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Media Note

Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

March 18, 2008

Designation of Al-Shabaab

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On February 29, 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice designated al-Shabaab (aka al-Shabab, aka Shabaab, aka the Youth, aka Mujahidin al-Shabaab Movement, aka Mujahideen Youth Movement, aka Mujahidin Youth Movement, aka MYM, aka Harakat Shabab al-Mujahidin, aka Hizbul Shabaab, aka Hisb'ul Shabaab, aka al-Shabaab al-Islamiya, aka Youth Wing, aka al Shabaab al-Islaam, aka al-Shabaab al-Jihaad, aka the Unity of Islamic Youth) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (as amended) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224 (as amended).

The consequences of these designations include a prohibition against the provision of material support or resources to al-Shabaab and blocking of all property and interests in property of the organization that are in the United States, or come within the United States, or the control of U.S. persons. Secretary Rice took this action in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury. Designations play a critical role in our fight against terrorism and are an effective means of curtailing support for terrorist activities and pressuring groups to renounce terrorism.

Al-Shabaab is a violent and brutal extremist group with a number of individuals affiliated with al-Qaida. Many of its senior leaders are believed to have trained and fought with al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

Al-Shabaab has used intimidation and violence to undermine the Somali government and threatened civil society activists working to bring about peace through political dialogue and reconciliation. The group scattered leaflets on the streets of Mogadishu warning participants in last year's reconciliation conference that they intended to bomb the conference venue. Al-Shabaab promised to shoot anyone planning to attend the conference and to blow up delegates' cars and hotels. Although al-Shabaab did not carry out these particular threats, the group has claimed responsibility for shooting Deputy District Administrators, as well as several bombings and shootings in Mogadishu targeting Ethiopian troops and Somali government officials. Al-Shabaab's leader, Aden Hashi Ayrow, has ordered his fighters to

attack African Union (AU) troops based in Mogadishu. Ayrow has also called for foreign fighters to join al-Shabaab in their fight in Somalia. Given the threat that al-Shabaab poses, the designation will raise awareness of al-Shabaab's activities and help undercut the group's ability to threaten targets in and destabilize the Horn of Africa region.

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