



# NJOHSP

## INTELLIGENCE NOTE

March 11, 2020

### AQAP Appoints New Leader Following Death of Rimi

*On February 23, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) released a 16-minute video announcing Khalid Batarfi, aka Abu Miqdad al-Kindi, as its new leader following the death of Qassim al-Rimi in a US airstrike at the end of January.* Rimi was appointed leader of AQAP in 2015 after former emir Nasir al-Wahishi was killed. Rimi was designated a global terrorist by the US State Department in May 2010 and pledged allegiance to al-Qa'ida in June 2015.

- Batarfi is a Saudi national who trained in Afghanistan in the late 1990s and fought with the Taliban against US forces in 2001. After he joined AQAP in 2010 as a senior commander, Batarfi was captured by Yemeni security forces in March 2011. He later escaped from Mukalla's central prison in Yemen in April 2015.
- In January 2018, the US State Department added Batarfi to its list of specially designated global terrorists, highlighting his leading role in AQAP. In addition to his activities as AQAP's senior commander in the Abyan and Hadhramaut governorates, he was a former member of AQAP's shura council.
- There is a \$5 million reward for the capture of Batarfi, who has played an important role in AQAP propaganda by calling for attacks in the West. In 2018, Batarfi released a video threatening the United States after it announced it would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.
- In a video released in February, AQAP claimed "full responsibility" for the shooting at Naval Air Station Pensacola on December 6, 2019, when Saudi military member Mohammed Saeed al-Shamrani killed three sailors and wounded eight others.



*Khalid Batarfi,  
aka Abu Miqdad al-Kindi*

#### Additional Resources

[2020 Terrorism Threat Assessment](#)