



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Press Statement

Richard Boucher, Spokesman

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Redesignation of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan as a Foreign Terrorist Organization

Today, the Department of State is announcing the redesignation of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under U.S. law. The group was first designated two years ago, and designations last for a two-year period.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is a threat to the security of Uzbekistan and to the region. The group has close ties to al-Qaida and has received al-Qaida funds. It fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan against coalition forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan military leader Juma Namangani apparently was killed during an airstrike last November. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is responsible for criminal acts of terrorism against the citizens of Uzbekistan and has also kidnapped foreigners, including four American mountain climbers who were held hostage in 2000 before being able to escape. In 1999, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan took a group of Japanese geologists hostage. We also believe the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan was involved in explosions in Tashkent that killed 16 people and a bus hijacking in 1999, in which 2 passengers and several police were killed.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan has also publicly called for the violent overthrow of the Government of Uzbekistan and has claimed responsibility for ongoing armed incursions into the territory of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. These actions have resulted in the deaths of a number of civilian Uzbek security personnel. There are indications that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan continues planning for additional terrorist attacks.

Last September the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan was added to Executive Order 13224 that blocks terrorists' assets.

This redesignation of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan keeps the total number of Foreign Terrorist Organizations at 34. Although the Department reviews designated groups every two years, the Secretary of State is authorized to make new designations at any time, or to remove a group from that list at any time if the facts warrant.

The Foreign Terrorist Organization designation makes it illegal for persons within U.S. jurisdiction to provide funding or material support to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and gives the Department of the Treasury the authority to block any of the group's assets within U.S. jurisdiction. In certain cases, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan members or representatives can be denied visas or excluded from the United States.

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