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Designation of AQIM Leaders Mohamed Belkalem and Taleb Nail

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM
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The Secretary of State has designated al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) leaders Mohamed Belkalem and Taleb Nail under E.O. 13224, which targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism. The United Nations (UN) 1267 Sanctions Committee previously added Belkalem and Nail to its Consolidated List of individuals and entities associated with al-Qa'ida or the Taliban. These actions will help stem the flow of finances to Belkalem and Nail.

Mohamed Belkalem has played a key operational role in AQIM. He has participated in terrorist attacks such as the 2005 assault on Mauritanian military barracks and, separately, the kidnapping of two Austrian tourists in 2008. Belkalem is wanted by the Algerian government. He was also charged with and sentenced by the Government of Algeria, in absentia, to death for forming a terrorist organization.

Taleb Nail has been involved in numerous terrorist attacks in the Maghreb including a 2005 assault on Mauritanian military barracks. In 2005, Nail joined a terrorist cell specifically dedicated to kidnapping western nationals, preparing and carrying out attacks, and recruiting violent extremists. Nail is wanted by the Algerian government for terrorist activities and for membership in a terrorist organization active both within and outside Algeria.

The actions taken today against AQIM leadership support the international effort to degrade the capabilities of AQIM to execute violent attacks and to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat their networks. The United Nations 1267 Committee's listing of Belkalem and Nail requires all UN Member States to implement an assets freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo against these individuals.

"Today's designations of Mohamed Belkalem and Taleb Nail are in direct response to the threats posed by al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb and its senior leaders," said Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, the Department of State's Coordinator for Counterterrorism. "These cases illustrate our determination to pursue AQIM and undermine AQIM senior leaders' planning and coordination capabilities."

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