performances at public gatherings attended by men and women. Though these aren't independently verified numbers, they

do indicate the direction of popular feeling, which Saudis say is matched by anecdotal evidence.

"MBS," as the deputy crown prince is known, said that he was "very optimistic" about President Trump. He described Trump as "a president who will bring America back to the right track" after Barack Obama, whom Saudi officials mistrusted. "Trump has not yet completed 100 days, and he has restored all the alliances of the U.S. with its conventional allies."

A sign of the kingdom's embrace of the Trump administration was the visit here this week by U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. While the Obama administration had criticized the Saudi war in Yemen, Mattis discussed the possibility of additional U.S. support if the Houthi insurgents there don't agree to a U.N.-brokered settlement. (I traveled to Saudi Arabia as part of the press corps accompanying Mattis.)

Mohammed bin Salman has been courting Russia, as well as the United States, and he offered an intriguing explanation of Saudi Arabia's goal in this diplomacy. "The main objective is not to have Russia place all its cards in the region behind Iran," he said. To convince Russia that Riyadh is a better bet than Tehran, the Saudis have been "coordinating our oil policies recently" with Moscow, he said, which "could be the most important economic deal for Russia in modern times."

There's less apparent political tension than a year ago, when many analysts saw a rivalry between Mohammed bin Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, who is officially next in line for the throne but is less prominent than his cousin. Whatever the succession proves to be, the deputy crown prince appears to be firmly in control of Saudi military strategy, foreign policy and economic planning. He has gathered a team of technocrats who are much younger and more activist than the kingdom's past leadership.

Reform plans appear to be moving ahead slowly but steadily. Mohammed bin Salman said that the budget deficit had been cut; non-oil revenue increased 46



percent from 2014 to 2016 and is forecast to grow another 12 percent this year. Unemployment and housing remain problems, he said, and improvement in those areas isn't likely until between 2019 and 2021.

The biggest economic change is the plan to privatize about 5 percent of Saudi Aramco, which Mohammed bin Salman said will take place next year. This public offering would probably raise hundreds of billions of dollars and be the largest such sale in financial history. The exact size of the offering will depend on financial-market demand and the availability of good options for investing the proceeds, he told me. The rationale for selling a share of the kingdom's oil treasure is to raise money to diversify the economy away from reliance on energy. One priority is mining, which would tap an estimated \$1.3 trillion in potential mineral wealth.

The Saudi official listed other investment targets: creating a domestic arms industry, reducing the \$60 billion to \$80 billion the kingdom spends annually to buy weapons abroad; producing automobiles in Saudi Arabia to replace the roughly \$14 billion the government spends annually for imported vehicles; and creating domestic entertainment and tourism industries to capture some of the \$22 billion that Saudis spend traveling overseas each year.

The entertainment industry is a proxy for the larger puzzle of how to unlock the Saudi economy. Changes have begun. A Japanese orchestra that included women performed here this month, before a mixed audience of men and women. A Comic Con took place in Jeddah recently, with young men and women dressing up as characters from the TV show "Supernatural" and other favorites. Comedy clubs feature sketch comedians (but no female stand-up comics, yet).

These options are a modest revolution for a Saudi Arabia where the main entertainment venues, until recently, were restaurants and shopping malls. The modern world, in all its raucousness, is coming, for better or worse. King Fahd International Stadium in Riyadh hosted a Monster Jam last month with souped-up trucks. There are plans for a Six Flags theme park south of Riyadh.

Maya al-Athel, one of the dozens of young people hatching plans at the Saudi General Entertainment Authority, said in an interview that she'd like to bring a Museum of Ice Cream, like one she found in New York, to the kingdom.

"We want to change the culture," said Ahmed al-Khatib, a former investment banker who's chairman of the entertainment authority. His target is to create six public entertainment options every weekend for Saudis. But the larger goal, he said, is "spreading happiness" in what has sometimes been a somber country.

The instigator of this attempt to reimagine the kingdom is the 31-year-old deputy crown prince. With his brash demeanor, he's the opposite of the traditional Bedouin reserve of past Saudi leaders. Unlike so many Saudi princes, he wasn't educated in the West, which may have preserved the raw combative energy that is part of his appeal for young Saudis.

The trick for Mohammed bin Salman is to maintain the alliance with the United States, without seeming to be America's puppet. "We have been influenced by you in the U.S. a lot," he said. "Not because

anybody exerted pressure on us — if anyone puts pressure on us, we go the other way. But if you put a movie in the cinema and I watch it, I will be influenced." Without this cultural nudge, he said, "we would have ended up like North Korea." With the United States as a continuing ally, "undoubtedly, we're going to merge more with the world."

Mohammed bin Salman is careful when he talks about religious issues. So far, he has treated the religious authorities as allies against radicalism rather than cultural adversaries. He argues that extreme religious conservatism in Saudi Arabia is a relatively recent phenomenon, born in reaction to the 1979 Iranian revolution and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by Sunni radicals later that year.

"I'm young. Seventy percent of our citizens are young," he said. "We don't want to waste our lives in this whirlpool that we were in the past 30 years. We want to end this epoch now. We want, as the Saudi people, to enjoy the coming days, and concentrate on developing our society and developing ourselves as individuals and families, while retaining our religion and customs. We will not continue to be in the post-'79 era," he concluded. "That age is over."

# Saudi Arabia's Full Statement to Bloomberg on Its 2017 Agenda

**GLEN CAREY AND VIVIAN NEREIM | BLOOMBERG | MARCH 6, 2017**

A senior source in Saudi Arabia's Council of Economic and Development Affairs, a body overseen by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, responded to Bloomberg questions on the government's 2017 agenda with the statement that follows. Questions have been edited for clarity.

## **Busy Agenda**

This year will be a key year for Prince Mohammed's plan for life after oil, Saudi Vision 2030. How do you respond to those concerned that the to-do list for 2017 is too crowded?

Answer: Firstly, I would like to make it clear that the to-do list is ambitious but not impossible, and we have already begun applying it. Our work has started in the beginning of 2016 with the formulation of our future vision for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's position and our approach until 2030, and applying it realistically, clearly, ambitiously and decisively by the identification of challenges and visions.

Since the announcement of the Vision, we have started the actual implementation of several courses, including promoting the government performance by forming a specialized council in the field of economy and development, integrating some ministries, creating new executive government agencies and creating executive programs to achieve the objectives of Saudi "Vision 2030".

With the launching of Vision 2030, several programs, such as National Transformation Program 2020, Fiscal Balance Program 2020, bonds issuing, paying the delayed full dues to the private sector, Citizen's Account Program, Parallel Financial Market, General Entertainment Authority and activities directed to the citizens have been launched.

These are some examples of the success stories we have. These successes are directly contributing to achieving the objectives of the Saudi Vision 2030. Thanks to God, Saudi Arabia has social, economic, political and geographic abilities to achieve the Vision.

### **Taking Action**

How will the government shift from talk to action in 2017?

Answer: As I mentioned in the previous answer, the government is working in several avenues that contribute to implementing the plans and achieving the objectives, including paying the delayed full dues to the private sector, creating the Small and Medium Enterprises Authority and providing financial funds to support this sector. In addition to allocating many opportunities to enable the partnership between both public and private sectors. In 2017, four variety allocation opportunities in the Saudi market will be offered for private sector, locally and globally.

### **Austerity Buffer**

How will the government ensure that the Citizen's Account, the new cash payout program for Saudis, is implemented without mistakes?

Answer: Citizen's Account Program is a national program that aims to change the method of offering the government subsidies to be directed to low and

average income groups rather than being comprehensive support. This program will cover all kinds of government subsidies in the future not only gasoline, electricity and high cost living allowances.

I recall that on Dec. 22, we announced the Citizen's Account program. We also announced that registering for the program would start in February 1st of 2017, which was accomplished, thanks to God. Until now, more than 3 million Saudi families including 11 million male and female citizens had registered in the program. This means that more than half of Saudi society have registered in less than 30 days, and about 5 million male and female citizens registered in the first week easily and without any difficulties or technical malfunctions with high reliability.

In the kingdom, we also successfully established similar support programs in an electronic format such as Hafiz (a program meant to support job seekers) and social security and protection programs. This has acquired the kingdom an experience in management of these programs that draws on advanced technical infrastructure that we own and the electronic connectivity between more than 18 different government bodies. It should also be noted, that more than 80% of the registrations were done via mobile phones.

What has been said does not mean necessarily there will be no mistakes. Therefore, plans aimed at hedging against possible errors were developed. When examining the global experiences of such programs we found that all of them have suffered some faults in the beginning, and they have been improved and edited until they became efficient programs. That is why we included in our plans very conservative numbers and budget to make sure that the program covers all beneficiaries. In case we detected that the program did not cover an entitled category, we will adjust it and pay them retroactivity to achieve justice in coverage and support. With the intention of achieving objectives for which the program was created, the entitled citizen will always be a matter of concern for the program.

## Growth Risk

How can the government prevent new taxes and a levy on expatriates from further slowing economic growth or putting too much pressure on the private sector?

Answer: The financial reforms are expected to cause some slowdown in economic growth. However, the state is working to cushion the slowdown through a number of procedures that will be taken in 2017. They include but not limited to the following:

- Increasing government spending in 2017 in comparison to 2016.
- Increasing the paid capital of Saudi Industrial Development Fund from 34 billion riyals to 59 billion riyals during 2017 in order to finance the private sector to stimulate economic growth and sustainable economic diversity.
- Easing some of the regulatory restrictions (exporting as an example) in order to give private companies a chance to enter larger markets.
- Establishing the National Center for Allocation to increase private sector contribution to the economy through the National Transformation Program and through state-owned enterprise's privatization. In 2017, there will be privatizations of four opportunities for the private sector.
- The prior announcement and gradualism of reforms will grant private sector adequate chance to invest and increase efficiency.
- Launching the Citizen Account Program to minimize the impact of reforms on citizens and their in-home consumption.
- Supporting main industrial sectors through loans and programs of increasing efficiency in energy consumption.
- Paying the delayed full dues in 2016 to the private sector.
- Increasing the transparency significantly in terms of financial reforms, the public finances of the state and the mechanism of dues payment for the private sector.
- Improving export-financing capabilities in the Kingdom by increasing the size of existing programs to provide export companies with necessary funding.
- Developing new economic sectors, such as the mining, logistics and entertainment sectors.
- We believe that the enhancement of the economic efficiency will be the main key to raise the profitability of the private sector and promote the level of salaries, which will increase the attractiveness of the private sector to the

Saudis and employment. Consequently, this step will support the domestic consumption and investment because of keeping money in the Kingdom. In addition, one of the most important goals that we seek to achieve is to diversify the national economy to support sustainable economic growth, which is based on productivity."

- Launching the fund of funds by the Public Investment Fund, to invest in Venture Capital Funds and strengthening small and medium enterprises growth.
- The local and international private sector is an important partner in the achievement of the vision, and is expected to adapt generally with the economic and financial measures and reforms, especially in the presence of incentive programs that increase efficiency and productivity. Saudi Arabia suffers from economic distortions due to the abundance of low-cost expats, which have encouraged the private sector to employ these workers, rather than investing in increasing the efficiency through using advanced technology.
- We believe that the enhancement of the economic efficiency will be the main key to raise the profitability of the private sector and promote the level of salaries, which will increase the attractiveness of the private sector to the Saudis and employment. Consequently, this step will support the domestic consumption and investment because of keeping money in the Kingdom. In addition, one of the most important goals that we seek to achieve is to diversify the national economy to support sustainable economic growth, which is based on productivity.

## **Aramco IPO**

How will Prince Mohammed's team convince those who believe the initial public offering of Saudi Aramco is not in the country's interests?

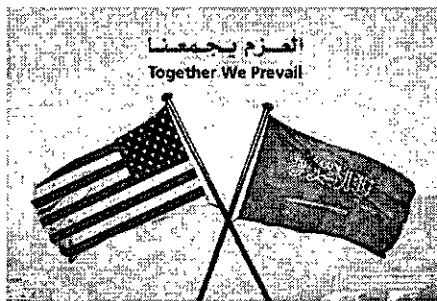
Answer:

- Aramco will remain a Saudi company that contributes to the domestic product.
- Saudi Arabia will not give up on its majority ownership of Aramco, and will not relinquish the control of it as the owner of largest proportion.
- Citizens will be given the priority for the IPO by offering the shares on the Saudi stock exchange, Tadawul.



- IPO proceeds will be invested in the development and diversification of the kingdom's economy and will raise its sustainability.
- Aramco IPO will raise transparency of the company and the efficiency of its business.
- All the suggested options in the IPO are there to maximize the economic benefits of the kingdom.





# DID YOU KNOW?

Here are some new developments in Saudi Arabia that may be of interest to journalists visiting Saudi Arabia:

## ON COUNTERTERRORISM:

- **ISLAMIC MILITARY ALLIANCE HAS OPENED A NEW HEADQUARTER IN RIYADH:** The Islamic Military Alliance is taking on terrorist groups and the threat of violent extremism and counter the expansion of terror groups throughout the Islamic world. With 41 member nations, founded by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Riyadh-headquartered Alliance has been welcomed as a historic and unifying demonstration of strength of allied nations against terrorism.
- **MINISTRY OF INTERIOR MONITORS MOSQUES TO COMBAT EXTREMISM:** Mosques in Saudi Arabia are monitored for extremist preaching, and imams who preach deviant terrorist ideologies are identified and disciplined. These mosques are monitored via closed circuit television by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance. The most prominent clerics are on our side: following the three simultaneous terror attacks of July 2016--against U.S. targets--the imams of the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Medinah condemned terrorism and urged waging a tough fight against the "evil goals" behind those organizations. In his sermon of July 8, 2016, Sheikh Khalid Ali Al-Ghamedi, the Imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, said terrorism is "an outlandish phenomenon for Islam and in particular for Saudi Arabia, home to the two holiest mosques."
- **IT IS A VIOLATION OF SAUDI LAW TO FUND EXTREMISM.** Saudi Arabia has enacted some of the toughest terror financing laws in the world and strictly enforces them. It is illegal for any Saudi individual or institution to fund or support a school or any institution or person that promotes violent extremism. In 2016, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. jointly identified and pursued extremists with connections to the schools. The U.S. Department of the Treasury stated: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia designated these individuals and entities under its Law of Terrorism Crimes and Financing and the Royal Decree A/44."



SAUDI ARABIA

- **SAUDI PROGRAM TO REHABILITATE EXTREMISTS IS A MODEL FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD:** Saudi Arabia believes extremists who were once dedicated to the destruction of the Kingdom can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into Saudi society. These model rehabilitation centers have a high rate of success with detainees. The main program consists of religious instruction that is meant to purge the extremist's interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. Once the detainees are released, they are placed on a kind of parole or probation, with the individual having to wear a monitoring device.
- **YOUR FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT:** Saudi Arabia experienced a six-fold increase in deaths due to terrorism in 2015 compared to the year prior, with 48 attacks resulting in 107 deaths. This is the highest level of terrorism Saudi Arabia has experienced since the year 2000; in fact, there were more people killed from terrorism in 2015 in the Kingdom than in the previous 11 years combined. That same year Daesh (ISIS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a "fatwa" against the Saudi royal family--one of three to date. In 2016, Saudi Arabia faced a total of 34 attacks on its soil from a variety of extremist groups, including a trio of simultaneous attacks against U.S. targets on 4 July, while Saudi security forces conducted eight operations that foiled major attacks.
- **DAESH/ISIS IS OUR PRIMARY TARGET IN THIS FIGHT:** Already in 2014, the year of the founding of Daesh/ISIS, Saudi Arabia condemned that terror group (along with Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian affiliate of al-Qaeda). Hundreds of alleged ISIS supporters were arrested in the Kingdom between 2015 and 2016. One very prominent arrest on this front took place on June 3, 2016, when Saudi security services announced the arrest of a cell of terror suspects, among whom was an imam at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina suspected of supporting the so-called "Islamic State". In addition, our commitment to combatting this terror group includes the following developments:
  - The U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) in 2011 began collaboration with the Kingdom's Ministry of Defense focusing on internal security and terrorist activity throughout the Arabian Peninsula. This partnership, in turn, has been conducted under the auspices of the CIA's relationship with the Kingdom's General Directorate for Investigations (or GDI--equivalent to the FBI program of the United States). While structured in distinct divisions, the GDI works alongside the Saudi Special Security Forces and Special Operations Forces. Since 2014, all exercises and training have focused on how to counter and combat non-state insurgent elements such as the Islamic State (Daesh/ISIS). The "Islamic State" and the emergence of similarly aligned militant Islamists pose the most immediate threat to the Kingdom.
  - As a member of the 68-nation strong Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, the Kingdom offered, first in early February 2016 and again in February 2017, to deploy ground troops made up of Saudi Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Syria as part of a wider ground intervention in that country--within the context and only at the request of a broader US-led coalition effort--to assist in operations against Daesh/ISIS.

- This follows on the heels of the creation, in December 2015, of the Islamic Military Alliance, principally focused on the elimination of Daesh/ISIS, made up of 41 Muslim member-states—an initiative of Deputy Crown Prince and Minister of Defense Prince Mohammed bin Salman and in which Pakistan, not originally part of the Coalition, has recently signed on and has given the Alliance its first-ever Commander-in-Chief. These efforts remain highly active: just last August, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with Brett McGurk, the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, to discuss intensifying this cooperation.

## ON YEMEN:

- **SAUDI ARABIA HAS BEEN A KEY DIPLOMATIC—AND NOT ONLY MILITARY—LEADER:** During a meeting of his General People's Congress Party in the Yemeni capital of Sana'a on May 10, former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh expressed willingness to enter into talks with the leadership of the Kingdom, which led a coalition to intervene in that country militarily at the behest of exiled President Abd Rabbou Mansour Hadi in March 2015. "We have no choice but dialogue. We are ready to go to Riyadh, Khamis Mushait, Muscat or elsewhere to start dialogue and to reach an understanding," former President Saleh was quoted as saying. This development follows on two years of Saudi Arabia's exhaustive efforts to bring all parties in the conflict in Yemen to conclude a diplomatic peace agreement—and in the years prior to the Kingdom's intervention.
- **A GOAL OF RESTORING ORDER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR ALL.** The driving goal of Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Yemen crisis has been to restore civil order, adhere to the rule of law as embodied in the UN Charter and relevant resolutions, and to oversee "National Dialogue" conferences between factions in which all sides, no matter their political affiliation, have a voice in Yemen's future. Saudi Arabia is playing a leading role in a series of UN-led diplomatic accords that seeks to reconcile various conflicting political factions in Yemen, including the Houthis, under the aegis of 'National Dialogue' consultations. The Kingdom also called upon international diplomatic channels through the GCC, G10 countries [the US-NATO allies and Gulf monarchies] and the Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General to secure a peaceful transition of government. With active Saudi participation, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2216, calling for sanctions and demands that the Houthis withdraw from all territory that group has seized—without a single objection (Russia chose to abstain). The UN's special envoy for Yemen, Jamal Benomar, described the conclusion of the Saudi-led National Dialogue Conference as a "historic moment". Mr. Benomar added: "The National Dialogue established a new social contract and opened a new page in the history of Yemen."



SAUDI ARABIA

- **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SEES INTERVENTION AS SELF-DEFENSE.** "Yemen" is neither a war the Kingdom wanted, nor a war the Kingdom started, but it is a war waged by others into which our country was summoned to intervene by the exiled legitimate leader of Yemen. Our engagement is about a fight for the restoration of law and civil order, and of our own national defense. This is not merely the position of Saudi Arabia, but is a view shared by the international community as well.
  - The UK Defense Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, told British media in May that the Kingdom has a right to defend itself by intervening militarily in Yemen, stating that the Kingdom is entitled to ask its allies for help. "Saudi Arabia is being attacked by Houthi rebels across its southern border with Yemen," Sir Michael explained. "It's had its towns and villages shelled by the Houthis. Saudi Arabia is fully entitled to defend itself and it is fully entitled to call on its friends in so doing." He added that the Kingdom is a key ally to his country, echoing a sentiment of the civilized community of nations: "Saudi Arabia is a key partner of ours—and an enormously important trading partner, a commercial partner, but also a defense partner. We share intelligence about Saudi Arabia about terrorism. We gain from that relationship. Every arms export application is very carefully looked at and judged by our criteria, some of the toughest in the world. But Saudi Arabia is equally entitled to defend itself," said Sir Michael.
- **THE SAUDI SIDE OF THE CONFLICT: UNSUNG HEROES, UNKNOWN VICTIMS:** The Kingdom receives coordinates regularly from international humanitarian organizations in Yemen, and has 4,800 points on a list not to be targeted that is updated daily. These include medical and UN facilities, historical locations and schools. Unfortunately, the international media jump to conclusions accusing the Saudi-led Coalition Supporting Legitimacy in Yemen of targeting civilians, when in fact the majority of civilian casualties in Yemen are caused by the Houthis' indiscriminate shelling. One set of these victims are the Saudi border patrol on the southern border of the Kingdom, whose work in defending Saudi Arabia while allowing Yemenis to be sheltered in our country, goes unnoticed by that same media. Dozens of ballistic missiles have been shot across or at the border between Yemen and the southern part of the Kingdom, severely wounding or killing these men. Attempted incursions of the Houthis have been resisted by Saudi patrol with little attention paid by press accounts. Saudi on-the-ground intelligence at those borders monitors Iranian ships in the Red Sea delivering armaments to those Houthis, all the while streams of Yemenis have taken refuge inside the Kingdom. This is the same Saudi southern branch intelligence that provided security to the United States as demonstrated in that Saudi agency's thwarting of the US-bound airliner through Yemen in October 2010 that was outfitted with explosive-laden cartridges.
- **MILITARY TARGETING IN YEMEN FOLLOWS NATO STANDARDS:** Saudi Arabia has taken several steps to create a more thorough vetting process for target selection and validation for the Saudi-led Arab Coalition's operations in Yemen. These steps are meant to ensure that: a)



the process continues to adhere to the Law of Armed Conflict; b) it expands the 'No Strike List', and the 'Restricted Target List', now at over 33,000 (thirty-three thousand) targets; c) target criteria such as Damage Assessment and Collateral Damage Estimates are enhanced; and d) the implementation of stricter Rules of Engagement is observed. Furthermore, the Saudi-led coalition has implemented additional vetting criteria for time-sensitive targets. These criteria place stringent responsibilities on Coalition pilots, as they are required to undertake supplementary vetting measures before conducting a mission. Currently, the Coalition seeks to align its targeting practices and personnel training with NATO standards, and only personnel that meet these rigorous standards are involved in target selection.

## ON ECONOMIC REFORM:

- **THE GROWTH OF NON-HYDROCARBONS AT AN UNPRECEDENTED RATE:** High-speed rail; the privatization of public utilities, airports and of commercial ports; the development of nuclear and solar energy; the rise of our tourism industry and the easing of visa requirements; pharmaceutical research breakthroughs; world leadership in environmental technology—cogeneration and desalination—are all components of the motor driving the Kingdom's vast, Vision 2030-inspired change. This strategy is being accompanied by a broader 'buy Saudi' theme: the government is hoping that by 2020, 50% of all the goods consumed in the Kingdom will be domestically produced (up from around one-third at present), with pharmaceuticals and renewables among several sectors highlighted. In addition, the country seeks to reduce unemployment from 11.6% all end-2015 to 7% by 2030.
- **THE LIBERALIZATION OF THE ECONOMY AND THE RISE OF THE SAUDI STOCK EXCHANGE.** The Kingdom is also expediting liberalization of the financial sector, including easing restrictions on foreign participation in the Saudi stock-market from 2017. In June 2015, the country's stock exchange, the Tadawul, opened to qualified investors for the first time, driving increased participation by institutional investors. This was "one of the most keenly anticipated financial events in the Mideast region", according to analysts, and the most recent step in a longer process of market reform that has seen that Exchange develop from a single-product market to a diverse-investment platform.
  - As Western analysts have noted, one of the most striking features of the Saudi exchange is that its listed companies reflect the range of economic activity taking place in the country, a standard that is not equaled by the Kingdom's regional peers. To date, equities are divided into 15 sectors: banks and financial services; petrochemical industries, cement, retail, energy, utilities, agriculture, food industries, telecoms & IT, insurance, construction, real estate development, transport, media, publishing and hotel tourism.

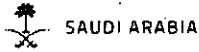


- **SAUDI ARABIA: BANKING'S EXPANDING HUB:** Saudi Arabia is the Mideast's rapidly growing and highly regarded banking hub. Saudi Arabia's robust economy has been the principal leading factor enabling the resilience of the banking sector and with the introduction, in 2013, by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) of the Basel III's new capital regime, the country has attained international standards of stability and transparency. In terms of profitability, Saudi banks have enjoyed sustained growth in recent years, with aggregate expansion in 2016 of approximately 11.5%, according to published financial results, while prudent regulation has played a significant role in this development, all the while that authority (SAMA) raised the cap on foreign ownership of commercial banks from 40% to 60% in line with its WTO agreement.
- **AMERICAN INVESTMENT BREAKS NEW RECORDS:** The April 2017 announcement that Saudi Arabia plans to award at least 15 trade licenses to American companies is an extension of Vision 2030. As the majority of the recipient companies are expected to be outside the oil and gas fields, increased hospitality towards American corporations is helping bolster Saudi economic diversity while strengthening economic partnership.
- **WOMEN ROLE IN THE WORKFORCE IS RAPIDLY EXPANDING:** Under Saudi Vision 2030, the percentage of women in the workforce is expected to rise from 22 to 30 percent. Glowork, a Riyadh-based startup that helps women find employment through training initiatives and job matching, placed over 20,000 women throughout Saudi Arabia in jobs.
- **AMERICAN PARTNERSHIPS WITH SAUDI WOMEN:** The interest American companies have taken in the professional development of Saudi women on the part of these companies shows a further bond between the U.S. and the Kingdom. For example, The Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy workshops are designed to complement the work undertaken by the Saudi government, which has recently created a program to encourage more female business owners to join the workforce. This initiative follows on the heels of the pioneering US-Saudi women-in-business programs as the GE 'Conference for Saudi Women' that took place on 22 June 2014. GE hosted a first-of-its-kind summit dedicated to women leaders from the government and private sectors in the Kingdom at Crotonville, the world's first major 'corporate university' founded in 1956, and this Saudi women's leadership Summit was attended by more than 50 high-level women leaders from the Kingdom representing ministries, private sector businesses and civil society organizations.
- **SAUDI WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ARE CHANGING THE COUNTRY AND THE WORLD:** In the past decade alone, Saudi Arabia has recorded a 1,708 percent increase in female employment. Saudi women in the workforce grew 48% in five years (from 2010 to 2015). More than half of Saudi students today are women. Today, Saudi women lead law firms and head major banks. The largest Saudi companies, including Saudi Aramco, have joined global Fortune 500 companies in launching programs focused on integrating women into their workforces at all levels.





- **SAUDI'S FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS:** In the autumn of 2016, HSBC issued a report on worldwide patterns of entrepreneurship, making special mention of the Kingdom. In that paper, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were cited as having "the youngest and the most successful" entrepreneurs in the Middle East. Saudi entrepreneurs recently made the Forbes listing of the Middle East's top movers and shakers.
- **THE GREEN KINGDOM:** The King Abdullah Center for Science and Technology (KACST) is a world-class institution, having formed partnerships with no less than NASA, Stanford, MIT, Cambridge University, the University of Southern California, and a host of others. The Center of Excellence of Nano-materials for Clean Energy Application (CENCEA) at KACST recently announced a partnership with the University of California at Berkeley to develop nanotechnologies in energy conversion. Meanwhile, the Joint Center for Integrated Bio-Integrated Technology Systems has recently partnered with labs at Stanford University and MIT to design sustainable energy storage super-capacitors and the harvesting of solar cells. KACST and UCLA have partnered to develop green nanotechnology to make solar cells more efficient.
- **PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS IN SAUDI ARABIA:** The Riyadh Metro is an example of new projects in which new technology is being incorporated into Saudi society. The new \$22.5 billion metro system includes fully automatic trains and stations powered by renewable energy to meet the demands of the growing population while reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.
- **THE SUPER-COMPUTER REVOLUTION:** The King Abdullah University for Science and Technology is home to Shaheen II, the fastest supercomputer in the Middle East, and the seventh-fastest supercomputer in the world. Brought into service the summer of 2015, Shaheen II focuses on four specific "research thrusts": a) resources, energy and environment; b) biosciences and bioengineering; c) materials science and engineering; d) applied mathematics and computational science. Data research is unique, in that it comes primarily from the Kingdom and natural border areas, with this data concentrated on oil and gas reserves, Red Sea exploration, etc. The project has partnerships with the Oxford University Center for Collaborative Applied Mathematics; the Imperial College, London; MIT, the Institut Français du Pétrole, and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.
- **...AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA ONE:** On the social media front, the Kingdom boasts the largest Twitter presence in the entire Arab world—approximately 2.6 million active Twitter accounts.
- **THE RENEWABLE KINGDOM:** One of the finest research institutes in the world, the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, (the body set up by Saudi Arabia's late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in 2010), is the country's leading research institution to push the national economy into the development of renewables. "Solar should be the fundamental solution for Saudi Arabia," the Kingdom's Ministry of Economy and Planning announced last year, and the country is keeping its word.



- **MEETING THE NEEDS OF A GROWING POPULATION:** Saudi Arabia is also particularly vulnerable to climate change, as most of its ecosystems are sensitive, its renewable water resources are limited and its economy remains highly dependent on fossil fuel exports. Meanwhile, significant demographic pressures continue to affect the government's ability to provide for the needs of its population. The Kingdom is seeking to achieve food security by implementing its newly prepared water and environmentally-friendly agriculture strategy which promotes Saudi agricultural investments in collaboration with countries with a high-agricultural potential. The country also aims at saving 8.5 billion cubic meters of irrigation water by 2030. The list is "endless" as the country leads global research in these and other fields of renewable energy and environmental research. It is unfortunate that this is something that rarely—if ever—is covered in the international press.

## ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- **WOMEN ON THE SHURA COUNCIL:** In 2013, Saudi Arabia increased female representation on the Kingdom's 150-member legislative body. Today, 29 women sit on the council.
- **SAUDI ENTERTAINMENT:** The Kingdom created the General Authority for Entertainment a little over a year ago to provide greater entertainment offerings to the people of Saudi Arabia. To date, they have brought a diverse array of events to the Kingdom – from monster trucks to comic books to the Japanese Symphony Orchestra.
- **REFORMS TO GUARDIANSHIP:** The May 2017 royal decree allowing women increased access to government services without the permission of a male guardian was celebrated in Saudi Arabia as a formal step towards the empowerment of women. This royal decree constituted a national recognition of Saudi women's right to access jobs, higher education, and medical procedures and instructs government agencies to provide services to women without requiring permission from their male relative. The relaxation of guardianship rules will contribute to enhanced female participation in the workforce to promote economic diversification.
- **WOMEN IN SPORTS:** Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan, Vice President of the General Authority of Sport for the Women's Section, has stood unwaveringly by her mission to promote a culture of sports among Saudi women.

## ON HUMANITARIANISM: THE HEART OF SAUDI ARABIA

- **SYRIAN GUESTS LIVING IN THE KINGDOM:** Saudi Arabia is hosting hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. But the Kingdom does not treat them as refugees – none of them are living



in tents or camps. Saudi Arabia provides residency status so that Syrians can live and work in the Kingdom like any other foreign nationals and have access to housing and health care. The Kingdom has also provided over \$800 million in support and care to millions of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries.

- **HUMANITARIAN RELIEF IN YEMEN:** Saudi Arabia is the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief). This aid takes the form of shipments of food, water and other items to the people of Yemen, and the treatment of Yemeni nationals in Saudi hospitals. We propose a media availability at a warehouse in Riyadh where a shipment of humanitarian relief is being assembled. The media availability would feature testimonials from Yemeni nationals who had received health care in Saudi Arabia, as well as a representative of KSRelief who could discuss the overall program of humanitarian aid. Since April 2015, the Kingdom has provided Yemen over \$8.2 billion in humanitarian and developmental assistance.
- **HUMANITARIAN RELIEF IN IRAQ:** In 2014, the US State Department singled out Saudi Arabia for praise for our contribution of \$500 million in humanitarian relief to war-torn Iraq. A statement from the press release of December 12 of that year praising that aid read: "We applaud, for instance, the generosity of Saudi Arabia, whose \$500 million contribution to the UN in the early stages of the crisis this year was absolutely critical to providing life-saving assistance to those who fled ISIL."
- **ROHINGYA GUESTS LIVING IN THE KINGDOM:** Saudi Arabia is hosting two hundred thousand Rohingya refugees, like all refugees living in the Kingdom, they are not treat as refugees. They are granted residency status so that they can live and work and have access to housing and health care. The Kingdom has also pledged \$50 million to the Indonesian Government to support Rohingya refugees in Indonesia.

*This is distributed by Qorvis MSLGROUP on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.*