

## Arabian Peninsula Background Notes

# APBN-003

December 2007

## Saudi Arabia: Internal Security Incidents Since 1979

The following summary of incidents covers those involving violence in Saudi Arabia, against Saudi officials abroad, or arrests by Saudi authorities. It is concerned only with domestic dissidents with one exception: the 2002 bombings in Riyadh, for which the Saudi government arrested European expatriates. Therefore, it does not include such events as the Iranian-inspired riots during various *hajjs* in the 1980s or the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on

American targets carried out by al-Qa'idah and employing a number of Saudi citizens.

The information provided below has been acquired from a wide variety of sources, including Western and Arab newspapers, published books and articles (sources are cited at the end of individual entries), as well as interviews, discussions, and observations inside Saudi Arabia and elsewhere (identified as "Pers.>").

### 1979

21 November -5 December A neo-Ikhwan group, led by Juhayman bin Muhammad al-'Utaybi seizes Great Mosque of Makkah. Control is not regained until 5 December and after the loss of many lives. Juhayman and other surviving dissidents are subsequently executed.

The Ikhwan had been an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century movement of Najdi tribesmen imbued with a religious fervor to spread the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam. The Ikhwan were the principal instrument used by 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abd al-Rahman Al Sa'ud to establish his control over what was to become the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia but when the Ikhwan turned against him in the late 1920s, 'Abd al-'Aziz ruthlessly put down the revolt. Juhayman's group was established about 1960 by

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*N.B. This background note is a preliminary attempt to present in summary form the essential details of a particular set of circumstances or event in Arabian Peninsula history. It lays no claim to being comprehensive or fully accurate. Although considerable effort has been made to assure the reliability of the information it contains, its accuracy is limited to the information contained in the sources listed in the note. The contents of this note may be freely quoted and cited provided both the author and source are given. A complete listing of APBNs is contained on [www.JEPeterson.net](http://www.JEPeterson.net).*

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students at the Islamic University in al-Madinah and elsewhere as an attempt to revive the Ikhwan movement in opposition to the Al Sa'ud. Juhayman had been a member of the Saudi Arabian National Guard but resigned his position in the mid-1970s. Eventually he proclaimed his brother-in-law Muhammad b. 'Abdullah al-Qahtani to be the *mahdi* (the Islamic equivalent of a messiah).

The group acquired arms by smuggling them into the country and stealing them from a National Guard base near Jiddah. Approximately 250 members were involved in the seizure of the Great Mosque of Makkah where they declared their allegiance to the *mahdi*. The government procured a *fatwa* from the country's 'ulama' permitting the use of force to regain control of the mosque. Forces from the Ministry of Interior were initially tasked with regaining control of the mosque but when they failed, the National Guard was brought in to replace them. Details of the mosque's recovery have never been made public but it appears that French commandos were called in, formally "converted" to Islam (since non-Muslims are forbidden to enter Makkah) and proceeded to flood the cellars of the mosque and then plunged live electrical cables into the water to electrocute the insurgents, as well as using toxic gas. The so-called *mahdi* was among the 75 individuals killed but some 170 individuals were captured, including Juhayman and some women and children. Juhayman and 62 others were subsequently executed. [YASSINI; HOLDEN; KECHICHIAN; IROAP; *INDEPENDENT* (LONDON), 4 JULY 1990; *LE MONDE* (PARIS), 20-21 NOV. 1994; IN ADDITION TO OTHER PRESS REPORTING]

November Riots break out in al-Qatif oasis during *Ashura*, the holiest time of the Shi'ah calendar. Inspired by the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, younger Shi'ah of the Eastern Province vent their anger against Saudi discrimination.

### 1985

March A Yemeni national attempts to hijack a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight after take off from Riyadh. The pilot persuades the hijacker to allow the plane to land at Dhahran airport for refuelling. After the passengers were released unharmed, the hijacker is shot dead by special security forces. [SAUDI ARABIAN EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, D.C., *NEWSLETTER*, 1 APRIL 1985]

19 May Two bombs explode in Riyadh in dustbins in al-Sulaymaniyah district (one of them close to the US Embassy), killing one and wounding three. The perpetrators were never found. Although al-Jihad al-Islami (Islamic Jihad) in Lebanon claimed responsibility, it was believed that dissident Shi'ah were responsible. [WP, 20 MAY 1985; KT, 20 MAY 1985; PERS.]

### 1987

15 August An explosion and fire takes place in a natural gas plant north of Ra's Tanurah on the Gulf coast, killing an unknown number of workers. Although the Saudi government claimed the explosion was caused by electrical failure, the Hizbullah Party of al-Hijaz claimed responsibility in Beirut. [NYT, 16 AUG. 1987; WP, 19 AUG. 1987]

### 1988

March Explosions are set off at a refinery in Ra's Tanurah on 28 March and at al-Sadaf

- Petrochemical Company plant in al-Jubayl on 30 March. Saudi authorities initially deny that the explosions were the result of sabotage but four Saudi Shi'i nationals (Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Qarrus, 'Ali b. 'Abdullah b. 'Ali al-Khatim, Azhar b. 'Ali b. 'Ali al-Hajjaj, and Khalid b. 'Abd al-Hamid b. Hasan al-'Alaq) are subsequently arrested and beheaded in al-Dammam on 30 September 1988 for the al-Jubayl act, after the Saudi government makes the death penalty mandatory for sabotage. Saudi authorities accuse Iran of being behind the sabotage. [SPA, 9 APR. AND 30 SEPT. 1988; ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY (TEHRAN), 12 APR. 1988; *THE ECONOMIST*, 8 OCT. 1988]
- August Hizbullah claims in a statement issued in Beirut on 8 August that its members in Saudi Arabia killed 3 Saudi police officers during a clash in al-Qatif early in August and that the Hizbullah members were arrested. There is no confirmation of the incident. [*VOICE OF LEBANON* (BEIRUT), 8 AUG. 1988]
- 25 October A Saudi diplomat (a telex operator) in Turkey is shot and killed outside his apartment in Ankara. Responsibility is claimed in Beirut by the Islamic Jihad in al-Hijaz, citing revenge for the execution of four of its followers. [WP, 27 OCT. 1988]

### 1989

- October Saudi police reportedly defuse two bombs in the Ministry of the Interior, said to have been planted by the Islamic Revolutionary Organization of the Arabian Peninsula. [*THE OBSERVER* (LONDON), 5 NOV. 1989]

### 1993

- 13 September A lone gunman drives through the gate of King Fahd's al-Salam Palace in Jiddah, jumps out of his car and opens fire, seriously wounding a security guard and inflicting minor wounds on a civilian employee. The Saudi Press Agency contends that the man is "not normal." [AP IN WP, 14 SEPT. 1993]

### 1994

- September Security forces arrest more than a hundred Islamic dissidents, many of them in the central region of al-Qasim, following claims by opposition group Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) that demonstrations had taken place in the town of Buraydah (in the central region of al-Qasim) and Riyadh. Among those arrested are religious leaders Shaykh Salman b. Fahd al-'Awdah and Shaykh Safar b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hawali, who were well-known for their opposition to government policies. Minister of the Interior Prince Nayif claims that the arrested suspects were guilty of disrupting Saudi Arabia's security and that the government had proof that they had support from groups outside the country, particularly from Kuwait. The Ministry of Interior announces on 16 October that it had detained 157 individuals. It adds that it is still holding 27 "ring-leaders" but that 130 others had been released after admitting their offenses and promising not to repeat them. [AFP 13 SEPT. 1994; AP, 19 SEPT. 1994; REUTERS, 19-21, 25, 27, 28 SEPT., AND 16 OCT. 1994; WP 26-27 SEPT. 1994; NYT 28 SEPT. 2004]

### 1995

- 3 June Diplomatic sources in Riyadh and Saudi opposition outside the country

- Prominent opposition religious figure Shaykh Hamud b. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Uqla’ al-Shu‘aybi is arrested at his home in Buraydah, according to diplomatic sources in Riyadh and CDLR. [AP, 5 JUNE 1995]
- August Dissident ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Hadhif is allegedly executed for throwing acid at a police officer on orders from the CDLR. [AFP, 13 AUG. 1995; *AL-QUDS AL-‘ARABI*, 15 AUG. 1995]
- 20 October Saudi national ‘Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Sa‘d al-‘Amri (also known as Ibn Mu‘ammar) hurls two bombs into a mosque of al-Bishah Province during Friday prayers. Seven worshippers die and more than one hundred are injured. When cornered by security forces in a mountain hideout, ‘Abdullah uses the same type of Russian-made explosives to kill himself; a security officer is killed during the battle. The incident appears to be personally motivated without any political implications. [REUTERS, 22, 26 OCT. 1995; *AL-HAYAT* (LONDON), 23 OCT. 1995; AP, 23 AND 27 OCT. 1995]
- 13 November A car bomb explodes at a National Guard facility in al-‘Ulaya district of Riyadh used by American military personnel to train Saudi personnel; the bomb is set off near a cafeteria at prayer time; five Americans and two Indians are killed and 60 people are injured. Three unknown groups claim responsibility: Islamic Movement for Change, Tigers of the Gulf, and the Combatant Organization of the Partisans of God (*Munazzamat ansar Allah al-muqatilah*); faxes in the name of the first group had been sent to the US Embassy in Riyadh in April and June 1995 warning that violence would ensue if all American troops were not removed from the kingdom; the third group also demanded the release of blind cleric ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahman, convicted in the US of involvement in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. American and Saudi officials voice their suspicions that the perpetrators received outside assistance; both Iraq and Iran deny involvement. Saudi security forces and opposition groups later say that about 40 Saudi Shi‘is with links to Iran are among those detained. [REUTERS, 13, 14, 16, 17, 23, AND 28 NOV. 1995; *AL-QUDS AL-‘ARABI* (LONDON), 15 NOV. 1995; AFP, 17 NOV. 1995; AP, 26 NOV. 1995 AND 26 NOV. 1996]
- Four Saudis, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Fahd b. Nasir, Riyad al-Hajari, Muslih al-Shamrani, and Khalid b. Ahmad al-Sa‘id, confess to the act on Saudi television on 22 April 1996, claiming they had been influenced by the CDLA and Usamah bin Ladin. All four are aged between 24 and 28 and had fought the Soviets in Afghanistan. They said they had smuggled explosives and arms across the Yemen border and had intended to carry out a series of attacks. The four are executed in Riyadh on 31 May 1996. Amnesty International condemns the executions as “summary and arbitrary,” saying that the four men did not have a fair trial; the Saudi ambassador to the UK responds by that the organization had compromised its own credibility by the criticism. [REUTERS, 22, 23 APR., 31 MAY, 14 JUNE 1996; AFP, 22 APR. 1996; UPI, 26 APR. 1996; SPA, 31 MAY 1996]

## 1996

- 27 March Three Saudi tribesmen from the Bani Hilal tribe hijack an Egyptian aircraft

- travelling from Jiddah to Egypt and force it to fly to Libya. Egyptian television says the hijackers acted to pass on a message from God about the problems in Palestine and the Sudan. [REUTER, 27 MAR. 1996]
- April Several Saudi Shi'is are arrested while trying to smuggle explosives into the kingdom from Jordan, but there are indications that the explosives were destined for use in Bahrain and in the kingdom. [AP, 18 APR. 1996; *THE ECONOMIST* (LONDON), 29 JUNE 1996]
- 26 June A truck driven up to a barracks at a US military housing complex in al-Khubar explodes and kills 19 Americans and injures 386 individuals of various nationalities, including 147 Saudi nationals, 118 Bangladeshis, 109 Americans, four Egyptians, two Jordanians, two Indonesians, two Filipinos, and two of undetermined nationality. Another 200 people were treated for minor injuries. The two men in the truck fled the scene before the explosion. Speculation on the identity of the perpetrators focuses on either Saudi Islamist Sunni groups and "Arab Afghans" linked to earlier bombings or dissident Saudi Shi'ah backed by Iran through Hizbullah in Lebanon. In mid-July, the Movement for Islamic Change claims responsibility while Iran reacts angrily to American suggestions that it had sponsored the attack. [REUTERS, 26, 27 JUNE, AND 4 AUG. 1996; AP, 27 JUNE 1996; AFP 19 JULY 1996; *AL-SAFIR* (BEIRUT), 19 JULY 1996; *AL-HAYAT* (LONDON), 20 JULY 1996]
- The true identity of the attackers is not proven despite extensive investigations in the following years and American investigators, principally the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), complain of a Saudi lack of cooperation. Saudi security denies the August 1996 claims of the London-based dissident groups CDLR and the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (MIRA) that two Kuwaitis and two Lebanese suspects had been turned over to Saudi authorities and that six Islamists had been arrested and confessed to the act but admit that a number of suspects had been detained for questioning without, however, being formally arrested. Kuwait subsequently denies that any of its nationals had been arrested. [AP, 14, 15 AUG. 1996; REUTERS, 28 OCT. 1996]
- One consequence of the bombing was the removal in October 1996 of American troops involved in patrolling the southern "no-fly" zone in Iraq from urban areas to high-security accommodation at remote Prince Sultan Air Base at al-Kharj, some sixty miles south of Riyadh. [REUTERS, 24 OCT. 1996]
- As the investigation continues into late 1996 and early 1997, there are more press reports of US administration concerns that the Saudi Arabian government is withholding information on arrests and leaks from Washington implicate Saudi Shi'ah members of a Saudi Hizbullah group and allege assistance for the bombing came from Iran and Syria. Further reports allege that the US is planning retaliation against Iran as soon as it establishes enough evidence. [UPI, 1 NOV. 1996; AP, 2 NOV. 1996, 22 JAN. 1997; REUTERS, 7, 10, 15, 17 DEC. 1996, 25, 26 JAN. 1997]
- In March 1997, Hani 'Abd al-Rahim Husayn al-Sayigh, a Saudi living in Canada, is arrested by Canadian authorities on suspicion of having driven a car

that led the truck into the carpark at al-Khubar. Other reports claim that the mastermind is a Saudi named Ahmad Ibrahim Ahmad Mughassil, said to be living in Iran. Congressional hearings reiterate American suspicion that Iran was behind the bombings but admit that positive proof is lacking. Al-Sayigh is deported from Canada to the United States in early June but, at a court appearance on 30 July, reneges on a plea-bargain agreement and proclaims his innocence. The US Justice Department announces in September that it is dropping charges against him for involvement in 1994-1995 activities (not for the 1996 al-Khubar bombing) and he is ordered to be deported from the US in January 1998 (he is not actually extradited to Saudi Arabia until 11 October 1999). [REUTERS, 14, 16, 22, 29, 31 MAR., 5, 17, 21 APR., 14, 16 MAY 1997, 22 JAN. 1998, 11 OCT. 1999; UPI, 25 MAR. 1997; NYT, 3 APR. 1997; AP, 30 JULY, 9 SEPT. 1997]

The investigation languishes for the next several years, with the Saudi Minister of the Interior declaring that only Saudis were behind the bombing and there was no foreign involvement (although he later seemed to backtrack slightly) and the FBI withdrawing most of its agents from the kingdom. It is reported in September 1998 that Riyadh was trying to persuade the Taliban government of Afghanistan to turn over suspects in the bombing hiding in Afghanistan under the protection of Usamah b. Ladin. [REUTERS, 22 MAY, 20, 24 JUNE 1998; NYT, 21 JUNE 1998; AFP, 25 JUNE, 23 SEPT. 1998]

The open case comes to light again in early 2001 with reports that FBI Director Louis Freeh, soon to retire, is determined to resolve the case. A federal grand jury in Alexandria, VA, indicts 13 Saudis and a Lebanese, all members of Saudi Hizbullah, for al-Khubar bombing on 21 June 2001. They are named as Ahmad al-Mughassil (also known as "Abu 'Umran"), 'Ali al-Huri, Hani al-Sayigh, Ibrahim al-Ya'qub, 'Abd al-Karim al-Nasir (the head of Saudi Hizbullah), Mustafa al-Qassab, Sa'id al-Bahhar, 'Abdullah al-Jarash, Husayn al-Mughis, 'Ali al-Marhun, Salih Ramadan, Mustafa al-Mu'allim, and Fadil al-'Alawi. In a news conference, Freeh and Attorney General John Ashcroft accuse elements of the Iranian government with inspiring and supervising the indictees although the indictment pointedly refrains from including Iranian officials. Iran immediately denies the accusations and Saudi Arabia quickly disassociates itself from them. Riyadh also complains that the US government had not kept it informed of the indictments and that the suspects it holds (11 of the 13 Saudis indicted) could be tried only in the kingdom. The Saudi Deputy Minister of the Interior announces on 1 June 2002 that some individuals have been sentenced in connection with the June 1996 bombing but their identity, how many, and details of the sentences are not released. After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, there is considerable speculation that al-Khubar bombing was the work of al-Qa'idah rather than Iran and Saudi Shi'ah. [WALSH; REUTERS, 24 MAR., 6 MAY, 13, 21 JUNE 2001; AP, 22, 23 JUNE 2001, 1 JUNE 2002; NYT 2 JULY 2001, 14 MAY 2003] Saudi opposition claims that bombs were discovered at King Khalid Airport in Riyadh, King Faysal Air Base, and a new palace of Prince Sultan, the Minister of Defense and Aviation. British sources say that locations were evacuated but no bombs were found. [DAILY TELEGRAPH (LONDON), 31 JULY 1996]

July

**2000**

- 17 March Shots fired from a moving car wound a guard at the Russian consulate in Jiddah; the Saudi government denies that the attack was because of Russia's campaign against Chechen rebels. [REUTERS, 17 MAR. 2000]
- August A lone Saudi attacks a housing complex housing British Aerospace employees in the southern city of Khamis Mushayt; a Saudi military policeman is killed and a British Aerospace employee is slightly injured while two more policemen and the gunman are wounded. The Minister of the Interior tells a news conference that the attacker, a medical student, acted alone because of school problems. [REUTERS, 17 OCT. 2000]
- 6 October Police break up an impromptu pro-Palestinian demonstration by several hundred supporters in Riyadh. There is no report of arrests. [REUTER, 6 OCT. 2000]
- 14 October Two Saudis, Faysal b. Naji al-Balawi and 'Ayish b. 'Ali al-Faridi, hijack a Saudi Arabian Airlines plane travelling from Jiddah to London and divert it to Damascus but then land in Baghdad, where they are given sanctuary. The four men are able to use their positions in Saudi security forces to smuggle a pistol aboard the aircraft. The hijackers call for an inquiry into human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia and request political asylum in Iraq while the Saudi government unsuccessfully demands their extradition from Iraq. In November 2003, the opposition Saudi Human Rights Center in London claims that al-Balawi had contacted the center for help in gaining political asylum in Europe. Shortly afterwards, he is allegedly kidnapped in Baghdad by Jordanian secret service officers and smuggled back to a prison in Saudi Arabia; the Jordanian Minister of the Interior subsequently confirms that al-Balawi has been extradited to Saudi Arabia but does not explain how he came to be in Jordanian custody. [REUTERS, 14, 16 OCT. 2000; AFP, 15 OCT. 2000; SPA, 27 MAY 2001; AL-JAZIRAH.NET, 11 NOV. 2003; REUTERS, 18 NOV. 2003]
- 17 November A British engineer working in Saudi Arabia is killed and his wife wounded when a bomb inside their car blows up on a Riyadh street. Three more British, employed by the Boeing Company, are injured in a similar car bomb blast on 22 November. An American citizen, Michael Sedlak, is arrested in connection with the attacks during the following week. Another British expatriate employed by Coca-Cola, is injured in al-Khubar on 16 December when he tries to remove a parcel resting on the windshield of his car. London-based MIRA claims that the government arrested some 38 Islamists, mostly Saudis, as part of the investigation. But the Saudi government investigation soon focuses on rivalries prompted by an alleged alcohol-smuggling ring and arrests two British, a Belgian, and a Lebanese, in addition to Sedlak. [NYT, 18 NOV. 2000; INDEPENDENT (LONDON), 21 NOV., 21 DEC. 2000; REUTERS, 23, 24 NOV., 13, 16, 17 DEC. 2000; AP, 15 DEC. 2000; AFP, 17 DEC. 2000; SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON), 17 DEC. 2000]

**2001**

- 15 March A bomb exploding in a garbage bin in front of a bookstore on Riyadh's al-'Ulayah street wounds a Briton and a Sudanese. [REUTERS, 15 MARCH 2001; SPA, 27 MAY 2001]
- 16 March Three Chechens hijack a Vnukovo Airlines plane en route from Istanbul to

- Moscow and divert it to al-Madinah on 15 March 2001. Three people are killed, including one of the hijackers, when Saudi special forces successfully storm the plane on the following day and free the passengers and crew. Saudi Arabia refuses to extradite the two remaining hijackers, both teenagers, and a year later sentences them to five and six years in jail in al-Madinah. [REUTERS, 16 MAR. 2001, 1 AUG. 2002]
- 18 April A home-made bomb is discovered outside the Jordanian Embassy in Riyadh. [AFP 19 APR. 2001]
- 2 May An American physical therapist in al-Khubar is seriously injured when a parcel bomb explodes in his face. [AP, 2 MAY 2001]
- 12 June The MIRA opposition group claims that a group, including a traffic policeman and a National Guardsman, have been arrested in Jiddah and al-Madinah after the discovery of explosives in an al-Madinah carpark. [MIRA WEBSITE, 12 JUNE 2001]
- 11 September Fifteen Saudis are discovered to be among the 19 hijackers of four passenger aircraft in the United States that are used to destroy the World Trade Center in New York and crash into the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Usamah b. Ladin's al-Qa'idah group is accused of masterminding the attacks and US President George W. Bush declares a "war against terror" and orders US forces to attack the Taliban government in Afghanistan that had been providing refuge for Usamah b. Ladin and his followers.
- 7 October A bomb exploding in a busy commercial street in al-Khubar kills an American and another unidentified expatriate and wounds five others. On 14 November, the Ministry of the Interior announces that the unidentified expatriate killed in the blast was the perpetrator, Palestinian dentist Ayman b. Muhammad Abu Zinad. [AP, 7, 8 OCT. 2001; SPA 14 Nov. 2001]
- 18 December Riots occur on Jiddah's Corniche during 'Id al-Fitr when about 1000 young men begin harassing motorists and women and beat several passers-by. A similar incident is reported in al-Dammam. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 26 DEC. 2001; AL-WATAN (ABHA), 1 JAN. 2002; PERS.]
- 2002**
- Early May An empty missile tube from a Soviet-made SA-7 anti-aircraft missile launcher is discovered outside the Prince Sultan Air Base, used by United States aircraft enforcing the no-fly zone over Iraq. Thirteen men, including 11 Saudis, are arrested a few weeks later on charges of having been involved in a planned attack on behalf of al-Qa'idah. [AP, 11 MAY 2002]
- 20 June A British banker is killed by a car bomb explosion in Riyadh. Bombs attached to the cars of two other expatriates are discovered a few days later. Saudi security forces hint that the incident might be linked to a suspected alcohol-smuggling ring. [REUTERS, 20 JUNE 2002]
- 29 June An American hospital employee in Riyadh discovers a bomb attached to his car and the next day another bomb is found attached to a car at the same compound where the British banker was killed. [REUTERS, 30 JUNE 2002]
- 11 July Saudi police arrest an armed Saudi who had entered the Qatari consulate in Jiddah to seek political asylum. Saudi authorities later say the man had a history

- of drug convictions and was undergoing a psychiatric evaluation. [REUTERS, 11, 12 JULY 2002]
- 29 September A German employee of an electronics company is killed by a car bomb explosion in Riyadh. Saudi authorities deny it was a terrorist attack and blame it on a struggle between factions in illicit alcohol smuggling. [REUTERS, 30 SEPT. 2002]
- 15 October An American television network claims US and Saudi intelligence officials have confirmed that a terrorist assault against the giant Ra's al-Tanurah oil terminal on Saudi Arabia's Gulf coast was thwarted sometime during the late summer of 2002 and dozens of Saudis were detained. [ABC NEWS, 15 OCT. 2002]
- 15 October A Saudi, 'Adil b. Nasir b. Ahmad b. Faraj, unsuccessfully attempts to hijack a Saudi Arabian Airlines plane on a flight from Khartoum to Jiddah with a loaded pistol but is overpowered. Two Sudanese are arrested for selling him the gun and helping him to smuggle it onto the aircraft. The Saudi is subsequently extradited to Saudi Arabia and said by Saudi authorities to be mentally unstable and not politically motivated. [AP, 15 OCT. 2002; AFP, 16 OCT. 2002; REUTERS, 17 AND 27 OCT. 2002]
- 18 November Saudi securities forces wound and apprehend a terrorist suspect, Muhammad al-Sahim, in Riyadh who was trying to evade arrest. They deny reports that eight security officers had been wounded in a clash with "Arab Afghans" and suspected al-Qa'idah members two days earlier. [REUTERS, 18 NOV. 2002; *THE ECONOMIST* (LONDON), 23 NOV. 2002]
- 20 November Minister of Interior Prince Nayif bin 'Abd al-'Aziz says that Saudi Arabia holds more than 100 Saudi nationals on suspicion of ties to al-Qa'idah. On the same day, an unidentified Saudi gunman fires shots and sets a fire in an American fast-food restaurant in al-Kharj and is arrested several months later. [REUTERS, 20 NOV. 2002, 19 JAN. 2003]
- 30 November A crude bomb explodes under the car of a Dutch expatriate family but no one is injured. [REUTERS, 17 DEC. 2002]

### 2003

- 24 January A shootout between Saudi security forces and extremists said to be linked to al-Qa'idah in a town north of Riyadh leaves a Kuwaiti bystander dead while two security agents and the Saudi owner of the apartment building are wounded. Eight Saudis involved in the incident are arrested on 7 February. [AP, 7 FEB. 2003; REUTERS, 8 FEB. 2003]
- 6 February Unidentified gunmen open fire on the car of a British expatriate in Riyadh but the expatriate escapes with minor injuries. [REUTERS, 7 FEB. 2003]
- 17 February The deputy governor of al-Jawf province in northern Saudi Arabia is killed when an unidentified gunman fires on his car. The incident follows the shooting of a judge in the same province in September. The government subsequently posts an unprecedented \$130,000 reward for information leading to the killer. [REUTERS, 17, 25 FEB. 2003]
- 20 February A British expatriate is shot dead in his car in Riyadh while stopped at a traffic light. A Yemeni-born, naturalized Saudi, Sa'ud b. 'Ali b. Nasir, is arrested for the crime and Saudi authorities, noting his recent trip to Pakistan, suggest that

- he might be an al-Qa'idah member. [REUTERS, 22 FEB. 2003]
- 25 February Saudi government announces the arrest in Makkah of seven armed Saudi youths, some of them high school students, several days previously on suspicion of connections to al-Qa'idah. The arrests follow an earlier government announcement that 90 Saudis are to be tried for links to al-Qa'idah and a further 250 Saudi suspects are under investigation. [AP, 25 FEB. 2003; REUTERS, 25 FEB. 2003]
- 26 February A young Saudi man is arrested after trying to firebomb a McDonald's restaurant in al-Dammam. [REUTERS, 27 FEB. 2003]
- 8 March Three bombs made from sticks of dynamite are discovered in a Jiddah shopping mall before they were set to go off. [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 9 MAR. 2003]
- 18 March A Saudi linked to al-Qa'idah, Fahd b. Samran b. Amir al-Sa'idi, is killed when a bomb explodes prematurely in his house in Riyadh. Saudi police find grenades, pistols, assault rifles, ammunition, and explosions in the house. [REUTERS, 18 MAR. 2003; AP, 22 MAR. 2003]
- 25 March A gunman kills one policemen and wounds another at a traffic light in Sakakah, a town in the northern al-Jawf province; he is arrested the following day. [REUTERS, 26 MAR. 2003]
- 21 April The chief of a police station in Sakakah is shot dead while driving home from work. [REUTERS, 21 APR. 2003]
- 1 May An American contractor for the Saudi Navy is shot at a naval base at al-Jubayl in the Eastern Province and dies of his wounds a month later. [AP, 1 MAY, 2 JUNE 2003]
- 6 May A gun battle breaks out when Saudi security forces storm a house in Riyadh. The government offers a reward for the capture of 19 suspected militants (17 Saudis, one Yemeni, and one Iraqi) who flee the scene. Captured explosives, grenades, machine guns, and ammunition are shown on Saudi television. It is believed that the group (said to be an al-Qa'idah cell) was planning a major attack, possibly against American targets or a member of the royal family. [REUTERS, 7, 8 MAY 2003; NYT, 10 MAY 2003]
- 12 May Al-Qa'idah cell attacks three training and residential complexes in Riyadh, one at al-Hamra compound occupied by Western and Arab residents, a second at Granada compound, chiefly occupied by British Aerospace employees, and a third at the premises of US military contractor Vinnell Corporation. After overpowering guards at the entry gates, the assailants drive in vehicles full of explosions which are then detonated. The three bombs kill at least 34, including eight Americans, seven Saudis, three Filipinos, two Jordanians, and one each from Australia, Britain, Ireland, Lebanon, and Switzerland. As many as 194 are wounded. Saudi authorities identify 9 of the 34 dead as being members of the attacking cell. The cell is said to have been led Khalid al-Juhani, a Saudi who left Afghanistan after the US invasion for Yemen before returning to the kingdom, and Turki b. Mish'al Dandani. [AP, 13, 15 MAY 2003; NYT, 13, 15 MAY 2003; WP, 14 MAY 2003]

Soon after, American administration sources claim that they have intercepted communications indicating that the attacks were directed by al-Qa'idah leaders in Iran, possibly including Usamah b. Ladin's son Sa'd and Sayf al-'Adil; Iran

- immediately denies harboring any al-Qa'idah members. [NYT, 21 MAY 2003; REUTERS, 21 MAY 2003]
- 13 May A bomb explodes at the headquarters of a Saudi commercial establishment partly owned by an American company; no one is injured. [AP, 13 MAY 2003]
- 18 May The Saudi government announces three of the nine dead perpetrators of the 12 May bombings were from the cell of 19 al-Qa'idah militants who had escaped from the 6 May gun battle. In addition, the government says it has arrested four other men from the same cell who knew about the 12 May operation but did not take part. [REUTERS, 18 MAY 2003; ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 19 MAY 2003]
- 19 May A man standing with a gun outside the US Consulate in Dhahran is arrested, forcing the closure of the consulate. [AP, 19 MAY 2003]
- 19 May Three Moroccans with suspected links to al-Qa'idah are arrested and alleged to be planning to hijack an airplane in Jiddah and crash it. [REUTERS, 22 MAY 2003; AP, 22 MAY 2003]
- 20 May Saudi authorities announce the arrest of three al-Qa'idah members in Jiddah and a high-ranking Saudi official claims that at least three al-Qa'idah cells with about 50 hard-core operatives were operating in the kingdom before the May bombings. Later statements indicate that four members had been arrested, bringing the total to about 100. [REUTERS, 20 MAY 2003; WP, 20 MAY 2003; AP, 22 MAY 2003]
- 27 May Saudi authorities arrest up to five men in al-Madinah on suspicion of involvement in the 12 May bombings; the arrests initially are said to include 'Ali b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi, who had appeared on the list of 19 wanted individuals issued after the 6 May shoot-out and was regarded as the mastermind of the 12 May attacks, but he is later admitted to still be at large. The arrests come after the re-opening of American diplomatic missions on 25 May after a four-day closure for security reasons and the sending home of non-essential personnel. Prince Nayif, the Minister of the Interior, announces two days later that three dissident clerics, 'Ali b. Khudayr al-Khudayr, Ahmad b. Hamud al-Khalidi, and Nasir b. Ahmad al-Fahd, who had praised the wanted al-Qa'idah members and been in hiding for some time, had been among those arrested. A statement subsequently read out on Saudi television named 11 suspects arrested over the week, including nine Saudis and two Moroccans; but the statement did not mention 'Ali al-Ghamdi and named only two clerics. On 7 June, Prince Nayif tells 'Ukaz that 25 people have been detained in connection with the 12 May bombings and that another 10 are still being sought. Prince Nayif announces on 14 June that another five suspects have been arrested. [REUTERS, 28 MAY, 1 JUNE 2003; AP, 28, 29 MAY, 7 JUNE 2003; NYT, 28 MAY 2003; AL-RIYAD (RIYADH), 14 JUNE 2003]
- 30 May Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi denies the charge that al-Qa'idah members, including Sayf al-'Adil and Sa'd b. Usamah b. Ladin, directed the 12 May bombings from Iran. Kharrazi tells a news conference that Iran had arrested hundreds of al-Qa'idah suspects since the US invaded Afghanistan and that another group had been detained before the Riyadh attacks. Iran refuses to name any of the al-Qa'idah members it says it has in custody. Saudi Foreign Minister

- Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, on a visit to Tehran on 14 June, tells reporters that Iran bears no responsibility for the Riyadh attacks. [REUTERS, 30 MAY 2003; *ARAB TIMES* (JIDDAH), 31 MAY, 14 JUNE 2003]
- 31 May Two Saudi policemen are killed when two terrorist suspects they had been chasing throw a hand grenade at them outside Turbah in northern Saudi Arabia; three other policemen are seriously wounded. One of the suspects is killed, it is not clear whether at the time or subsequently; he is one of the 19 militants who escaped from the 6 May shootout in Riyadh and is carrying a letter allegedly from Usamah b. Ladin. [REUTERS, 3 JUNE 2003; AP, 3 JUNE 2003]
- 5 June The commander of the Saudi border guard in Jizan Province tells the press that 36 Saudi border guards were killed in the province over the 11 months up to February 2003. He adds that the border guards confiscated 263 firearms, 1.2 million rounds of ammunition, 46,700 sticks of dynamite, and a large number of detonators. [*ARAB NEWS* (JIDDAH), 5 JUNE 2003]
- 15 June The Ministry of the Interior announces that an overnight raid on a bomb-filled apartment in al-Khalidiyah district of Makkah foiled a major impending terrorist attack. Five suspects and two security agents are killed in the attack; five policemen and four bystanders are injured. At least five suspects are arrested, including two Chadians, an Egyptian, and a Saudi. The incident is said to have started when traffic police try to stop a car; the occupants are said to have fled on foot to the nearby apartment building. The arrest of another seven suspects from the same cell at different locations in Makkah is announced on 16 June. The government later discloses that the average age of the suspects in the Riyadh attacks and the Makkah plot is 20, with some recruits being high school students. [*'UKAZ* (JIDDAH), 15 JUNE 2003; AP, 15, 22 JUNE 2003; *AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT* (LONDON), 16 JUNE 2003]
- 21 June Security forces in Makkah arrest four Saudi women during a raid on a flat rented by a suspected militant. Arms, a homemade bomb, and a bag of gold are found in the flat. [REUTERS, 22 JUNE 2003]
- 22 June Leading Saudi dissident Sa'd al-Faqih, head of the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (MIRA), is attacked and wounded in London; the Saudi Embassy in London quickly rejects an accusation that the government had anything to do with the attack. [REUTERS, 22, 23 JUNE 2003]
- 25 June Three wanted militants, said to be carrying plans of government installations, are arrested at a checkpoint between Makkah and Jiddah. [*'UKAZ* (JIDDAH), 26 JUNE 2003]
- 26 June Saudi officials announce the voluntary surrender of 'Ali b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Sa'id al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi, a senior Saudi al-Qa'idah operative thought to be the organizer of the 12 May Riyadh bombings. He is reported to be about 26 years old, a veteran of fighting in Afghanistan (including the early stages of the battle in the Tora Bora mountains in 2001) and Chechnya, and married to a Moroccan woman. Another militant, Zafir b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Shihri, is arrested on 28 June in southern Saudi Arabia after a pursuit and shoot-out, that included the crash of a security helicopter. His capture brings the total of arrests since early May to 125. Al-Ghamdi is reported in August to be providing valuable

- information, including the allegation that two days before the 12 May Riyadh bombings Sa'd b. Usamah b. Ladin telephoned from somewhere in Iran to a member of the al-Qa'idah cell responsible for the attacks. [AP, 27 JUNE, 2 JULY 2003; REUTERS, 27 JUNE, 1 JULY 2003; *INDEPENDENT* (LONDON), 19 AUG. 2003]
- 3 July A key suspect in the 12 May Riyadh bombings, Turki Nasir al-Dandani, blows himself up with a hand grenade, killing two other suspected militants, after their safe house in the northern al-Jawf province is surrounded by police. A fourth suspect surrenders. [REUTERS, 3 JULY 2003; AP, 3 JULY 2003]
- 21 July The Ministry of the Interior announces it has arrested a group of militants planning further terrorist attacks and seized large amounts of arms and explosives, including rocket-propelled grenades and 20 tons of chemicals used in making explosives, from farms and public rest houses around Riyadh, in al-Qasim, and in the Eastern Province. A day later, Prince Nayif tells the press that 16 militants arrested in the latest wave have links to al-Qa'idah and that all are Saudis between the ages of 17 and 30. [REUTERS, 21, 22 JULY 2003; *AL-SHARQAL-AWSAT* (LONDON), 22 JULY 2003; *INDEPENDENT* (LONDON), 22 JULY 2003]
- 28 July A firefight at a farm in al-Qasim resulted in the deaths of six militants (four Saudis and two Chadians) and two policeman; another militant and eight policemen are wounded. The militants are said to have been trained in al-Qa'idah camps in Afghanistan and in the kingdom. The shoot-out follows Prince Nayif's assertion that the total number of suspects arrested since early May is about 240. In other action, the Saudi government removes over 1000 *imams* from their mosques and brings them to Riyadh for "re-education." [*AL-SHARQAL-AWSAT* (LONDON), 27 JULY 2003; REUTERS, 28, 29 JULY, 5 AUG. 2003; *THE ECONOMIST* (LONDON), 2 AUG. 2003]
- 4 August Three more militants are arrested in al-Qasim, bringing the total of arrests since May bombings to 144, in addition to more than 300 arrests following the 11 September 2001 attacks. [*ARAB NEWS* (JIDDAH), 4 AUG. 2003]
- 10 August A shoot-out erupts in Riyadh after a car eludes a police patrol and stops at a rest stop. No one is injured but ten suspects are arrested and are discovered to be in possession of hand grenades, weapons, and explosives. A Saudi counter-terrorism official tells American reporters on the following day that the cell has links to London-based Saudi dissident Sa'd al-Faqih and the British Foreign Office announces that it believes the cell had been targeting British targets in the kingdom and British Airways cancels flights to Saudi Arabia on 13 August. [REUTERS, 10, 12 AUG. 2003; AP, 11, 13 AUG. 2003; WP, 12 AUG. 2003]
- 12 August A raid on a militant hideout in al-Suwaydi district of Riyadh results in a five-hour shoot-out in which four policemen and a militant are killed. Five suspects are arrested but seven escape. Prince Nayif indicates that this cell is not linked to the 12 May bombings in Riyadh but is part of the same cell involved in the 10 August fight. [REUTERS, 13 AUG. 2003]
- 16 August A council of '*ulama*' headed by the Grand Mufti, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz Al al-Shaykh, issues a *fatwa* condemning terrorism, charging that "it is necessary under the *shari'ah* to severely punish those carrying out acts of sabotage and depravity, like bombings and murder and the destruction of property. These are

- dangerous crimes and an aggression against human life and wealth.” [REUTERS, 16 AUG. 2003]
- 15 August More than 200 security agents force their way into a building in a village of Jizan province along the Saudi-Yemeni border and arrest as many as 21 suspects without resistance. Inside they find a cache of anti-tank rockets, hand-grenades, machine guns, explosive chemicals, detonators, and security forces uniforms. The raid is said to have resulted from a tip from a suspect recently arrested in Abha. [AL-JAZIRAH (JIDDAH), 16 AUG. 2003; UKAZ (JIDDAH), 16 AUG. 2003; AL-RIYAD (RIYADH), 16 AUG. 2003]
- 9 September Yemen is reported to have arrested Bandar al-Ghamdi, one of the 19 militants on Saudi Arabia’s list of 6 May. [UKAZ (JIDDAH), 9 SEPT. 2003]
- 23 September Shooting breaks out in Jizan in southern Saudi Arabia when Security forces raid an apartment and some suspects flee to a nearby hospital where they hold hostages. The fighting ends after six hours with the deaths of one security officer and three militants, including Sultan b. Jubran b. Sultan al-Qahtani (also known as Zubayr al-Rimi and said to be the second-ranking al-Qa’idah leader in the Arabian Peninsula). Four other policemen are wounded and the two remaining militants surrender. [REUTERS, 23 SEPT. 2003; AP, 23, 24 SEPT. 2003; AL-WATAN (ABHA), 24 SEPT. 2003; THE GUARDIAN (LONDON), 25 SEPT. 2003]
- 8 October Police raid a farm in al-Qasim region of central Saudi Arabia and arrest one suspect but three others escape after a shootout. Arms and chemicals used for making explosives are found at the farm. A similar raid on another cell is carried out east of Riyadh on 5 October. [AP, 8 OCT. 2003]
- 12 October Security forces arrest a number of suspected militants in al-Qasim province. [REUTERS, 12 OCT. 2003]
- 14 October Saudi police arrest four armed Islamic militants at ‘Ar‘ar on the Iraqi border as they attempt to enter Iraq. [AFP, 14 OCT. 2003]
- 14 October Several hundred people demonstrate in Riyadh, calling for political reforms and police arrest more than 200 participants, 83 of whom are later charged sent to court, with seven sentenced to jail terms. The demonstration, organized by MIRA, takes place outside the venue of the kingdom’s first human-rights conference. About the same time, warnings are given to Riyadh’s two tallest skyscrapers, al-Faysaliyah Building and Kingdom Tower, about possible terrorist attacks. [REUTERS, 14, 22, 24 OCT., 8 DEC. 2003; AP, 15 OCT. 2003; INDEPENDENT (LONDON), 15 OCT. 2003; BBC NEWS, 15 OCT. 2003]
- 23 October Police block roads in Riyadh and other Saudi cities to prevent new demonstrations called for by MIRA from taking place. [REUTERS, 24 OCT. 2003]
- 3 November Police raid two fortified buildings in Makkah and kill two suspected al-Qa’idah militants as they try to flee. Another militant who gets away surrenders to police on the following day. A large cache of weapons, explosives, and thousands of photographs of Usamah b. Ladin are discovered. Minister of the Interior Prince Nayif claims that the militants were planning an attack on pilgrims performing the ‘umrah during Ramadan but other commentators believe that the targets may have been Saudi officials. [AP, 3 NOV. 2003; REUTERS., 4 NOV. 2003; AL-WATAN (ABHA), 4 NOV. 2003]

- 6 November A police raid on a hideout in Riyadh's al-Suwaydi neighborhood results in the death of one militant and the wounding of eight policemen. An unknown number of militants escape. Later in the day, two militants from the same cell raided on 3 November blow themselves up after police surround them in the same neighborhood in Makkah that was the site of the earlier raid. A cache of arms and explosives is recovered. The Grand Mufti, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abdullah Al al-Shaykh, condemns the dead militants for violating Islamic teachings. [AP, 6 NOV. 2003; REUTERS,, 6, 7 NOV. 2003]
- 9 November Al-Qa'idah militants disguised as police force their way into al-Muhaya residential compound in Riyadh and set off a suicide car bomb. Seventeen or 18 people, including Saudis, Sudanese, Lebanese, and Egyptians, are killed and 122 from a number of Arab and Asian countries are wounded. Four of the dead remain unidentified, with one believed to be a suicide bomber. The choice of the largely Arab-occupied target is seen as especially appalling by most Saudis. Saudi authorities arrest a number of suspects in the following days. An al-Qa'idah operative claims responsibility two days later. Prince Nayif rejects an offer by leading dissident clerics to mediate with the extremists. A suspect with ties to the bombers, 'Abdullah b. 'Atiyah b. Hudayd al-Sulaymi, surrenders on 20 November, just days after prominent dissident cleric Shaykh 'Ali b. Khudayr al-Khudayr apologizes on Saudi television for his support for extremists, followed a week later by Shaykh Nasir b. Hamad al-Fahd who also denounces al-Muhaya bombing. A third cleric, Ahmad al-Khalidi, recants on television on 13 December. A Saudi newspaper claims that al-Qa'idah security chief Sayf al-'Adil orchestrated the bombing from Iran but Iranian officials deny it. The Ministry of the Interior determines through DNA testing that two Saudis, 'Ali b. Hamad al-Ma'badi al-Harbi and Nasir b. 'Abdullah b. Nasir al-Sayyari, carried out the suicide bombing. [REUTERS,, 10, 11, 12, 21 NOV., 1 DEC. 2003; AP, 11, 12 NOV., 13 DEC.. 2003; NYT, 11 NOV. 2003; *AL-MAJALLAH* (LONDON), 11 NOV. 2003; *UKAZ* (JIDDAH), 23 NOV. 2003]
- 25 November Security forces kill two militants in northeastern Riyadh and seize a car primed with explosives that authorities claim was on the verge of being used in a car bombing. Saudi media report that enough explosives were recovered to make an even bigger attack than the 9 November attacks on Riyadh residential compounds. The explosives-rigged car is said to be painted with the same markings used by military guards at most residential compounds, and several militants are said to have escaped in a stolen car. [REUTERS, 25, 26 NOV. 2003; *UKAZ* (JIDDAH), 26 NOV. 2003]
- On 2 December, The United States Embassy in Riyadh bars American employees and dependents from visiting housing compounds in Riyadh between the hours of 6pm and 6am except for official business for fear of renewed attacks. Four days later, the US embassy staff are warned not to leave the diplomatic quarter except for essential duties. [AP, 2, 6 DEC. 2003] Then a Ministry of the Interior statement on 6 December names 26 top suspects wanted in connection with terrorist operations in the kingdom; the list includes 23 Saudis, two Moroccans, and a Yemeni. In addition, the ministry offers a reward of SR

- 1 million (\$270,000) for information leading to the arrest of any of the men on the list, SR 5 million (\$1.35 million) for the arrest of a group of suspects, and SR 7 million (\$1.9 million) for assistance in preventing future attacks. [REUTERS, 6 DEC. 2003] A London Arabic newspaper claims that Salim al-Balushi, an Islamic “fundamentalist” businessman from the UAE and former “Arab Afghan” fighter acquainted with al-Qa‘idah leader Sayf al-‘Adil, was arrested around the end of summer 2003 in al-Dammam on his way to perform a pilgrimage before the start of Ramadan. [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 7 DEC. 2003]
- 4 December Militants shoot at Saudi Arabia’s top counter-terrorism official, Maj. Gen. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Huwayrini, wounding him moderately. [NYT, 30 DEC. 2003]
- 4 December Saudi authorities arrest a British and an American convert to Islam, the latter a brother of a man convicted in the US for supporting the Taliban. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 6 DEC. 2003]
- 8 December A gun battle at a gas station in southern Riyadh results in the death of Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. ‘Abdullah al-Rayyis, one of the 26 wanted men on the 6 December list. Another militant is killed in a separate clash in Riyadh’s southwestern al-Suwaydi neighborhood on the same day. Unconfirmed reports say that another man is arrested and that some militants may have escaped. A Saudi citizen who tipped the police about al-Rayyis’ hideout is paid a reward of SR 1 million but it is unclear whether he is paid in less than two hours of the killing or on 9 December. [AP, 8 DEC. 2003; AFP, 22 DEC. 2003; REUTERS, 13 DEC. 2003]
- 11 December A leaked assessment by the Central Intelligence Agency is said to conclude that al-Qa‘idah is intensifying its efforts to destabilize Saudi Arabia and overthrow the Al Sa‘ud royal family although the CIA casts doubts on the movement’s ability to succeed. The assessment also identifies ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. ‘Isa b. ‘Abd al-Muhsin al-Muqrin as the commander of al-Qa‘idah elements in Saudi Arabia; he is said to have fought in Bosnia-Herzegovina and smuggled weapons into Spain and Algeria. A leaked US Department of Defense assessment estimates that the Saudi armed forces hold as many as 10,000 al-Qa‘idah members or sympathizers. During the same week, militants are said to attempt unsuccessfully to shoot Prince Muhammad b. Nayif, a senior official of the Ministry of the Interior and the son of Prince Nayif. [PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, 11 DEC. 2003; UPI, 12 DEC. 2003]
- 29 December A small bomb explodes in a parked car in Riyadh belonging to a major in the Ministry of Interior’s Mabahith service (equivalent to the American Federal Bureau of Investigation) but causes no casualties or damages. Three men are arrested in connection with the attack shortly afterwards, while al-Haramayn Brigades, linked to al-Qa‘idah, claims responsibility for the bomb two days later. The attempt appears to be part of a pattern of attacks on security officials, following the wounding of a security official on 4 December and the defusing of another car bomb near the headquarters of a Saudi intelligence service earlier in December. [REUTERS, 29, 31 DEC. 2003; NYT, 30 DEC. 2003; UKAZ (JIDDAH), 31 DEC. 2003]
- 30 December Mansur b. Muhammad b. Ahmad Faqih, 14<sup>th</sup> on the list of 26 wanted suspects, turns himself in to Saudi authorities. He is said to have gone into hiding shortly

after his 18-year-old brother Hasan was arrested in connection with the 12 May bombings. [AP, 31 DEC. 2003]

## 2004

- 3 January Brig. Gen. Hadi Mabjar al-Sahli, a senior commander of the border guards in Jizan province, is found shot dead outside his house, although it is suspected that he committed suicide because of family problems. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 5 JAN. 2004]
- 5 January Saudi security forces defuse a bomb or a bomb training device in a telephone booth in a Riyadh neighborhood near a December shootout that left Ibrahim al-Rayyis dead. [AP, 5 JAN. 2004]
- 9 January Swiss police arrest 8 foreigners of undisclosed nationality in connection with the 12 May bombings in Riyadh. [REUTERS, 9 JAN. 2004]
- 12 January Saudi television shows unidentified militants confessing to planning murders and bombing attempts while the Ministry of the Interior says it has seized nearly 24 tons of explosives over the previous six months. [BBC NEWS UK ONLINE, 12 JAN. 2004; AP, 13 JAN. 2004]
- 15 January Saudi authorities announce the discovery of a number of desert camps where al-Qa'idah and an Iranian official suggests that Saudi successes against militants may have been the result of information provided by Tehran. But Minister of the Interior Prince Nayif denies on 27 January that any training camps existed in Saudi Arabia. [GULF DAILY NEWS (BAHRAIN), 16 JAN. 2004; AP, 27 JAN. 2004]
- 18 January Three suspects believed to be on the list of wanted al-Qa'idah members escape from a clash with Saudi police in a stolen car. [REUTERS, 18 JAN. 2004]
- 24 January Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal reacts to the Iranian announcement of the previous day that it would put a dozen jailed al-Qa'idah suspects on trial by insisting that any Saudi Arabian detainees should be handed over to Riyadh. [REUTERS, 24 JAN. 2004]
- 5 February Saudi authorities say that they had found a body believed to be that of militant 'Amir Muhsin Zaydan al-Shihri, some 30 kilometers north of Riyadh. Al-Shihri was said to have been wounded in a clash with police and fled, although which clash was not made clear. The discovery resulted from a tip-off. Another suspect is reported to have been arrested on 4 February after a car chase in eastern Riyadh. A website associated with al-Qa'idah acknowledged on 11 February 2004 the death of al-Shihi and said that another militant, 'Abd al-Ilah al-'Utaybi, had been killed in the same November 2003 clash in Riyadh's al-Suwaydi neighborhood. DNA testing subsequently confirmed that it was the body of al-Shihri. ['UKAZ (JIDDAH), 5 FEB. 2004; AL-WATAN (ABHA), 5 FEB. 2004; REUTERS, 11 AND 22 FEB. 2004; AP, 12 FEB. 2004]
- 5 February A UPI survey of the prisoners held by the United States government at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba claims that nearly one-quarter, or 160 out of 619 total, are from Saudi Arabia. [UPI, 5 FEB. 04]

- 8 February A video released on an Islamist website and purported to be from al-Qa'idah contains scenes of Saudi Arabian militants carrying out what it claims was the 8 November 2003 attacks in Riyadh. Two of the suicide bombers in that attack, `Ali b. Hamid al-Ma'badi al-Harbi and Nasir b. `Abdulah al-Sayyari al-Khalidi, are also shown. Other scenes shows militants training with rocket-propelled grenades and surface-to-air missiles at a camp claimed to be in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as a previously released statements by Usamah b. Ladin and other al-Qa'idah personalities, including `Abd al-`Aziz b. `Isa b. `Abd al-Muhsin al-Muqrin, the new al-Qa'idah leader in Saudi Arabia after the death of al-Hajj and the supposed mastermind of the attack. [REUTERS, 5 AND 6 FEB. 2004]
- 13 February The Ministry of Interior warns the population in Riyadh that a four-wheel-drive vehicle owned by a wanted militant has been packed with explosives, presumably to be used in another bombing, and offers a reward of SR 7 million for information leading to its discovery. [REUTERS, 13 FEB. 2004; *AL-RIYAD* (RIYADH), 15 FEB. 2004]
- 19 February Security forces kill a wanted militant in Riyadh's al-`Aziziyah quarter after he opens fire on them. [*UKAZ* (JIDDAH), 19 FEB. 2004]
- 4 March A report by Saudi border guards indicates that they have detained 148,000 people in previous three months and seized 71 weapons, 60,000 rounds of ammunition, 100 sticks of dynamite, and 14 bombs, as well as large quantities of drugs and alcohol. [*AL-RIYAD* (RIYADH), 4 MAR. 2004]
- 10 March The police chief of al-Aflaj province in central Saudi Arabia, Major Lt. Mash'an al-Matari, is wounded in the legs when three gunmen open fire on him as he drops his daughter off at school. [*AL-RIYAD* (RIYADH), 11 MAR. 2004]
- 13 March Deputy Minister of the Interior Prince Ahmad b. `Abd al-`Aziz Al Sa'ud makes first official announcement of trials and convictions of terrorism suspects since the 2003 bombing attacks in Riyadh. Although he gave few details, none of the militants from the list of 26 or the three religious figures arrested in May 2003 have been tried. [*UKAZ*, 13 MAR. 2004]
- 15 March A Yemeni (born in Jiddah) regarded as the possible leader of al-Qa'idah elements in Saudi Arabia, Khalid `Ali `Ali al-Hajj (also known as Abu Hazim al-Sha'ir), is shot dead in Riyadh after the car in which he is riding fails to stop when challenged by police. His companion, Ibrahim b. `Abd al-`Aziz b. Muhammad al-Muzayni, is also shot dead. Al-Hajj had been placed third on the list of 26 wanted militants and had been tied to the 12 May 2003 Riyadh bombings. Hand grenades, Kalashnikov rifles and ammunition, three revolvers, and SR 516,000 are found in their car. A group calling itself al-Qa'idah Organization in the Arabian Peninsula posts a statement on 17 March claiming that al-Hajj and al-Muzayni were ambushed and killed by surprise while heading to an undisclosed operation. It also threatened revenge for their deaths. [*AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT*, 23 FEB. 2004; REUTERS, 15 AND 18 MAR. 2004; AP, 16 MAR. 2004]

- 16-17 March The Saudi General Intelligence Police arrest a number of liberal activists for questioning over alleged seditious statements. Some 12 individuals are arrested on 16 March (including Muhammad Sa'id Tayyib, Dr. Matruk al-Falih, Dr. Tawfiq al-Qusayyir, Dr. 'Abdullah al-Hamid, and Dr. Khalid al-Humayd) with another five arrested on the following evening (Dr. 'Adnan al-Shakhs, Najib al-Khunayzi, Sulayman al-Rushudi, 'Ali al-Dumayni, and Amir Bu Khamsin). The authorities are thought to be displeased with their criticism of the newly established and government-sanctioned National Human Rights Committee and their organization of a petition presented to Heir Apparent Prince 'Abdullah in January 2003 calling for establishment of a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament. The ranks of the arrested include several current and former university professors, a well-known human-rights activist, and an established poet. The arrests are criticized by the US State Department on 17 March as three detainees (Khalid al-Hamid, 'Adnan al-Shakhs, and 'Abd al-Rabb Abu Khamsin) are released. Lawyer 'Abd al-Rahman al-Lahm is arrested on 17 March for criticizing the earlier arrests. Another seven activists are released on 21 March after signing pledges not to advance any more reform petitions or to talk to reporters. Support efforts for the release of the remaining six or so reformists from US Secretary of State Colin Powell during a subsequent visit to Saudi Arabia, the signing of a petition for their release by 130 people, and a meeting of about a dozen activists with Prince Nayif on 22 March are fruitless. Two reformists, Shaykh Sulayman al-Rushudi and Tawfiq al-Qusayyir, a lawyer and university professor respectively, are released on 29 March without signing any pledge to cease their pro-reform activities. The action left four activists still in detention – Muhammad Sa'id Tayyib, 'Ali al-Dumayni, Matruk al-Falih, and 'Abdullah al-Hamid. [REUTERS, 16, 18, AND 24 MAR. 2004; GULF NEWS (DUBAI), 17 MAR. 2004; AL-JAZIRAH.NET, 17 MAR. 2004; AP, 17 AND 21 MAR. 2004; CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 22 MAR. 2004; MIDDLE EAST ONLINE (LONDON), 29 MAR. 2004]
- 19 March Saudi security forces briefly seal off a district of southwestern Riyadh in expectation of surrounding al-Qa'idah leader 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin but have no success. [REUTERS, 19 MAR. 2004]
- 21 March Saudi Arabia hands over eight Yemenis detained on security charges and received five Saudi nationals in return. The exchange follows a similar Saudi handover of nine Yemenis (some of whom are connected to the 2002 attack on the French tanker Limburg in Yemeni waters) in September 2003. [REUTERS, 18 AND 21 MAR. 2004]
- 24 March The US Embassy in Riyadh is closed briefly after an explosion is reported but reopens shortly afterward as no threat to the embassy is discovered. [REUTERS, 24 MAR. 2004]
- 4 April Three explosions kill three people at a residential compound in Riyadh. As many as 100 people are said to have been injured. The Saudi Ministry of the Interior blames a terrorist bombing and says gunshots had been exchanged with the perpetrators. [UPI, 5 APR. 2004]

- 6 April A shoot-out takes place in the Riyadh suburb of Rawdah when a suspicious car fails to stop when ordered to do so by police. The occupants open fire and a wanted suspect, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Nayif al-Sahli al-Harbi, is killed. His companion, 'Abdullah b. Ghalib al-Sahli al-Harbi, is wounded but takes refuge in a nearby house, from where he is arrested after a seven-hour siege. The Ministry of the Interior later announced that the two men had been wanted for criminal activities. The ministry also announces that three other people had been wounded earlier in another gunbattle but does not provide any further details. [AP, 6 APR. 2004; REUTERS, 7 APR. 2004]
- 8 April 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin, believed to be the top al-Qa`idah still at large in Saudi Arabia, in a video posted on an Islamist website urges Muslims to kill Americans everywhere and warns of more attacks against allied Arab leaders. [REUTERS, 8 APR. 2004]
- 10 April The director of the Border Police is quoted that 51,811 people had been detained during the month of Muharram (February-March) for illegally crossing Saudi Arabia's borders. More than 47,000 of these were arrested in Jizan province in the south while 702 were held at the northern border with Iraq. [REUTERS, 10 APR. 2004]
- 9 April A policeman stops a car on Macarona Street in Jiddah and during questioning is shot and killed by one of the passengers. Two days later, a policeman questioning a suspect outside a cafeteria in al-Bawadi district on Jiddah is shot dead by another man. The perpetrators and their companions escape in both cases and it is not known whether there are any links to terrorists. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 11 APR. 2004]
- 12 April A shootout on a highway in Riyadh's eastern suburbs results in the deaths of one militant and one policeman while another five policeman are wounded. The militants fire a rocket-propelled grenade during the altercation. Three other militants are chased after they flee in a car. Early the next day, a car apparently carrying the same militants is stopped at a checkpoint near 'Unayzah. They open fire on police, killing four policemen, and then flee in police cars to a nearby town. Another Ministry of the Interior official claims that two policemen each were killed in separate attacks. [AP, 12 AND 14 APR. 2004]
- 14 April Two Saudi neighborhood patrol guards connected with the Ministry of the Interior are shot dead in 'Uyaynah, just northwest of Riyadh, by suspected militants. [REUTERS, 15 APR. 2004]
- 15 April The United States government orders nonessential diplomats and all diplomatic families out of the kingdom and warns all other Americans that they should leave the country also. Secretary of State Colin Powell tells reporters that "The threat level has gone up." [REUTERS, 16 APR. 2004]
- 17 April Saudi police find a four-wheel-drive vehicle belonging to militants in Riyadh and defuse the bomb inside it. The incident follows two other discoveries of car bombs north of Riyadh on 13 April. In addition, another security source says that police have arrested a suspected militant in Jiddah but no further details are provided. [REUTERS, 17 APR. 2004]

- 17 April Islamic reform activist Shaykh Sa'id al-Zu'ayr is arrested following his alleged support for militant attacks during an interview on Qatar's al-Jazirah television. A former professor at Imam Muhammad b. Sa'ud University in Riyadh, al-Zu'ayr had spent eight years in detention for his activities. His son claims that al-Zu'ayr's comments were taken out of context. [REUTERS, 17 APR. 2004]
- 18 April The Ministry of the Interior announces that it has arrested eight militants involved in the recent killings of policemen in Riyadh and has seized a large quantity of money, weapons, and explosives. [REUTERS, 18 APR. 2004]
- 19 April Security authorities seize two four-wheel-drive vehicles packed with explosives on Ramah highway outside Riyadh. The discovery follows the seizure of two booby-trapped vehicles in Riyadh on the previous day. [AP, 19 APR. 2004]
- 21 April A suicide bomber attempts to drive a four-wheel-drive vehicle packed with explosives through a gate into the General Security building in Riyadh. He sets off the explosives when he is stopped by guards, shattering the facade of the building and killing at least five people while wounding several hundred. One official states that five other vehicles with explosives are also apprehended. Al-Haramayn Brigades, linked to al-Qa'idah, claims responsibility. Minister of the Interior Prince Nayif b. 'Abd al-'Aziz claims on 29 April that the Riyadh bombing was a "limited part of a big operation which was foiled." The suicide bomber is subsequently identified as 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Ali al-Mudayhish. [NYT, 22 APR. 2004; AP, 22 APR. 2004; REUTERS, 22, 29, AND 30 APR. 2004]
- 22 April A gunbattle erupts in Jiddah between security forces and militants holed up in a flat. The siege ends twelve hours later when security forces storm the building and kill three militants. Two others escape in a car but one is killed and the other blows himself up rather than face capture. A policeman is slightly wounded. Four of the dead are on the list of 26 most wanted militants. Sources indicate that the incident prevented a planned major operation in the Jiddah area. [REUTERS, 23 APR. 2004; NYT, 24 APR. 2004]
- 25 April Security forces surround a suspected militant stronghold in a hilly region of al-'Ammariyah, some 35 kilometers north of Riyadh. The head of al-Qa'idah operations in Saudi Arabia, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin, is thought to be among the trapped militants. Forces are withdrawn on 13 May after the hunt for militants produces no success. [REUTERS, 29 APR. AND 13 MAY 2004]

- 1 May Four attackers enter the office of a contractor, ABB Lummus Global, in a petrochemical complex in the industrial city of Yanbu' on the Red Sea and kill five engineers: two Americans, two British, and an Australian. The perpetrators then flee to a nearby residential area and begin shooting at the Holiday Inn and a McDonalds. Two attackers are reported to have blown themselves up in their car, a third is killed by security forces after dragging the corpse of one of the Americans through the streets behind his car, and the fourth is captured wounded. At least one Saudi policeman is seriously wounded and another is injured. The Ministry of the Interior subsequently identifies the attacks as brothers Sami and Samir al-Ansari and their uncles Ayman and Mustafa; the ministry also claims that Mustafa had spent time in London working with dissidents Muhammad al-Mas'ari and Sa'd al-Faqih. Heir Apparent Prince 'Abdullah initially suggests that Zionists were behind the attack but the Ministry of the Interior later blames al-Qa'idah, a thesis supported by a statement allegedly from 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin on an Islamist website that claimed responsibility. [REUTERS, 1, 4, AND 5 MAY 2004; *INDEPENDENT* (LONDON), 2 MAY 2004; AP, 4 MAY 2004]
- 8 May Heir Apparent Prince 'Abdullah warns Saudi citizens against showing sympathy to terrorists and tells them not to be silent, as "Anybody who is silent over what happened in Riyadh and Yanbu' is considered one of them." [AP, 8 MAY 2004]
- 14 May Another statement purportedly from 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin posted on an Islamist website claims that al-Qa'idah is aiding militants fighting US forces in Iraq and commends the activities of Ansar al-Islam in this context. [REUTERS, 14 MAY 2004]
- 16 May Reports that a gunfight outside the Kingdom Towers complex in Riyadh ends with the arrest of four suspected terrorists; gunmen is denied by the Ministry of the Interior, which contends that a guard had fired his gun prematurely. [REUTERS, 16 MAY 2004; AP, 16 MAY 2004; UPI, 16 MAY 2004]
- 17 May Brigadier Muhammad al-'Awdah, the chief police officer in northern city of Kuhafiyah, is shot and wounded by three brothers when they open fire on police seeking to arrest them. The reasons for their arrest are not made clear. [UPI, 18 MAY 2004]
- 20 May Saudi civil defense chief Sa'd al-Tuwayjiri announces that a special strike force has been set up to counter terrorist attacks, as well as provide help during natural disasters. [*UKAZ* (JIDDAH), 20 MAY 2004]
- 22 May A German caterer for Saudi Arabian Airlines is shot and killed in Riyadh by an unknown assailant as he leaves a bank cash machine. [REUTERS, 22 MAY 2004; AP, 22 MAY 2004]
- 23 May A cache of weapons, explosives, and money, is seized by security forces at a hideout in Buraydah in central Najd. The following day, suspected militants shoot at policemen from a car; two policeman and four militants are killed. The car is captured and three men are arrested in connection with the attack in nearby 'Unayzah a day later. [REUTERS, 23, 24, AND 25 MAY 2004]

- 27 May A statement said to be from ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Muqrin and posted on several Islamist websites calls for an urban guerrilla war in Saudi Arabia and gives a detailed list of steps militants should take to carry out their campaign, among them working in groups of four or fewer people and to work in cities where they reside in order to avoid suspicion. [REUTERS, 27 MAY 2004]
- 29 May Four militants, disguised in National Guard uniforms, attack two office buildings in al-Khubar in the Eastern Province, the Petroleum Center complex housing offices of a number of multinational oil-related firms, and the office of APICORP (Arab Petroleum Investments Corporation), shooting the workers inside and dragging at least one corpse behind a car. The attackers later make their way into the Oasis residential compound through a disused gate and go door to door, shooting and capturing expatriates. As many as 50 people are then held hostage at a hotel for 25 hours before Saudi Arabian special forces drop onto the hotel’s roof and free the hostages. The leader, subsequently identified as Nimr al-Baqmi, is wounded and captured but three other attackers escape when the hostages are freed. The Ministry of the Interior announces that the attackers killed a total of 22 people and another 25 or more are believed to have been wounded; another source says that nine hostages were killed. There are allegations that Saudi security forces allowed the three attackers to escape in exchange for freeing the hostages, although the official account says the attackers used hostages as body shields to make their escape. Other reports mention another siege in a building in nearby al-Dammam that ended with the escape of either the same three or another three militants. It is disclosed later that four Americans evaded the attackers by hiding on the roof, where they were rescued a few hours before the end of the siege. Saudi authorities also disclose later that, following American advice, the attackers were allowed to escape after they began killing hostages. A purported al-Qa‘idah statement on an Islamist website claims responsibility and details the sequence of events of the attack. On 7 September, the British ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, said that he believed that the three attackers were allowed to escape because of an understanding with the security forces. Saudi observers immediately contradicted his remarks by reiterating that the attackers were let go in order to protect remaining hostages. [REUTERS, 30 AND 31 MAY 2004; NYT, 30 MAY AND 1 JUNE 2004; *INDEPENDENT* (LONDON), 31 MAY AND 1 JUNE 2004; AP, 2 AND 4 JUNE 2004; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 8 SEPT. 2004]
- 1 June Two militants, one dressed as a woman, open fire after being stopped at a security checkpoint on the Makkah-al-Ta’if highway and flee into a mountainous area near al-Haddah. Pursuing security officers finally kill the two men on 2 June after a 12-hour chase. Officials claim that the pair are linked to al-Khubar attackers but deny that they were among those who escaped. One official identifies one of the dead as ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad Yazji, no. 25 on the list of the 26 most-wanted militants. [AP, 2 JUNE 2004]

- 2 June A Saudi driver is wounded when gunmen open fire on US Army personnel training the Saudi Arabian National Guard as they leave their residential area in Riyadh. A statement claiming to be from al-Qa'idah in the Arabian Peninsula posts a statement on a website later in the day claiming responsibility for the attack. [AP, 2 AND 3 JUNE 2004; UPI, 2 JUNE 2004; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 2 JUNE 2004]
- 4 June 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin, the head of al-Qa'idah in Saudi Arabia, praised attacks on foreigners and called upon Saudis to support their campaign to overthrow the monarchy. [REUTERS, 5 JUNE 2004]
- 5 June A firefight in Jiddah between police and extremists in moving cars turns into a chase when the militants speed away. [REUTERS, 5 JUNE 2004]
- 6 June BBC correspondent Frank Gardner receives critical bullet wounds and his cameraman Simon Cumbers is killed when they venture into the poor Riyadh neighborhood of al-Suwaydi, apparently in search of people to interview about local al-Qa'idah members. In the midst of photographing the house of a dead extremist, the two men are shot by gunmen in passing cars. [BBC NEWS ONLINE, 6 JUNE 2004; INDEPENDENT, 8 JUNE 2004]
- 8 June An American employee, Robert C. Jacobs, of the American contractor Vinnell Corporation is shot dead at his home in the eastern al-Khalij suburb of Riyadh. A video posted on a website on 12 June purports to show his execution. [NYT 9 JUNE 2004; CNN.COM 13 JUNE 2004]
- 9 June A poll of 15,000 Saudi Arabian citizens conducted in August and November 2003 is released by Saudi security consultant Nawwaf Obaid, reporting that nearly one-half of all Saudis had a favorable view of Usamah b. Ladin's sermons and rhetoric but less than 5% would like to see Usamah rule in the kingdom. The poll also reported that 41% favored strong and close relations with the United States while only 39% held a favorable opinion of the Saudi armed forces. [WP, 9 JUNE 2004]
- 10 June Four Saudi teenagers are arrested after two incidents in al-Ta'if. In the first, an American was threatened with a knife by three teenagers in a restaurant while another American was rammed in his car by another teenager. Separately, a Chadian national is arrested in Jiddah where he had been hiding since escaping from a fire in Makkah on 15 June 2003. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 11 JUNE 2004; UKAZ (JIDDAH), 11 JUNE 2004]
- 12 June The four Saudi Arabian nationals implicated in a Libyan plot to assassinate Heir Apparent 'Abdullah b. 'Abd al-'Aziz are said to be members of al-Qa'idah. [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 12 JUNE 2004]

- 12 June American engineer Kenneth Scroggs, a Vinnell Corporation employee, is shot to death in Riyadh as he parked his car in front of his residence in al-Malazz suburb. Police discover a car rigged with explosives elsewhere in Riyadh on the same day. Still on the same day, a group calling itself the Fallujah Squadron of al-Qa'idah in the Arabian Peninsula claims on the website of Sawt al-Jihad to have kidnapped another American, Paul Marshall Johnson Jr., an engineer for Lockheed Martin specializing in the maintenance of Apache helicopters. A captive Johnson is shown in a video posted on an Islamist website on 15 June and his kidnappers threaten to execute him within 72 hours unless the Saudi Arabian government releases the group's members from jail. Six prominent dissident clerics, including Safar b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hawali and Salman al-'Awdah, issue a statement on 13 June carried by SPA condemning the attacks. Some sources claim that the incidents provoke a number of Americans to leave the kingdom. Johnson is beheaded on 18 June when his abductors' deadline passes, despite a massive manhunt by 15,000 security officers searching more than 1200 homes in Riyadh. A few hours after the execution, security forces kill 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin and three other members of his cell, Faysal b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abdullah al-Dakhil (said to be no. 2 in the organization), Turki b. Fuhayd al-Mutayri (said by the Ministry of the Interior to be one of the perpetrators of the al-Khubar killings), and Ibrahim al-Durayhim (said by the Ministry of the Interior to have helped prepare the November 2003 Riyadh attack). Another 12 members are captured, including Rakan al-Saykhan, described as one of the planners of the attack on the USS Cole in Aden. Despite initial reports, Johnson's body is not found but photographs of his beheading are posted on an Islamist website; the search for his body is called off on 14 July. Al-Muqrin and al-Dakhil are the eighth and ninth names on the list of 26 most wanted to be killed; al-Durayhim is also in the list and, since another had previously turned himself in, 15 remain at large. [REUTERS, 12, 18, AND 19 JUNE 2004; CNN.COM 13 JUNE 2004; AP, 14 AND 21 JUNE 2004; NYT 16, 19, AND 20 JUNE 2004; IHT, 19 JUNE 2004; INDEPENDENT (LONDON), 21 JUNE 2004; WP, 15 JULY 2004]
- 15 June Security forces arrest two suspected militants north of Riyadh. [AP, 17 JUNE 2004]
- 16 June Saudi security forces surround a house in a poor southwestern Riyadh neighborhood but later withdraw; it is unclear whether any arrests were made or whether the action was related to the Paul Johnson kidnapping. [AP, 17 JUNE 2004]
- 16 June The Ministry of Interior states that a Saudi security team has visited the 124 Saudi Arabian detainees held by the United States government at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, in the second such visit. [AP, 16 JUNE 2004]

- 20 June Sawt al-Jihad website announces that former Saudi policeman and Afghanistan and Bosnia veteran Salih b. Muhammad al-‘Awfi has succeeded ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Muqrin as head of al-Qa‘idah in the Arabian Peninsula. The site also posts details of the abduction and beheading of Paul Johnson, including the claim that sympathizers within Saudi security forces provided uniforms and cars for the kidnapping; the claim is denied by the Saudi government. Meanwhile, security forces continue to comb al-Malazz neighborhood for Johnson’s body. [AP, 21 JUNE 2004; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 21 JUNE 2004; *GUARDIAN* (LONDON), 22 JUNE 2004]
- 23 June Minister of the Interior Prince Nayif announces that foreign residents of Saudi Arabia will be allowed to carry personal weapons for their safety. He also announces a month-long amnesty for militants and on the following day the first surrenders – Saban b. Muhammad b. ‘Abdullah al-Layhi al-Shihri, said to have provided logistical support to al-Qa‘idah although he was not on the list of 26 most wanted. The Ministry of the Interior acknowledged that the amnesty would also apply to two militants who surrendered earlier, ‘Abd al-Rahman b. al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi and Mansur b. Muhammad b. Ahmad Faqih. The Saudi ambassador to the UK explains in an interview that the amnesty will apply to action by the state but that families of victims could decide if the surrenderees should be executed. [AP, 24 JUNE 2004; REUTERS, 24 AND 26 JUNE 2004]
- 25 June Saudi Arabian National Guard Deputy Sergeant Sa‘d b. Misfar al-Qahtani uses a machine gun to kill a National Guard major and a lieutenant at their base in northern Riyadh. Another officer states that the incident was personal and that Qahtani turned himself in to police. [*GULF DAILY NEWS* (BAHRAIN), 26 JUNE 2004]
- 27 June ‘Uthman b. Hadi b. al-Maqbul al-‘Amri becomes the first extremist on the list of 26 most wanted to surrender under the month-long amnesty. He is taken into custody in the Jiddah home of well-known cleric Safar al-Hawali. [REUTERS, 28 JUNE 2004]
- 29 June The Ministry of the Interior announces an amnesty for citizens with unlicensed weapons. [AP, 29 JUNE 2004]
- 30 June Extremist Fahd b. ‘Ali b. Dakhil al-Ghabalan, a logistics manager for al-Qa‘idah responsible for smuggling weapons and explosives into the kingdom, is killed during a shootout with police as he leaves a safe house in al-Quds neighborhood of Riyadh; several other militants escape. Early reports identify the dead man as radical cleric ‘Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Rashid al-Rushud, thought to be the chief ideologue for al-Qa‘idah in Saudi Arabia and one of the 26 most wanted extremists, but this is later denied by the Deputy Governor of Riyadh Prince Sattam b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. A policeman is killed in the shootout and six other security personnel and three bystanders are wounded; one of the wounded policemen dies a few days later. Large quantities of explosives, weapons, communications equipment, and computers are seized in two safe houses. [AP, 30 JUNE 2004; REUTERS, 1, 2, AND 4 JULY 2004]

- 1 July Acting on a tip, security forces surround the hiding place in the northern Nakhil district of Riyadh of two extremists who had escaped during the 30 June incident. One extremist, ‘Awad b. Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-‘Awad, is killed and the other is wounded; a security officer is killed while another security officer and the National Guard officer who provided the tip are wounded. [REUTERS, 1 AND 2 JULY 2004; AP, 3 JULY 2004]
- 3 July The Ministry of the Interior announces that investigations had uncovered the deaths of two men on the list of 26 most wanted, Rakan b. Muhsin al-Saykhan and Nasir b. Rashid al-Rashid, as a result of their wounds received during the 12 April 2004 shootout in Riyadh. The statement says that burial in an unknown location was supervised by ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Muqrin and that five of those who helped in the burial had been captured and another, ‘Awad al-‘Awad, was killed in 1 July shootout. No explanation is given for the discrepancy between al-Saykhan’s reported death and his reported capture on 12 June. [REUTERS, 3 JULY 2004; AP, 3 JULY 2004]
- 11 July A newspaper report claims that a number of Saudis who had been fighting US forces in Iraq were returning home to carry out attacks in the kingdom, including local al-Qa‘idah leader Salih al-‘Awfi, said to have spent several months with Ansar al-Islam in northern Iraq and to have barely survived US aerial bombardment. Other Saudi extremists are said to have been trained in remote areas of Sudan. [WP, 11 JULY 2004]
- 13 July Khalid b. ‘Awdah b. Muhammad al-Harbi (aka Abu Sulayman al-Makki), an extremist disabled while fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan and confidante of Usamah b. Ladin, surrenders under the amnesty to Saudi diplomats in Iran and is flown to Riyadh. [AP, 14 JULY 2004]
- 16 July A fourth al-Qa‘idah suspect, Ibrahim al-Sadiq al-Qa’idi, surrenders under the amnesty to Saudi diplomats in Damascus and arrives in Riyadh on 17 July. He had been living in Syria after fighting in Afghanistan and Bosnia. [AP, 16 AND 17 JULY 2004]
- 18 July A government statement carried by SPA says “brotherly countries” had handed over 27 wanted Saudis. Unnamed security sources speculate that most had come from Yemen and Syria, and possibly from Iraq. [GULF DAILY NEWS (BAHRAIN), 19 JULY 2004]

- 20 July A gunbattle erupts as security forces raid a Riyadh residence suspected of being used by militants: two militants are killed, three others are wounded, and at least two are captured. Three security officers are also wounded. The firefight triggers fire from a second group of extremists in an attempt to divert the attention of security forces; the second group then flees the scene. Initially, it is believed that Salih al-‘Awfi, the new head of al-Qa‘idah in the Arabian Peninsula, may be among them but the Ministry of the Interior later claims that al-‘Awfi was wounded but escaped. Authorities hold his wife and three children who were in the house at the time. Both of the dead men are on the list of 26 most wanted: ‘Isa b. Sa‘d al-‘Awshan, editor of the Sawt al-Jihad website, & Mujab Abu Ra’s al-Dawsari. The head of Paul M. Johnson, Jr., is discovered in a freezer in the house; a weapons cache including a surface-to-air missile, bombs, machine guns, and more than 30,000 bullets is also retrieved. A statement by al-Qa‘idah in the Arabian Peninsula posted on the Internet on 27 July described the gunbattle and admitted the deaths of the two militants, plus that of Mish‘al b. al-Shaykh Hamud al-Faraj who died later of wounds received. [AP, 21 AND 27 JULY 2004; NYT, 21 JULY 2004]
- 22 July The month-long amnesty declared by Heir Apparent Prince ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz expires with only six surrenders. Fawzan al-Fawzan surrenders on 22 July at Saudi embassy in Damascus while Fayiz al-Khashman al-Dawsari surrenders in al-Ta’if just before the deadline. Dissident cleric Safar al-Hawali says that he is still negotiating with Salih al-‘Awfi over his surrender even though Prince ‘Abdullah has refused to extend the amnesty, as well as with 14 others. All six surrenderees are released several months later. [REUTERS, 22 AND 23 JULY 2004, 11 NOVEMBER 2004; AP, 23 JULY 2004]
- 23 July Security forces hunt for militant leader Salih al-‘Awfi after he evades a police dragnet in Riyadh hours after the amnesty offer ended. [FT, 25 JULY 2004]
- 26 July Security forces announce the arrest of an unnamed extremist in al-Qasim region, north of Riyadh. [UPI, 27 JULY 2004]
- 27 July Hamid al-‘Awfi, the brother of local al-Qa‘idah leader Salih al-‘Awfi, tells Saudi media that he and all his brothers would alert authorities if he had any information about his brothers whereabouts. [UPI, 27 JULY 2004]
- 31 July Police arrest a man when a cache of weapons and explosives, including RPG launchers and hand grenades, in his house in Riyadh. On the same day, the wife of a prominent militant, ‘Isa al-‘Awshan, surrenders to police after three months in hiding with her husband. [REUTERS, 31 JULY 2004]
- 3 August Anthony Christopher Higgins, an Irish national working for a private company in Riyadh as an engineer is shot and killed when several gunmen break into his office. Al-Qa‘idah in the Arabian Peninsula later claims responsibility. [AP, 3 AUG. 2004; REUTERS 13 AUG. 2004]
- 5 August Police capture Faris Ahmad Jum‘an al-Shawil al-Zahrani, no. 12 on the last of 26 most wanted, along with a companion, apparently in Abha. [AP, 6 AUG. 2004]

- 11 August 'Abd al-Rahman al-Harbi, a prominent extremist and explosives expert, is shot dead by security forces in Makkah. Al-Harbi was believed to have been one of extremists who carried out the November 2003 attack on the Muhaya residential compound in Riyadh. [REUTERS 13 AUG. 2004]
- 15 August Two unnamed suspects in terrorist attacks are arrested during a police raid in Tabuk in northern Saudi Arabia. [AL-JAZIRAH (RIYADH), 16 AUG. 2004]
- 17 August Security forces arrest a militant in Riyadh and newspapers report that another suspect had been arrested earlier in Makkah, apparently during the same operation that led to the death of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Harbi. ['UKAZ (JIDDAH), 18 AUG. 2004; AL-WATAN (ABHA), 18 AUG. 2004]
- 19 August It is reported that 14 extremists have been arrested in al-Ta'if and held for questioning about involvement in terrorist activities. [AL-HAYAT (LONDON), 16 AUG. 2004]
- 22 August The wife of Salih Muhammad al-'Awfi, the head of al-Qa'idah in the Arabian Peninsula, is released by the Ministry of the Interior after a month in detention since a shootout with 'Awfi and other militants in Riyadh. [AFP, 25 AUG. 2004]
- 27 August Two month amnesty for citizens to surrender unlicensed weapons without penalty expires. [REUTERS, 27 AUG. 2004]
- 25 August Extremist suspect Faris al-Shawil al-Zahrani, on of the list of 26 most wanted, is arrested in Abha while in possession of bombs that he planned to use in a theatre where a famous singer was to perform. There is no explanation of earlier report that he was arrested on 5 August. [AL-HAYAT (LONDON), 27 AUG. 2004]
- 30 August Gunmen open fire on a US diplomatic car near the US Consulate in Jiddah but the occupants of the car are unhurt. [REUTERS, 30 AUG. 2004]
- 31 August One militant is killed and three others with him are wounded when their car breaks through a security checkpoint in al-Ahsa governorate in the Eastern Province. The incident takes place during a police search of the governorate that began on 30 August; the search results in the arrest of another suspected militant. [REUTERS, 31 AUG. 2004]
- 2 September The Ministry of the Interior announces that 'Abdullah b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Ahmad al-Muqrin, believed to be one of the organizers of the cell that carried out the May 2004 attack in al-Khubar, has surrendered. Although not on the list of 26 most wanted, he is a relative of the former head of the Saudi wing of al-Qa'idah, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin. [REUTERS, 2 SEPT. 2004]
- 3 September A policeman is killed and three others wounded in a clash with extremists in the city of Buraydah in al-Qasim. A number of explosives and weapons re found in the house occupied by the extremists. Earlier reports place the scene of the clash in the town of al-Baradah, northeast of Riyadh. A wanted militant is killed in a gunbattle outside Buraydah on the same day. [AP, 3 SEPT. 2004]; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 3 SEPT. 2004; REUTERS, 5 SEPT. 2004]
- 5 September State television reports a second battle in Buraydah in which three policemen are killed and 7 suspects are arrested. [REUTERS, 5 SEPT. 2004]
- 11 September A small explosion takes place in a car parked near a bank cash machine in Jiddah, injuring the driver. [REUTERS, 11 SEPT. 2004]

- 15 September Edward Stuart Muirhead-Smith, a British expatriate working for Marconi in Riyadh, is shot dead in his car at a shopping center in eastern Riyadh by two young Saudis. [INDEPENDENT (LONDON); 16 SEPT. 2004; AP, 16 SEPT. 2004]
- 20 September A shootout in Tabuk results in the arrest of a wanted extremist; he and three security men are wounded during the shooting. [REUTERS, 20 SEPT. 2004]
- 21 September SPA announces that Saudi border guards stopped 942,000 people from entering the kingdom illegally during the past year and seized 2,000 weapons. Most of these incidents are assumed to have taken place along the border with Yemen. They also foiled 19,000 smuggling attempts, arrested 8000 smugglers, and seized 6000 tons of *qat*, a plant popular in Yemen for chewing the leaves as a stimulant. [REUTERS, 21 SEPT. 2004]
- 22 September US officials announce that they will turn Yasir b. 'Isam al-Hamdi, a Saudi citizen also holding American citizenship by virtue of his birth in the US, over to Saudi Arabia. Al-Hamdi was captured in Afghanistan and held without charges for more than two years as an "enemy combatant." In exchange for his freedom, Hamdi agrees to renounce his American citizenship, not to travel outside Saudi Arabia for five years, and to accept a ban on travel to a number of countries, including the United States. [REUTERS, 22 SEPT. 2004; AP, 27 SEPT. 2004]
- 26 September Frenchman Laurent Barbot, an employee of a French company providing maintenance on naval frigates sold to Saudi Arabia, is shot and killed by drive-by attackers at a supermarket in Tarikh district of Jiddah, the first such fatal attack on a Westerner in that city. An extremist captured in November during a raid in Jiddah, Hamad al-Sa'di, subsequently confesses to killing Barbot. But the Ministry of the Interior on 15 June 2005 says it has arrested five Chadian extremists for the murder and several armed robberies. [REUTERS, 26 SEPT. AND 23 NOV. 2004; AP, 26 SEPT. 2004; 'UKAZ (JIDDAH), 23 NOV. 2004; REUTERS, 15 JUNE 2005]
- A gunbattle ensues that night when a police patrol car attempts to stop a suspicious vehicle in the Shafa district of Riyadh. The three occupants escape by hijacking two other cars, but a fourth suspect is arrested in the same area. [AP, 27 SEPT. 2004]
- 1 October Machine gun shots are fired from a moving car towards the Seder Village compound, which houses expatriate workers, in Riyadh. Security forces disclose that video footage of the compound and a car filled with hundreds of kilograms of explosives was seized during a raid on a hideout in Riyadh on 25 November 2003. [REUTERS, 3 OCT. 2004]
- 7 October The Ministry of the Interior announces the arrest of cleric Muhanna b. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Hubayl, leader of the Islamic National Forum, for "inciting strife" in al-Ahsa' region. The Sunni group is accused of creating feuds with the region's Shi'ah population. [REUTERS, 7 OCT. 2004]

- 12 October A raid by security forces on a house in al-Nahdah district in eastern Riyadh escalates into a firefight: three extremists die in the confrontation while seven police officers are wounded. One of the dead is identified as 'Abd al-Majid Muhammad 'Abdullah al-Mani', number 18 on the government's list of 26 most wanted suspects. The other two extremists killed are 'Abd al-Hamid al-Yahya, who had provided safehouses, and 'Isam al-'Utaybi, who had been extradited from an unnamed country several weeks previously but released upon his pledge not to associate with any dissident group. [AP, 12 OCT. 2004]
- 19 October The Ministry of the Interior announces the arrest of a suspected extremist, heavily armed and dressed as a woman, after he flees a police checkpoint and steals a car at Hawtah, south of Riyadh. [REUTERS, 19 OCT. 2004]
- 26 October A statement by al-Qa'idah Organization in the Arabian Peninsula praises the activities of Iraqi-based extremist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. [REUTERS, 26 OCT. 2004]  
Belgian authorities announce Husayn Muhammad al-Haski, a Moroccan listed among Saudi Arabia's 26 most wanted extremists. Belgium intends to prosecute al-Haski for crimes in that country. [REUTERS, 26 OCT. 2004]
- 31 October Two raids on hideouts in Riyadh by Saudi security forces result in the arrest of three suspects and the capture of explosives, guns, and ammunition. [REUTERS, 31 OCT. 2004]
- 2 November An extremist website indicates that Sa'ud b. Hamud al-'Utaybi has become the new leader of al-Qa'idah Organization in the Arabian Peninsula, replacing Salih b. Muhammad al-'Awfi, who appeared to have died after being wounded in a 21 July shootout or another clash and who had earlier replaced 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muqrin, killed by security forces in aftermath of the beheading of Paul Johnson. The website denies that al-'Awfi is dead in a 10 November posting but does not offer an explanation for his silence. [AFP, 2 NOV. 2004; REUTERS, 10 NOV. 2004]
- 4 November A suspected militant is captured after shootout in an internet café in Buraydah. Two policemen are reported wounded and another report claims the arrest of a total of seven in the café. [REUTERS, 4 NOV. 2004; AL-WATAN (ABHA), 4 NOV. 2004]
- 5 November A raid on a flat in Jiddah's Jami' district ends with the death of one extremist and the arrest of three others; three security officers are wounded. One of those captured subsequently confesses to the killing of Frenchman Laurent Barbot in September. ['UKAZ (JIDDAH), 23 NOV. 2004]
- 6 November The Ministry of the Interior announces that four Saudis accused of carrying out acts of violence in al-Jawf Province will be placed on trial. They are accused of killing a local judge, a senior provincial official, a member of the security forces on patrol, and a policeman, but their activities are not linked to al-Qa'idah. [REUTERS, 6 NOV. 2004] Three of the men, which the Ministry of the Interior claims created a criminal gang after returning from fighting in Afghanistan, are executed on 1 April 2005. [UPI, 1 APR. 2005]
- 7 November An attempt to smuggle a large quantity of explosives, arms, and drugs across the Saudi-Yemeni border is foiled by Saudi Coast Guard forces. One smuggler is arrested after a brief exchange of fire. [GULF NEWS (DUBAI), 7 NOV. 2004]

- 8 November A suspected extremist is killed by security forces during a raid on a flat in Jiddah. Three others are arrested and a cache of arms is seized. [REUTERS, 8 NOV. 2004]
- 13 November Three men are arrested after Friday prayers in Zilfi, north of Riyadh, for spreading extremist ideology. Two more individuals are arrested for the same reason later in the day in separate raids in Riyadh. [REUTERS, 13 NOV. 2004]
- 17 November A raid on a house in al-Qasim escalates into a shootout that kills one policeman and wounds eight others. Five suspects, two of which are wanted militants, are arrested after a car chase. One of the wanted militants is severely wounded. Guns, ammunition, documents, and cash is found in the house. [REUTERS, 17 NOV. 2004]
- 27 November A suspected extremist is killed in another clash in Jiddah's Jami' district and another is captured but two escape. The dead man is identified as 'Isam Qasim Mubarak and is alleged to have helped plan the November 2003 attack on the Muhaya compound in Riyadh. [REUTERS, 28 NOV. 2004]
- 29 November The London-based Islah Movement, earlier known as the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (MIRA), announces that it will call for demonstrations in Saudi Arabia at some point in the following two weeks, defying a government ban. [FINANCIAL TIMES (LONDON), 29 NOV. 2004]
- 6 December Five extremists attack the US Consulate in Jiddah, gaining access to the outer perimeter of the consulate by hiding behind a diplomatic car and throwing a grenade at consulate guards; but they fail to penetrate into the consulate itself. A protracted gunbattle between the extremists and guards and arriving security forces ends with the death of four extremists and five consulate employees, including a Yemeni, a Sudanese, a Filipino, a Pakistani, and a Sri Lankan, but no Americans, as well as four Saudi security personnel. The fifth attacker is captured after being wounded. The Ministry of the Interior identifies three of the attackers as Fayiz b. 'Awad al-Juhani, 'Id b. Dakhil Allah al-Juhani, and Hasan b. Hamid al-Hazimi, and says Fayiz al-Juhani had been arrested previously for "extremist ideology." A statement from al-Qa'idah Organization in the Arabian Peninsula claims responsibility and announces the attack was carried out in revenge for the American attack on Fallujah in Iraq. [AP, 6 AND 7 DEC. 2004; REUTERS, 7 AND 8 DEC. 2004; INDEPENDENT (LONDON), 7 DEC. 2004; WASHINGTON POST, 7 DEC. 2004; NEW YORK TIMES, 8 DEC. 2004]
- 10 December An unidentified man is arrested by police at his home in Buraydah for suspected ties to terrorists. Ministry of the Interior officials say he is not on the most-wanted list of 26. [AL-RIYAD (RIYADH), 11 DEC. 2004]
- 12 December A call by the London-based Movement of Islamic Reform in Arabia (MIRA) head Sa'd al-Faqih for demonstrations in Saudi Arabia is met by the arrest of Sa'ud al-Dughaythir, a MIRA supporter in the kingdom. The protests, scheduled for 16 December, are also attacked by dissident cleric Shaykh Safar al-Hawali, who declares that they are not sanctioned by the *shari'ah* and by a statement signed by 35 prominent religious figures. On the day of the demonstrations, Saudi security forces arrests around a dozen people in Jiddah who had gathered outside mosques and riot police and helicopters are deployed throughout Riyadh

- to prevent any activity there. Minor protests are reported in Tabuk and Ha'il. A strong security presence around mosques prevents any demonstrations on Friday, 17 December. Fifteen people put on trial for participation in the protests are sentenced on 12 January 2005 to prison terms of two to six months and up to 250 lashings. [AP, 6 AND 7 DEC. 2004; REUTERS, 12-14, 16-17 DEC. 2004 AND 12 JAN. 2005; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 16 DEC. 2004; AP, 17 DEC. 2004]
- 14 December Saudi television airs footage of seven jailed extremists who deny they have been tortured and claim they have been treated leniently. [REUTERS, 15 DEC. 2004]
- 15 December Three suspects in two cars are arrested at a checkpoint in al-Ta'if. An anonymous security source describes them as "very important" and says they surrendered without resistance. Other reports contend that suspects fired on officers. [AL-JAZIRAH (RIYADH), 17 DEC. 2004; UPI, 18 DEC. 2004]
- 16 December Usamah b. Ladin, in a videotape posted on the Internet, praises the attackers of the US Consulate in Jiddah and warns that the "corrupt and oppressive" rulers of Saudi Arabia will be overthrown if they did not permit their citizens to adopt an Islamic leadership, as happened to the Shah of Iran. [REUTERS, 16 DEC. 2004]
- 18 December A security officer is shot and wounded by an unidentified gunman near Jiddah; the attacker escapes but his stolen car is found later in al-Rawdah district. [UPI, 18 DEC. 2004]
- 19 December A statement posted on a website and attributed to al-Qa'idah Organization in the Arabian Peninsula urges followers to attack Saudi oil installations and foreign targets in the kingdom. [AFP, 19 DEC. 2004]
- 21 December The United States Treasury Department freezes the assets of Saudi nationals Sa'd al-Faqih, head of the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia based in London, and 'Adil Batterjee, believed to be living in Saudi Arabia, alleging that they provided financial and material support to al-Qa'idah. The following day, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Turki al-Faysal, indicates that the Saudi government would also freeze the two men's assets if the United Nations Security Council adds their names to its 1267 Committee's consolidated list of terrorists. The names are subsequently listed. On 27 December, Jamal Khshoggi, media adviser to the Saudi ambassador in London, says he is confident that Britain would extradite al-Faqih to the kingdom. [REUTERS, 21 AND 27 DEC. 2004; AFP, 22 DEC. 2004]
- 28 December A shootout breaks out when a car refuses to stop at a police checkpoint in eastern Riyadh and three militants are killed by police. [REUTERS, 28 DEC. 2004]
- 29 December One suspected militant is killed after lobbing a hand-grenade at police searching a neighborhood in Riyadh after the previous day's fight; four policemen are wounded. Two other militants are captured following a shootout in Jiddah and another militant is arrested in Jiddah but wounded while trying to escape. [REUTERS, 29 DEC. 2004]

Information received from a militant arrested on 28 December leads security forces to a hideout in Riyadh and a firefight results in the death of three extremists, among them Sultan b. Bijad al-'Utaybi and Bandar b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Dakhil – the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> men on the list of 26 most wanted to be killed or captured – and Badr b. Mansur al-Subay'i. The ministry says that the

two men provided shelter and car bombs for other militants: al-'Utaybi made the bombs used in the November 2003 al-Muhayya complex attack in Riyadh and al-Dakhil is the brother of Faysal al-Dakhil, the deputy head of al-Qa'idah Organization in the Arabian Peninsula who was killed on 12 June 2004.

During the night, two car bombs explode in Riyadh, one outside the Ministry of the Interior's headquarters and the other outside a base for special forces in eastern Riyadh. Seventeen security officers and several bystanders are wounded but the only deaths are the three suicide bombers. A ministry spokesman says the bombings were rushed because of earlier captures. Seven extremists tracked to their hideout after the bomb blasts are killed in a gunfight; one of those killed is a Yemeni. The Ministry of the Interior later announces that the dead militants include 'Abdullah b. Sa'ud al-Subay'i, the 20<sup>th</sup> on the list of 26 to be killed or captured, Muhammad b. Muhsin al-'Usaymi, Dakhil b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Dakhil al-'Ubayd, Nasir b. 'Ali b. Sa'd al-Mutayri, and Isma'il b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Khazim (who was linked to the kidnapping and murder of Paul Johnson). A statement posted on the Internet a few days later contends that the intended targets of the bombing were the Minister of the Interior, Prince Nayif b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, and his son Muhammad, a Deputy Minister in the same ministry. [AP, 30 DEC. 2004 AND 5 JAN. 2005; REUTERS, 30 DEC. 2004, 1 AND 4 JAN. 2005; UPI, 3 JAN. 2005; ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 4 JAN. 2005]

## 2005

- 3 January The suicide bomber who attacked an American military mess hall near Mosul, Iraq, on 21 December 2004 is identified as a Saudi medical student, Sa'id b. Ahmad al-Ghamdi. [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 3 JAN. 2005]
- 9 January Security forces surround an encampment in the Najdi desert between al-Zilfi and Buraydah in al-Qasim. Four extremists inside a tent seek to escape in a car but are killed. Three are identified as Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad al-Farraj, Mish'al b. 'Ubayd b. 'Abdullah al-Hasiri, and 'Umar 'Abdullah al-Ra'id al-Qahtani. A cache of weapons, ammunition, explosives, and false car plates is seized. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 10 JAN. 2005; REUTERS, 10 JAN. 2005]
- 15 January A suspected militant is arrested in Baqa' on suspicion of being linked to a shootout between extremists and police in Kuwait. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 18 JAN. 2005]
- 17 January Saudi security forces discover the source of the explosives used in the 29 December 2004 car bombs against the Ministry of the Interior in a neighborhood in the middle of Riyadh and seize a cache of explosives and documents. [ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 18 JAN. 2005]
- 19 January Three men are interrupted in a suspected attempt to blow up a mosque along the Riyadh-al-Ta'if road but they escape. [AL-JAZIRAH TELEVISION (DOHA), 21 JAN. 2005]
- 29 January The Kuwaiti Minister of the Interior, Shaykh Nawwaf al-Ahmad Al Sabah, confirms that some individuals involved in a series of shootouts in Kuwait have been handed over to Saudi authorities. [REUTERS, 29 JAN. 2005]
- 6 February Minister of Islamic Affairs Salih b. 'Abd al-'Aziz Al al-Shaykh claims that counter-terror campaign has caused more than 250 militant sympathizers to change their ways. He adds that his ministry has been carrying out a dialogue

- with 800 sympathizers. [REUTERS, 6 FEB. 2005]
- 19 February The Ministry of the Interior announces it has handed over 19 Yemenis to the Republic of Yemen government in the latest of a series of extraditions. [REUTERS, 19 FEB. 2005]
- 20 February A Chadian national is shot dead in Jiddah when he runs a security checkpoint. It is unclear whether he was connected to any extremist group. [REUTERS, 20 FEB. 2005]
- 7 March The government claims to have arrested 700 terrorism suspects, stepped up controls against terrorist financing, and is launching a public-relations campaign against extremism. [REUTERS, 7 MAR. 2005]
- 11 March Security forces arrest 18 men, 17 Saudis and one Afghan, as suspected militants in al-Zilfi, a Najdi town north of Riyadh. [REUTERS, 11 MAR. 2005]
- 13 March A raid on a house in Jiddah results in the shooting death of one suspected extremist, Sa'id al-Jubi, and the arrest of three more after they open fire on security forces. [REUTERS, 13 AND 14 MAR. 2005]
- 14 March A firefight breaks out between security forces and extremists in the Khalidiyah district of Buraydah in central Najd. [REUTERS, 14 MAR. 2005]
- 17 March A supporter of Saudi Arabian detainees in Guantánamo Bay says that five Saudis were repatriated from Guantánamo in 2003, adding they were all jailed on arrival in the kingdom and remain in jail. [REUTERS, 17 MAR. 2005] The five are released on 9 August 2005 after having served their sentences. [REUTERS, 10 AUG. 2005]
- An audiotape appearing on the website of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights, an organization opposed to the Saudi régime and based in London, purports to be the voice of Salih al-'Awfi, the head of al-Qa'idah in the Arabian Peninsula. The speaker asserts solidarity with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leading director of extremist attacks in Iraq. [REUTERS, 17 MAR. 2005; AP, 17 MAR. 2005]
- 18 March A driver in a stolen car attempts to break through a security perimeter around the offices of al-Watan newspaper in Abha and is shot dead by police. [REUTERS, 18 MAR. 2005]
- 1 April Three Saudi extremists are executed for killing officials in al-Jawf province in September 2002 and February-March 2003. [UPI, 1 APR. 2005]
- 3-5 April A fierce gunbattle takes place around a house in al-Ra's in al-Qasim province, forcing the evacuation of about 1000 nearby residents. Extremists defending the house open fire on security forces as they prepared to storm the house and the shooting continues for several days. At least 100 security men are wounded and one dies while between 10 and 15 militants are killed. Among them are 'Abd al-Karim al-Majati, a Moroccan suspected of masterminding the May 2003 Casablanca bombing and linked to the Madrid bombing, and Sa'ud b. Hamud al-'Utaybi, one of those on the kingdom's list of 26 most wanted along with al-Majati. Only four men on the list of 26 remain at large. [REUTERS, 3-5 APR. 2005; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 6 APR. 2005; ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 9 APR. 2005; AFP, 14 MAY 2005]
- 6 April A raid on an apartment in Riyadh's al-Sina'iyah district results in the death of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Yazji, another on the list of 26 most wanted, and the wounding of a companion. [REUTERS, 6 APR. 2005; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 6 APR. 2005]

- 21 April A police patrol attempts to stop two extremists in Jiddah but they flee to a farm on the edge of the city and are wounded and captured after several hours of fighting. Later in the day, four militants speed through a checkpoint at an entrance into Makkah just after polling stations for municipal elections closed. Although the driver is captured, the other three flee to nearby houses and fighting continues for several hours. The death toll includes two policemen and two extremists. [REUTERS, 21 APR. 2005; AP, 21 APR. 2005]
- 5 May Syria claims to be holding 137 Saudi Arabian nationals suspected of trying to cross into Iraq to join extremists carrying out attacks there. Some 30 suspects are extradited to the kingdom in the following weeks. [REUTERS, 5 MAY 2005; AP, 30 MAY 2005]
- 9 May Two extremists are wounded and arrested after crashing through a police checkpoint in eastern Riyadh; two security men are also wounded. One of those arrested is 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Rashid al-Anzi, an editor of and writer in al-Qa'idah's online journals. [REUTERS, 10 MAY 2005; AP, 12 MAY 2005]
- 12 May Conflicting accounts report one or more shootouts in Buraydah result in the arrest of several militants, and the escape of a third and possibly a fourth although other reports say the man escapes. [AL-RIYAD (RIYADH), 13 MAY 2005; AL-WATAN (ABHA), 13 MAY 2005; AFP, 14 MAY 2005]
- 1 June A gunman opens fire on a police checkpoint north of Riyadh, wounding two policemen before escaping. Incident follows another clash near Majma'ah, 350km north of Riyadh along a smuggling route, in which two policemen are wounded. [REUTERS, 1 JUNE 2005]
- 18 June A Saudi police officer, Mubarak al-Sawwat, is shot dead outside his residence in Makkah. On 21 June, the two extremists accused of his murder are stopped outside Jiddah and are shot dead after they attempt to flee; three security officials are wounded. [REUTERS, 18 JUNE 2005; BBC NEWS ONLINE, 21 JUNE 2005]
- 23 June The head of al-Qa'idah forces in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, announces that a top Saudi Arabian ideologue, 'Abdullah al-Rushud, and one of those on the kingdom's list of 26 most wanted, was killed fighting US forces at Qa'im, Iraq. [REUTERS, 23 JUNE 2005]
- 28 June The Ministry of the Interior announces a new list of 36 wanted extremists. The list comprises 29 Saudi nationals, three Chadians, and one each from Morocco, Kuwait, Yemen, and Mauritania. Fifteen on the list are thought to be inside the kingdom while the other 21 are suspected to be abroad, especially in Iraq. Only three remain at large from the first list of 26. Prince Turki al-Faysal, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United Kingdom, says that extremist attacks have killed 91 foreigners and Saudi civilians and wounded 510. In addition, 41 members of security forces have been killed and 218 wounded while 112 militants have been killed and 25 wounded. The attacks have cost about one billion Saudi riyals (\$270 million). [REUTERS, 28 JUNE AND 3 JULY 2005; AP 29 JUNE 2005; ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 29 JUNE 2005]
- 1 July One of the extremists on the new list of 36 most wanted, Fayyiz 'Ayyub, flies from Lebanon to Riyadh and surrenders to authorities. Security sources report that at least two others on the list have been killed already in Iraq and one other

- is in detention in northern Iraq. [REUTERS, 3 AND 9 JULY 2005]
- 2 July The top individual on the new list of 36 most wanted, Moroccan Yunis b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Hayyari, is killed during a fight in an eastern district of Riyadh; one other extremist is arrested and two other extremists are arrested in another simultaneous police raid. Six policemen are slightly wounded. [REUTERS, 3 JULY 2005]
- 9 July It is discovered that Zayid Hasan Humayd, a Yemeni on the list of 36, has been in Yemeni custody since before the list was issued under the name of Zayid Hasan Ju'aydi. [REUTERS, 9 JULY 2005]
- 10 July Minister of the Interior Prince Nayif asserts that the Saudi extremists fighting in Iraq will be even more of a problem when they return to Saudi Arabia than those who fought in Afghanistan were. [REUTERS, 10 JULY 2005]
- 14 July A US Treasury Department official announces that the US has ordered a freeze on the assets of the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (MIRA), based in London and headed by Saudi dissident Sa'd al-Faqih. The US claims that al-Faqih is a spokesman for al-Qa'idah and has ties to terrorists. [VOICE OF AMERICA NEWS, 14 JULY 2005]
- 16 July A raid in al-Nasim district of eastern Riyadh results in arrest of four suspected extremists while a second raid on the highway between Riyadh and al-Ta'if produces another four arrests. [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 16 JULY 2005]
- 19 July Security forces discover an extremist cache 60km southeast of Riyadh containing bomb-making equipment, pipe bombs, and electrical equipment. [REUTERS, 21 JULY 2005]
- 25 July Three extremists are arrested in al-Madinah, including Muhammad b. Sa'id al-'Amri who was disarmed of a pipe bomb. [REUTERS, 25 JULY 2005]
- 18 August Salih al-'Awfi, the head of al-Qa'idah in the Arabian Peninsula, is killed along with two companions (a third man is arrested) in a gunbattle at his hideout in al-Madinah. 'Awfi's death leaves only one person, Talib b. Sa'ud b. 'Abdullah al-Talib, on the original list of 26 most wanted still at large. The head of Paul Johnson, an American engineer kidnapped and killed in June 2004, is found in the hideout. Security forces in another raid in Riyadh's al-Massif district kill four militants and arrest at least 10 more. The other dead are Majid Hamid 'Abdullah al-Hasari, one of the 36 extremists on the kingdom's second list, and Muhammad b. 'Abdullah 'Uwaydah. [REUTERS, 18, 20, AND 26 AUG. 2005; AP, 19 AND 26 AUG. 2005]
- 26 August A security force in Riyadh says that following the death of Salih al-'Awfi 41 suspected militants have been arrested in raids around the country, including in al-Madinah, 'Ar'ar, and Riyadh. One of them is named as Muhammad Sa'id Muhammad al-Sayam al-'Umari, also on the list of 36 most wanted. [REUTERS, 26 AUG. 2005; AP, 26 AUG. 2005]
- 29 August Security forces engage in a gunbattle in al-Jubayl with what are believed to be Iraqis. [REUTERS, 29 AUG. 2005]
- 2 September Saudi officials disclose that they had obtained information about the 7 July 2005 suicide bombings in London months before the event and informed British authorities between December 2004 and February 2005. [AP, 2 SEPT. 2005]

- 4 September A gunbattle in al-Dammam results in the killing of one militant and the death of a second one of wounds in hospital. A few hours later, another shoot-out ensued at a seaside villa in al-Mubarakiyah district where three suspects had taken refuge. Fighting ends after three days with all-out successful assault on house. The Ministry of the Interior later announces that five militants – Zayid Sa‘d Zayid al-Sammari, one of those on most wanted list, Salih al-Harbi, Sultan al-Hasiri, Nayif al-Shammari, and Ahmad al-Suwaylimi – and four policeman died in the fighting. [AP, 4 AND 6 SEPT. 2005; ARAB NEWS (JIDDAH), 5 SEPT. 2005; REUTERS, 7 SEPT. 2005]
- 8 September The Ministry of the Interior announces that 14.8 million ammunition rounds, 16,300 firearms, and 1282 kilograms of explosives were seized between 2000 and 2004. [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 9 SEPT. 2005]
- 14 September The arrest of two Saudis on the list of 36 most – ‘Abdullah Muhammad Salih al-Ramyah and Muhammad Salih Sulayman al-Rushudi – wanted by Kurdish security forces in northern Iraq is disclosed. Their arrest leaves 27 out of the 36 on the most wanted list at liberty. [‘UKAZ (JIDDAH), 9 SEPT. 2005; GULF NEWS (BAHRAIN), 16 SEPT. 2005]
- 23 September The arrest of a suspect on the Riyadh-Makkah highway leads to the arrest of another 12 suspects at an apartment in al-Nassim quarter in eastern Riyadh. Captures follow the discovery of a warehouse used by militants to store weapons and manufacture explosives in al-Kharj. [UPI, 23 SEPT. 2005]
- 29 October A security policeman is shot and seriously wounded in Makkah but criminals are suspected. [REUTERS, 29 OCT. 2005]
- 2 November A militant carrying a bomb is arrested in al-Madinah apparently on his way to carry out an attack. [UPI, 2 Nov. 2005]
- 8 November The Ministry of the Interior announces that ‘Adnan b. ‘Abdullah al-‘Umari, one of the 36 on the most wanted list, has been returned from an unnamed country. [BBC NEWS ONLINE, 8 NOV. 2005]
- 3 December A series of raids in Riyadh, al-Kharj, and al-Mujamma‘ result in the arrest of 17 suspects, along with weapons and ammunition. The arrested are said to be linked to the militants involved in al-Dammam fighting in early September. [REUTERS, 3 DEC. 2005; AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 4 DEC. 2005]
- 13 December Security forces capture a house in Riyadh’s King Faysal quarter that had been used by al-Qa‘idah militants to manufacture explosives. [AL-JAZIRAH (JIDDAH), 14 DEC. 2005]
- 27 December Two al-Qa‘idah militants kill two policemen on patrol near Buraydah in al-Qasim and then kill another three policemen when he is stopped at an al-Qasim checkpoint. One militant, ‘Abd al-Rahman Mit‘ab, is wounded and captured, and dies the following day in hospital Another shooting in the same area on the following day results in the death of Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Suwaylimi, one of the 36 most wanted. [REUTERS, 27 AND 28 DEC. 2005]
- 27 December Saudi newspapers report that London-based dissident ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Shanbari, an associate of Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia founder Sa‘d al-Faqih, had returned to Saudi Arabia and surrendered. He claims on 25 January 2006 that an attempt was made to assassinate him in al-Ta‘if; in London, Sa‘d al-

Faqih denies any knowledge. [REUTERS, 27 DEC. 2005; *AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT* (LONDON), 28 JAN. 2006]

## 2006

- 6 January Two men are arrested near ‘Unayzah, possibly as the result of information gained from computer disks captured during the 27 December 2005 operation. [*AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT* (LONDON), 6 JAN. 2006]
- 16 January Security forces announce that five suspects – four Saudis and one other – are arrested on suspicion of establishing a facility for making bombs northeast of Riyadh. [AP, 16 JAN. 2006; REUTERS, 16 JAN. 2006]
- 24 February Al-Qa‘idah militants attack a perimeter gate of the Buqayq oil facility in the Eastern Province, the world’s largest oil processing plant. In a suicide attack, two pick-up trucks, painted to resemble Saudi ARAMCO vehicles and loaded with a ton of explosives each, are used to ram a secondary outer gate of the facility. One truck collides with the closed gate, blowing a hole in the fence, and the second truck drives through the hole and detonates. Both attackers are killed and two security guards are wounded. Some reports speak of a gun battle with other attackers outside the perimeter fence. Al-Qa‘idah announcements on the Internet on the following day identified the attackers as ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Tuwayjiri and Muhammad Salih al-Ghayth and promised more attacks on oil facilities. The identities were confirmed by the Ministry of the Interior; both men were on the kingdom’s list of most-wanted militants. [REUTERS, 24 AND 26 FEB. 2006; AP, 25 FEB. 2006; NYT, 25 FEB. 2006]
- 27 February Saudi security forces surround a villa in eastern Riyadh and kill five militants in a firefight. They were tracked to the villa through vehicles caught on surveillance tape at Buqayq shortly before the attack. A sixth suspect is apprehended. Four of the five men – Fahd Faraj al-Juwayr, Jaffal Rafi‘ah al-Shammari, Ibrahim ‘Abdullah Ibrahim al-Mutayri, and ‘Abdullah Muhya Shulash al-Sulayti al-Shammari – killed had been on the list of most-wanted and their deaths mean that nearly all of the 15 men thought to be operating in the kingdom from the list of 36 had been killed or arrested. Al-Juwayr was the latest head of al-Qa‘idah in the Arabian Peninsula and he and Jaffal al-Shammari are alleged to have taken part in the Buqayq attack. [REUTERS, 27 AND 28 FEB. 2006]
- 3 March Iraq announces that a militant alleged to have been involved in Buqayq attack was captured by Iraqi border guards on the Iraqi-Saudi border and a search was being carried out for another five companions said to be lost in the desert. The Saudi Ministry of the Interior subsequently announces that the man, ‘Abd al-Rahman Muslih al-Harbi, has a history of mental illness. [BBC NEWS ONLINE, 3 MAR. 2006; *ARAB NEWS* (JIDDAH), 4 MAR. 2006]
- 18 March Raids in al-Khubar and al-Dammam in the Eastern Province net the capture of five militant suspects and another raid in al-Khubar on 21 March resulted in the capture of three more suspects. [DPA, 22 MAR. 2006]
- 29 March The Ministry of the Interior announces that recent raids had resulted in the arrest of 40 suspected militants, including eight linked to the Buqayq attack, and the seizure of caches of weapons. Arrests had taken place in Riyadh, Makkah, al-Madinah, and the Eastern Province. [REUTERS, 29 MAR. 2006; *AL-RIYAD* (RIYADH), 29 MAR. 2006]

- 12 May A Saudi identified as Muhammad ‘Abd al-Razzaq Sa‘d Faydi al-Ghamdi drives past the US Consulate in Jiddah and fires on the guards. A pursuit results in his wounding and capture. Saudi authorities subsequently claim that he was acting on his own and that he had been a psychiatric patient. [REUTERS, 12 AND 15 MAY 2006]
- 19 May Fifteen Saudi detainees at the Guantánamo camp are handed over to Saudi authorities. They follow the earlier release of eight detainees, all eight of whom were freed by the Saudi government after serving jail sentences. [REUTERS, 19 AND 29 MAY 2006]
- 7 June King ‘Abdullah claims that the terrorist campaign by al-Qa‘idah in the Arabian Peninsula has been defeated. Officials say that 120 militants have died along with about 144 civilians and security personnel during the three-year campaign. [REUTERS, 19 AND 29 MAY 2006]
- 13 June A statement on an al-Qa‘idah website claims that Fawwaz al-Nashimi, also known as Turki b. Fuhayd al-Mutayri and killed on 12 June 2004, was meant to be the 20<sup>th</sup> member of the team that hijacked the airplanes used in the 11 September 2001 attacks. Usamah bin Ladin had denied earlier that Zacharias Moussaoui had been the 20<sup>th</sup> member. The website also showed a video of Nashimi participating in the 21 May 2004 on oil offices in al-Khubar. [AP, 21 JUNE 2006]
- 23 June An al-Qa‘idah hideout in Riyadh’s al-Nakhil district is stormed and a gunbattle erupts. Six militants are killed and a seventh is wounded and arrested. A subsequent Ministry of the Interior statement names one of the killed as Sami al-Mutayri and says he had been arrested after meeting Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, head of al-Qa‘idah in Iraq, but then he had escaped. [AP, 23 JUNE 2006; REUTERS, 24 JUNE 2006]
- 24 June Saudi Arabia says 13 militants are arrested near the Saudi border with Iraq. That brought to 42 the number of militants captured in previous several months. [REUTERS, 24 JUNE 2006]
- Fourteen Saudis held at Guantánamo Bay are turned over to the kingdom. [AP, 25 JUNE 2006]
- 26 June King ‘Abdullah renews the amnesty of June 2004, announcing that any militant who surrenders will be covered by the amnesty. [REUTERS, 26 JUNE 2006]
- 4 July Al-Qa‘idah in the Arabian Peninsula rejects a government amnesty offer and urged Muslims to "burn the land" from underneath the Westerners. [REUTERS, 5 JULY 2006]
- 8 July The Ministry of the Interior announces that seven extremists – six Saudis and one Yemeni, possibly connected to al-Qa‘idah – have escaped from Malazz Prison in Riyadh. It apparently was Riyadh’s second prison escape in six months. [AP, 8 JULY 2006; REUTERS, 11 JULY 2006]
- 21 August A government security siege of a building in Jiddah on 21 August resulted in the capture of four militants (initial reports said that two had been killed); two of these were from the Malazz escapees and it was subsequently announced that the four were part of a group of 34 total men arrested. [REUTERS, 21, 24, AND 26 AUG. 2006]

- 29 August Nine men from a group of 37 who had been held at Guantánamo Bay and handed over to the Saudi government by the US are released by Saudi authorities. [AP, 29 AUG. 2006]
- 4 September Four suspects (three Saudis and a Yemeni) are arrested in a village near al-Bahah. These arrests bring the total over three months to 80. [REUTERS, 4 AND 5 SEP. 2006]
- 20 November A British man is knifed in al-Jubayl but it is not known whether his attacker was an extremist. [REUTERS, 20 NOV. 2006]
- 2 December The Ministry of the Interior announces the arrest of 136 extremists over the previous two months who it claimed were planning to pose as *hajj* pilgrims and carry out suicide bombings and assassinations. At the same time the ministry disclosed that it was preparing a third list of wanted militants since all of those on the previous two lists had been killed, captured, or gone to Iraq. [REUTERS, 2 AND 4 DEC. 2006]
- 7 December Two guards are shot and killed outside Riyadh's Ruways prison where al-Qa'idah suspects were being held. Some reports said two attackers were arrested but this was not confirmed. [Reuters, 7 Dec. 2006]
- 14 December Sixteen Saudis who had been held at Guantánamo return to the kingdom. An estimated 136 had been held at Guantánamo. [AP, 14 DEC. 2006]
- 26 December The Ministry of the Interior announces that it has released 18 of the former Guantánamo detainees repatriated in May and June. This followed the release of 11 men the previous week. A total of 53 Saudis were repatriated from Guantánamo, all in 2007. [Reuters, 26 Dec. 2006]

## 2007

- 1 February An armed man is arrested as he tries to enter the Grand Mosque of Makkah. [REUTERS, 2 FEB. 2007]
- 3 February Arrests are made in Jiddah and al-Madinah of ten men accused of collecting donations and recruiting for terrorist groups. It was subsequently claimed that the ten, all Saudis apart from one expatriate resident, were political activists who had been warned by the government to stop their activities. [AP, 3 Feb. 2007; Reuters, 3 and 4 Feb. 2007]
- 9 February Al-Qa'idah in the Arabian Peninsula announces that is "in the process of preparing major operations ... to cleanse the Arabian Gulf of the presence of crusaders and of their bases...." [AFP, 9 FEB. 2007]
- 12 February Two Saudi border policemen are wounded in a shootout with a group of men in a car speeding towards the Yemeni border; the driver is wounded and the passengers are arrested. [REUTERS, 12 FEB. 2007]
- 22 February Seven more Saudis held at Guantánamo are sent back to the kingdom. [REUTERS, 22 FEB. 2007]
- 26 February Four French nationals, out of a group of eight, are shot dead near Tabuk, the apparent victims of an al-Qa'idah attack. It is the first such attack in three years. Two suspects are announced as arrested on 6 March and two at-large suspects are named. [REUTERS, 26 FEB. AND 6 AND 9 MARCH 2007; AP, 27 FEB. 2007] Other arrests take place in subsequent months.

- 6 April A shootout in al-Madinah leaves a policeman dead but kills Walid b. Mutlaq al-Radadi, one of the most wanted extremists in the kingdom and a suspect in the February killing of the French nationals. [BBC NEWS ONLINE, 6 APR. 2007]
- 27 April The Ministry of the Interior announces that it has foiled a plot linked to al-Qa'idah that would have meant attacks on oil facilities and military bases. One hundred seventy two suspects in seven cells are arrested and weapons and more than SR 20 million (\$5.33 million) in cash is seized. Some suspects had been undergoing pilot training in other countries in preparation for suicide attacks and there was a close linkage with groups in Iraq. [REUTERS, 27 AND 28 APR. 2007; AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (LONDON), 29 APR. 2007]
- 29 April Muhammad Ja'far al-Qahtani, one of four extremists who had escaped from the US military prison at Bagram in Afghanistan but subsequently captured, is turned over to Saudi Arabia. [AFP, 8 MAY 2007]
- 5 June Three suspected al-Qa'idah members are arrested for activities promoting al-Qa'idah on the Internet, including the Internet magazine Sawt al-Jihad. [GULF NEWS (DUBAI), 5 JUNE 2007]
- 7 June Authorities announce the arrest of 11 al-Qa'idah members, including one linked to the Buqayq attack of February 2006. [AFP, 8 JUNE 2007]
- 9 July Lebanese authorities announce that they have found the bodies of 10 Saudis among the Fath al-Islam militants fighting the Lebanese police in Tripoli and nearby Nahr al-Barid refugee camp. [AFP, 10 JULY 2007]
- 14 July Nasir al-Buluwi, a suspect in the killing of the four French tourists in Tabuk in February, is arrested in al-Jawf; this follows the arrest of eight suspects in April, the killing of Walid b. Mutlaq al-Raddadi – the main suspect – in May, and the arrest of another suspect in May. [REUTERS, 15 JULY 2007]
- 16 July Sixteen Saudis are repatriated from Guantánamo Bay, leaving an estimated 53 Saudi prisoners at Guantánamo; two Saudis were among the three prisoners who hanged themselves in June. [REUTERS, 16 JULY 2007]
- 9 August It is reported that 135 suspected al-Qa'idah sympathizers were arrested during the week in Makkah. [REUTERS, 9 AUG. 2007]
- 1 October The Grand Mufti, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz Al al-Shaykh, issues a *fatwa* that admonishes Saudis from going abroad to join *jihad* campaigns. [REUTERS, 1 OCT. 2007]
- 14 October Another suspect from the February 2006 killing of the French tourists, 'Abdullah b. Sayir al-Muhammadi, is arrested northwest of al-Madinah. [AFP, 15 OCT. 2007]
- 28 November Eight men are arrested on suspicion of planning to attack oil facilities in the Eastern Province and possibly religious leaders as well. A later notice on the same day announces the arrest of 208 total suspected militants in six cells, among the eight earlier announced. The 208 were broken down into a group of 18 planning to smuggle eight missiles into the kingdom, a group of 112 for links to groups in Iraq and Afghanistan, 32 for providing financial aid to al-Qa'idah in Saudi Arabia, 22 for plotting to assassinate religious leaders and security officials, and 16 for preparing a pro-al-Qa'idah publication in al-Madinah. [AP, 28 NOV. 2007]

21 December Twenty-eight members of a group accused of planning to carry out terrorist attacks during the *hajj* are arrested in Makkah, al-Madinah, and Riyadh provinces, as well as northern border regions. The arrests were not announced earlier in order to avoid concern during the *hajj*. [AFP, 22 AND 23 DEC. 2007]

**Abbreviations:**

AFP	Agence France-Presse.
AP	Associated Press.
CDLR	Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights.
DPA	Deutsche Press Agency.
FT	<i>Financial Times</i> (London).
Holden	Holden, David, and Richard Johns, with James Buchan. <i>The House of Saud: The Rise and Rule of the Most Powerful Dynasty in the Arab World</i> . New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.
IHT	<i>International Herald Tribune</i> (Paris).
IROAP	Islamic Revolutionary Organization in the Arabian Peninsula. <i>Al-Haram Revolt</i> . N.p., 1401/1981.
Kechichian	Kechichian, Joseph A. "Islamic Revivalism and Change in Saudi Arabia: Juhayman al-'Utaybi's 'Letters' to the Saudi People." <i>Muslim World</i> , Vol. 80, No. 1 (1990), pp. 1-16.
KT	<i>Khaleej Times</i> (Dubai).
MIRA	Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (also known as al-Islah).
NYT	<i>New York Times</i> .
Pers.	Personal.
SPA	Saudi Press Agency (Riyadh).
UPI	United Press International.
Walsh	Walsh, Elsa. "Louis Freeh's Last Case." <i>New Yorker Magazine</i> (14 May 2001), pp. 68ff.
Yassini	Yassini, Ayman Al-. <i>Religion and State in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</i> . Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985.