



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

## Terrorist Designations of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Hamad el Khairy, and Ahmed el Tilemsi

### Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

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The Department of State has designated the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA, also known by MUJAO), Hamad el Khairy, and Ahmed el Tilemsi, two of the organization's leaders, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, which targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism. As a result of the designation, all property subject to U.S. jurisdiction in which MUJWA, Khairy, or Tilemsi has any interest is blocked and U.S. persons are prohibited from engaging in any transactions with them or to their benefit.

In addition to today's domestic designation under E.O. 13224, MUJWA is also listed by the United Nations 1267/1989 al-Qa'ida Sanctions Committee. The UN listing requires all member states to implement an assets freeze, a travel ban, and an arms embargo against MUJWA. The UN action demonstrates international resolve in eliminating MUJWA's violent activities in Mali and the surrounding region.

MUJWA was created in September 2011 after members broke off from al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in order to spread their activities into West Africa. MUJWA has been behind violent terrorist attacks and kidnappings in the region, including the October 2011 abduction of three aid workers from a refugee camp in western Algeria; a March 2012 suicide attack on a police base in Tamanrasset, Algeria, which wounded 23 people; and a June 2012 attack in Ouargla, Algeria, which killed one and injured three. MUJWA was also responsible for the April 2012 kidnapping of seven Algerian diplomats in Gao, Mali. Although three of the diplomats have since been released, MUJWA continues to make demands in exchange for the release of the remaining diplomats, and has threatened to kill the hostages if those demands are unmet.

Hamad el Khairy and Ahmed el Tilemsi are both founding leaders of MUJWA. Khairy has been involved in MUJWA's kidnapping for ransom operations, personally claiming the group's April 2012 abduction of Algerian diplomats, and has appeared in MUJWA videos to make threats against those who oppose the organization. Prior to his leadership role in MUJWA, Khairy was a member of AQIM, and was involved in planning terrorist operations against Mauritania in 2007. Tilemsi acts as MUJWA's military head, and directly participated in the group's October 2011 kidnapping of three aid workers in Algeria, which left two wounded by gunfire. Before joining MUJWA, Tilemsi was also affiliated with AQIM, and participated in that organization's January 2011 abduction of two French nationals in Niamey, Niger.

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