



# Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)

## The Foreign Terrorist Organization List

Congress has shown recurring interest in the administration of the State Department's FTO list and its application to groups that the U.S. government considers to be undertaking terrorism-related activities. At various times, Members or committees have expressed the desire to add suspected terrorist groups to the FTO list, designate drug cartels as an FTO, or revise legislation to allow other entities to be considered as an FTO.

The State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) is responsible for identifying entities for designation as an FTO. Prior to doing so, the Department is obligated to demonstrate that the entity in question engages in "terrorist activity," as defined in Section 212 (a)(3)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) (8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(3)(B)), or "terrorism," as defined in Section 140(d)(2) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act (FRAA), Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (FRAA) (22 U.S.C. §2656f(d)(2)), or retains the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism. When assessing entities for possible designation, CT looks not only at the actual terrorist attacks that a group has carried out, but also at whether the group has engaged in planning, preparations, and funding for possible future acts of terrorism or retains the capability and intent to carry out such acts.

Terrorist activity, as defined in the INA, specifically focuses on many types of violent activities or terrorist support efforts that could affect U.S. security interests. This definition does not address the motivations or goals of the perpetrators of the attack. However, the second aspect of these criteria for FTO designation, "terrorism," as provided in the FRAA, approaches the issue from the motivations of the aggressor and the targets of the violent activity. The FRAA defines terrorism as "*premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.*"

## FTO Designation Criteria

Entities placed on the FTO list are suspected of engaging in terrorism-related activities. By designating an entity as an FTO, the United States seeks to limit the group's financial, property, and travel interests. Per Section 219 of the INA, as amended via Section 302 of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, the Secretary of State must demonstrate that the entity of concern has met the three criteria to allow the Department to designate it as an FTO. The suspected terrorist group must

- be a foreign organization,
- engage in or retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorism, and
- threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national defense, foreign relations, or the economic interests of the United States.

## Consequences of Designation

- It is unlawful for a person in the United States or subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to knowingly provide "material support or resources" to a designated FTO.
- Representatives and members of a designated FTO, if they are aliens, are inadmissible to, and in certain circumstances removable from, the United States.
- The Secretary of the Treasury may require U.S. financial institutions possessing or controlling any assets of a designated FTO to block all transactions involving those assets.

## FTO designation further

- supports U.S. efforts to curb terrorism financing and to encourage other nations to do the same;
- stigmatizes and isolates designated terrorist organizations internationally;
- deters donations or contributions to and economic transactions with named organizations;
- heightens public awareness and knowledge of terrorist organizations; and
- signals to other governments U.S. concern about named organizations.

## FTO Revocation Process

The INA sets out three possible bases for revoking an FTO designation:

- The Secretary of State must revoke a designation if the Secretary finds that the circumstances that were the basis of the designation have changed in such a manner as to warrant a revocation.
- The Secretary of State must revoke a designation if the Secretary finds that the national security of the United States warrants a revocation.
- The Secretary of State may revoke a designation at any time.

Since its inception, numerous entities have been placed on and removed from the FTO list. Some entities have been listed, delisted, and relisted numerous times. Found below is a list of the entities currently designated as FTOs and groups that have been delisted. Relevant dates accompany the designations and delistings.

**Entities Currently Designated as FTOs***Date Designated*

10/8/1997 Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)  
 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)  
 Aum Shinrikyo (AUM)  
 Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)  
 Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group) (IG)  
 HAMAS  
 Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM)  
 Hizballah  
 Kahane Chai (Kach)  
 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) (Kongra-Gel)  
 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)  
 National Liberation Army (ELN)  
 Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)  
 Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)  
 Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)  
 PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC)  
 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)  
 Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)  
 Shining Path (SL)  
 10/8/1999 Al Qaeda (AQ)  
 9/25/2000 Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)  
 5/16/2001 Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA)  
 12/26/2001 Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)  
 Lashkar-e Taysyiba (LeT)  
 3/27/2002 Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)  
 Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)  
 Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)  
 8/9/2002 Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA)  
 10/23/2002 Jemaah Islamiya (JI)  
 1/30/2003 Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)  
 3/22/2004 Ansar al-Islam (AAI)  
 7/13/2004 Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)  
 12/17/2004 Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly Al Qaeda in Iraq)  
 6/17/2005 Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)  
 3/5/2008 Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)  
 3/18/2008 al-Shabaab  
 5/18/2009 Revolutionary Struggle (RS)  
 7/2/2009 Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)  
 1/19/2010 Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)  
 8/6/2010 Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)  
 9/11/2010 Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)  
 1/14/2010 Jundallah  
 5/23/2011 Army of Islam (AOI)  
 9/19/2011 Indian Mujahideen (IM)  
 3/13/2012 Jemaah Anshurut Tauhid (JAT)  
 5/30/2012 Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)  
 9/19/2012 Haqqani Network (HQN)  
 3/22/2013 Ansar al-Dine (AAD)  
 1/14/2013 Boko Haram  
 Ansaru  
 12/19/2013 al-Mulathamun Battalion  
 1/13/2014 Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi  
 Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah  
 Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia  
 4/10/2014 ISIL Sinai Province (formally Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis)  
 5/15/2014 al-Nusrah Front

8/20/2014 Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)  
 9/30/2015 Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN)  
 1/14/2016 ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K)  
 5/20/2016 Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's Branch in Libya (ISIL-Libya)  
 7/11/2016 Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent  
 8/17/2017 Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)  
 2/28/2018 ISIS-Bangladesh  
 2/28/2018 ISIS-Philippines  
 2/28/2018 ISIS-West Africa  
 5/23/2018 ISIS-Greater Sahara  
 7/11/2018 Al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB)  
 9/6/2018 Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)  
 4/15/2019 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)  
 1/10/2020 Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH)  
 1/14/2021 Harakat Sawa'd Misr (HASM)  
 3/11/2021 ISIS-DRC  
 3/11/2021 ISIS-Mozambique  
 12/11/2021 Segunda Marquetalia  
 12/11/2021 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP)

**Delisted FTOs***Date Originally Designated • Date Removed*

10/8/1999 • 10/8/1997 Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine -Hawatmeh Faction  
 Khmer Rouge  
 Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front  
 Dissidents  
 10/8/2001 • 10/8/1997 Japanese Red Army  
 Tupac Amaru Revolution Movement  
 10/8/1997 • 5/18/2009 Revolutionary Nuclei  
 10/8/1997 • 10/15/2010 Armed Islamic Group (GIA)  
 10/8/1997 • 9/28/2012 Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)  
 10/11/2005 • 5/28/2013 Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)  
 9/10/2001 • 7/15/2014 United Self Defense Forces of Colombia  
 10/8/1997 • 9/3/2015 Revolutionary Organization 17 November (17N)  
 12/17/2004 • 12/9/2015 Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)  
 10/8/1997 • 6/1/2017 Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)  
 1/19/2021 • 2/16/2021 Ansarallah (Houthis)  
 10/8/1997 • 12/1/2021 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)  
 10/8/1997 • 5/20/2022 Aum Shinrikyo (AUM)  
 10/8/1997 • 5/20/2022 Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)  
 10/8/1997 • 5/20/2022 Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group – IG)  
 10/8/1997 • 5/20/2022 Kahane Chai (Kach)  
 8/20/2014 • 5/20/2022 Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)

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