

STATEMENT BY RICHARD BOUCHER, SPOKESMAN

**INTENT TO DESIGNATE AS FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION THE ISLAMIC
MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN**

The Department of State is notifying Congress of its intention to designate the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under U.S. law. Formal designation will occur seven days following Congressional notification.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan has threatened the lives of civilians and regional security and undermined the rule of law. It is responsible for criminal acts of terrorism against the citizens of Uzbekistan and has also kidnapped foreigners, including four American mountain climbers who were held hostage last month before being able to escape. In 1999, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan took a group of Japanese geologists hostage. We also believe the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan was involved in explosions in Tashkent that killed 16 people and a bus hijacking in 1999, in which 2 passengers and several police were killed.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan has also publicly called for the violent overthrow of the Government of Uzbekistan and has claimed responsibility for ongoing armed incursions into the territory of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. These actions have resulted in the deaths of a number of civilian Uzbek security personnel.

This designation, pursuant to U.S. law, adds the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to the current list of 28 Foreign Terrorist Organizations. Groups designated must be reviewed every two years. The Secretary is authorized to make new designations at any time, or to remove a group from the list of U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations at any time if the facts warrant that action.

The Foreign Terrorist Organization designation makes it illegal for persons within U.S. jurisdiction to provide funding or material support to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and gives the Department of the Treasury the authority to block any Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan assets within U.S. jurisdiction. In certain cases, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan members or representatives can be denied visas or excluded from the United States.

Additional information about the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is contained in the fact sheet on the group's activities released today by the Press Office.