

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

## Press Center



## Treasury Designates an Additional Senior Leader of Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb

2/14/2013

### *Action Targets AQIM Activities in Mali as well as Ongoing Kidnapping for Ransom Operations*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today designated Yahya Abu Hammam (Hammam) pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, which targets terrorists and their supporters. Hammam is a senior leader of al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and has played a key role in the group's ongoing terrorist activities in North Africa and Mali. Today's designation supports ongoing international efforts to isolate AQIM, deny its members the benefits of their violent and criminal acts, and help restore Mali's territorial integrity.

"The United States will continue to support the efforts of France and the international community to combat AQIM's violent extremism in Mali and throughout the region. We have witnessed the suffering that AQIM has inflicted on the innocent populations and hostages under its control and remain determined to cut off the funding it needs to recruit new members and carry out future terrorist attacks," said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen.

Hammam is the AQIM leader for the Sahel region, succeeding the former leader, Nabil Abu-Alqama, who died in a car crash in late 2012. Previously, Hammam led another AQIM element whose members operated in Northern Mali. In that capacity, he participated in several attacks launched on behalf of AQIM in Mauritania. For years, AQIM has taken foreign nationals hostage and demanded that the victims' governments, employers, or families pay large ransoms for their release. As of late 2011, Hammam reportedly had possession of multiple European hostages.

AQIM, a violent extremist group based in Algeria and northern Mali, formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), merged with al-Qa'ida in September 2006. GSPC was one of 15 entities originally listed on the Annex to E.O. 13224 in September 2001, and was added to the United Nations' Consolidated List of individuals and entities associated with Usama Bin Laden, al-Qa'ida, and the Taliban in October 2001. AQIM has raised tens of millions of dollars through kidnapping for ransom and used the proceeds to help fund the full range of its activities, including acquiring weapons, staging attacks, and establishing its control over large areas of northern Mali.

As a result of today's designation, any assets Hammam may have subject to U.S. jurisdiction are frozen, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from doing business with Hammam.

#### **Identifying Information:**

Name: Yahya Abu Hammam  
AKA: Jamel Akacha  
AKA: Akkacha Djamel  
AKA: Yahia Abou el Hammam  
DOB: 1979  
POB: Algeria

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