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Country Report on Terrorism 2021 - Chapter 5 - Al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB)

Aka Saraya al-Ashtar; AAB

Description: Al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB) was designated as an FTO on July 11, 2018. AAB is an Iran-backed terrorist organization established in 2013 with the goal of violently overthrowing the ruling family in Bahrain. In 2018, AAB formally adopted Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps branding and reaffirmed its loyalty to Tehran to reflect its role in an Iranian network of state and nonstate actors that operates against the United States and its allies in the region.

Activities: Since 2013, AAB has claimed responsibility for more than 20 terrorist attacks against police and security targets in Bahrain. In 2014, AAB conducted a bomb attack that killed two police officers and an officer from the United Arab Emirates. In 2017, AAB shot and killed another local Bahraini officer. AAB also has promoted violent activity against the British, Saudi Arabian, and U.S. governments over social media. In 2019, AAB released a video statement promising more attacks in Bahrain to mark the anniversary of Bahrain's Arab Uprising-inspired political uprising.

AAB did not claim responsibility for any attacks in 2021.

Strength: Precise numbers are unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: Bahrain, Iran, and Iraq

Funding and External Aid: AAB receives funding and support from the Government of Iran.