

Gulf News: Riyadh releases most wanted list.

442 words

4 February 2009

Gulf News

English

The Financial Times Limited. Asia Africa Intelligence Wire. All material subject to copyright. Gulf News ©2009 All rights reserved.

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia's Ministry of the Interior has published a new list of its 85 most wanted suspects living abroad. The list includes 83 Saudis and two Yemenis, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Monday night, citing an official source at the ministry.

Six Saudis released from the Guantanamo Bay detention centre were also included in the list.

Saudi authorities have asked for the help of Interpol to detain the suspects and return them to Saudi Arabia, the statement said, adding that the list was publicised after the families of those on the list were notified.

The ministry announced rewards amounting to millions of dirhams for anyone with information on the suspects.

"Rewards announced earlier will also be extended to those who provide information about these persons wanted by the security authorities," the statement said.

"The wanted persons should return to reason and wisdom and surrender under the amnesty offer, whereby their return to the country would be secured and they would be reunited with their families depending on the charges against them," the statement said.

Saeed Ali Al Shihri, deputy chief of Al Qaida in Yemen, is named on the list, the state-owned Saudi Press Agency reported, citing an unidentified official at the Ministry of the Interior.

Saudi Arabia has cracked down on members of Al Qaida after Saudi militants in 2004 attacked an oil installation and stormed a housing complex in the Gulf city of Al Khobar, killing 22 foreign workers. Yemen has become a refuge for Saudi extremists fleeing security forces.

"In Yemen, the environment is not hostile like in Saudi Arabia," said Rohan Gunaratna, head of the Singapore-based International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research. "There is less capability, less skill and willingness to fight terrorism."

Most of the Saudis on the list are in Yemen and Iraq, with less than a dozen on the Pakistani border with Afghanistan, Gunaratna said in a telephone interview from Singapore on Tuesday.

"Yemen has traditionally been an important safe haven for Al Qaida," he said.

Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country, which lacks the oil and gas resources of Saudi Arabia, has seen a surge in attacks by Al Qaida. Islamic terrorists attacked the US embassy in Yemen's capital in September, killing 16 people.

Al Shihri, who passed through a Saudi rehabilitation programme, resurfaced with Al Qaida in Yemen and is suspected of involvement in the attack, the New York Times

reported on January 23. US authorities closed the Sana'a embassy briefly last week after receiving a threat of a possible attack.

-With inputs from agencies