

Middle East and North Africa Overview

“Jordan does not bow to coercion. We will not be intimidated into altering our position, nor will we abandon our convictions or forfeit our role in the fight against terrorism in all its forms. To the contrary, every act of terrorism strengthens our resolve to adhere to our convictions, and to confront, with all means at our disposal, those who seek to undermine the security and stability of this country.”

King Abdullah II, King of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Address to the Nation

November 10, 2005

Terrorist activities in the Middle East and North Africa continued to be a primary concern in the global war on terror. Active extremist groups in this region include: al-Qaida, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades (Fatah’s militant wing), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), Ansar al-Islam and its offshoot Ansar al-Sunna, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s organization, Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, a.k.a. al-Qaida of the Jihad Organization in the Land of Two Rivers (a.k.a. al-Qaida in Iraq). These terrorist groups continued to affiliate themselves with al-Qaida and/or express support for its ideology.

In the past year, major terrorist attacks have occurred in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Morocco. In Egypt and Jordan, attacks targeted tourist destinations. In the case of the hotel bombings in Amman, the Jordanian public showed an erosion of support for both al-Qaida and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Lebanon also witnessed more than a dozen terrorist explosions in 2005, including one that killed former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Widespread terrorism and violence continue to plague Iraq. Numerous attacks and kidnappings in Iraq targeted foreign aid workers, contractors, and other non-combatants. Staunching the flow of foreign terrorists into Iraq remains a primary area of concern.

Almost all countries in the region continued to cooperate with the United States in counterterrorist activities and undertook efforts to strengthen their capabilities to fight the war on terror, including active participation in USG-sponsored counterterrorism training programs. Many countries continued to provide some form of assistance to Coalition efforts to bring peace and stability to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Several countries made impressive gains against terrorist groups operating in the region. For example, under the leadership of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora (elected in July), the Government of Lebanon has taken small but critical steps to restrict the freedom of several terrorist groups, specifically PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada, to operate in Lebanon. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) strengthened border control posts and increased patrols along the Lebanese-Syrian border in order to prevent the uncontested flow of weaponry to terrorist

