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# The Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) List

Congress has shown recurring interest in the administration of the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)—one of several terrorism-related lists that the U.S. government maintains for the purpose of imposing financial sanctions, immigration restrictions, or other penalties in pursuit of law enforcement or national security goals. At various times, Members have sought to add suspected terrorist groups to the FTO list or weighed the potential political and economic costs of such additions.

**Recent Developments.** Since the beginning of President Donald Trump's second term, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has identified 14 entities as FTOs, including six Mexican cartels, two transnational gangs, the Yemen-based Ansar Allah/Houthi movement, two Haitian gangs, and two Ecuadorian criminal groups. (See **Table 1** for a complete list.) All 14 entities are also designated as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs), pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended—a separate counterterrorism sanctions program. On July 8, 2025, Secretary Rubio revoked the designation of one entity, the Syria-based al-Nusrah Front (more recently known as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS). Although no longer designated as an FTO, HTS nevertheless remains an SDGT.

## Legislative Origins

Congress first established the statutory process for designating FTOs in the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA; P.L. 104-132). The AEDPA added a new provision to the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), Section 219 on the "Designation of Foreign Terrorist Organizations" (8 U.S.C. §1189). Since the law's enactment in April 1996, Congress has amended Section 219 of the INA three times. The amendments modified the criteria for designation and judicial review of a designation, extended the duration of a designation, and established procedures to review an FTO's designation and amend a designation.

## FTO Designation Criteria

Pursuant to Section 219 of the INA, the Secretary of State is authorized to designate an organization as an FTO if such an entity meets three criteria: the suspected terrorist group must (1) be a foreign organization; (2) engage in "terrorist activity," "terrorism," or retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism; and (3) threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national defense, foreign relations, or economic interests of the United States.

Section 219 of the INA relies on the definition of "terrorist activity" in Section 212(a)(3)(B) of the INA (8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(3)(B)) and the definition of "terrorism" in Section 140(d)(2) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (FRAA, P.L. 100-204, as amended; 22 U.S.C. §2656f(d)(2)).

The INA and FRAA definitions place differing emphasis on what might lead to an FTO designation. The INA defines "terrorist activity" to include specific types of violent actions (hijackings, assassinations, etc.). This definition deemphasizes the ideological motivations or goals of the perpetrators of such activities. However, the FRAA approaches the issue from the motivations of the aggressor and the targets of the violent activity. "Terrorism," as defined in the FRAA, is "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."

## Consequences of Designation

By designating an entity as an FTO, the U.S. government seeks to limit the group's financial, property, and travel interests. Among the consequences of an entity's designation as an FTO,

- it is unlawful for a person in the United States or subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to knowingly provide "material support or resources" to a designated FTO, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §2339B;
- representatives and members of a designated FTO, if they are aliens (non-U.S. nationals) are inadmissible to, and in certain circumstances removable (deportable) from, the United States, pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(B) of the INA (8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(3)(B)); and
- the Secretary of the Treasury may require U.S. financial institutions possessing or controlling any assets of a designated FTO to block all transactions involving those assets, pursuant to Section 219(a)(2)(C) of the INA (8 U.S.C. §1189(a)(2)(C); 31 C.F.R. Part 597).

## FTO Revocation Process

According to statute, an organization's status as an FTO may be revoked by an act of Congress or by the Secretary of State. Pursuant to Section 219 of the INA, the Secretary is required to revoke the designation if (1) "the circumstances that were the basis for the designation have changed in such a manner as to warrant a revocation" or (2) "the national security of the United States warrants a revocation." An FTO may petition the Secretary to review its designation; the Secretary of State is required to review each FTO's status at least every five years. An FTO may also seek judicial review regarding its designation.

## The FTO List

To date, the Secretary of State has identified 81 entities as current FTOs (see **Table 1**). Since the FTO list's inception, entities have also been removed from the FTO list (see **Table 2**).

**Table 1. Entities Designated as FTOs**

<b>Date Designated</b>	
10/8/97	Abu Sayyaf Group HAMAS Harakat ul-Mujahidin* Hizballah Kurdistan Workers Party Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam National Liberation Army (ELN) Palestinian Islamic Jihad Palestine Liberation Front Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine PFLP-General Command Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front Shining Path
10/8/99	al-Qa'ida
9/25/00	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
5/16/01	New Irish Republican Army*
12/26/01	Jaish-e-Mohammed Lashkar-e Tayyiba*
3/27/02	Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb* Asbat al-Ansar
8/9/02	Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army
10/23/02	Jemaah Islamiya
1/30/03	Lashkar i Jhangvi
3/22/04	Ansar al-Islam
7/13/04	Continuity Irish Republican Army
12/17/04	ISIS* (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)
6/17/05	Islamic Jihad Union
3/5/08	Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh
3/18/08	Al Shabaab*
5/18/09	Revolutionary Struggle
7/2/09	Kata'ib Hizballah
1/19/10	al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula*
8/6/10	Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami
9/1/10	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan
11/4/10	Jaysh al-Adl*
5/23/11	Army of Islam
9/19/11	Indian Mujahedeen
3/13/12	Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid
5/30/12	Abdallah Azzam Brigades*
9/19/12	Haqqani Network
3/22/13	Ansar al-Dine
11/14/13	Boko Haram Ansaru
12/19/13	Al Mulathamun Battalion
1/13/14	Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia
4/10/14	ISIS-Sinai Province*
9/30/15	Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi
1/14/16	Islamic State's Khorasan Province
5/20/16	ISIS-Libya
7/1/16	Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
8/17/17	Hizbul Mujahideen
2/28/18	ISIS-Bangladesh ISIS-Philippines ISIS-West Africa
5/23/18	ISIS in the Greater Sahara
7/11/18	Al-Ashtar Brigades

9/6/18	Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam wal-Muslimin
4/15/19	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
1/10/20	Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq
1/14/21	Harakat Sawa'd Misr
3/11/21	ISIS-DRC ISIS-Mozambique
12/1/21	Segunda Marquetalia Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP)
2/20/25	Cartel del Golfo Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion Cartel de Sinaloa Cartel del Noreste Carteles Unidos La Nueva Familia Michoacana Mara Salvatrucha Tren de Aragua
3/5/25	Ansar Allah (Houthis)
5/5/25	Viv Ansanm Gran Grif
8/12/25	Balochistan Liberation Army
9/5/25	Los Lobos Los Choneros

**Note:** Entity names as listed at <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>. For a full list of aliases, see *Federal Register* notices for each designation. Entries with an asterisk (\*) denote FTOs whose aliases or primary names were subsequently amended.

**Table 2. Delisted FTOs**

<b>Date Originally Designated • Date Removed</b>	
10/8/97 • 10/8/99	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine-Hawatmeh Faction Khmer Rouge Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front Dissidents
10/8/97 • 10/8/01	Japanese Red Army Tupac Amaru Revolution Movement
10/8/97 • 5/18/09	Revolutionary Nuclei
10/8/97 • 10/15/10	Armed Islamic Group
10/8/97 • 9/28/12	Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization
10/11/05 • 5/28/13	Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group
9/10/01 • 7/15/14	United Self Defense Forces of Colombia
10/8/97 • 9/3/15	Revolutionary Organization 17 November
12/17/04 • 12/9/15	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
10/8/97 • 6/1/17	Abu Nidal Organization
1/19/21 • 2/16/21	Ansar Allah (Houthis)
10/8/97 • 12/1/21	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
10/8/97 • 5/20/22	Aum Shinrikyo Basque Fatherland and Liberty Gama'a al-Islamiyya Kahane Chai
8/20/14 • 5/20/22	Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem
5/15/14 • 7/8/25	al-Nusra Front (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham)

**Note:** Ansarallah returned to the FTO list in 2025.

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