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## Al-Qaea is a 'Western-made' group, not Yemeni: PM

11/6/2010

Sana'a, [Yemen](#) - Yemeni Prime Minister Ali Mujawar said on Saturday that al-Qaeda was a "Western-made" group and was not created by his country, the official Saba news agency reported.

"Al-Qaeda is mainly a Western-made group," Mujawar told ambassadors of Asian and African countries to Yemen.

The militant group "was not created in Yemen at all as it is being alleged by those who propagate this perception internationally about Yemen," he said, according to Saba.

Yemen is trying to shed its image as a haven for al-Qaeda militants as it comes under intense pressure from the [United States](#) and Western countries to crack down on the group's local branch, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), after last week's foiled plot to send bombs in [freight](#) packages to Chicago.

The group claimed responsibility for the plot in a statement posted on the web Friday. Mujawar called on the international community to [support](#) his government's efforts to fight terrorism, Saba said.

Interior Minister Mutahar al-Masri, who attended the meeting, said most of the group's members in Yemen were not Yemeni-born.

"The elements affiliated to al-Qaeda in Yemen are not Yemeni-born," the minister said, quoted by Saba.

"They were born and raised in other countries and came to Yemen to engage in terrorism," he said, in a reference neighbouring to Saudi Arabia.

An impoverished country at the south-western tip of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen has stepped up its operations against the AQAP since December, after the group claimed responsibility for a failed plot to blow up a US passenger airplane during its landing approach last Christmas Day in Detroit.

The AQAP emerged in January 2009 from the merger of al-Qaeda's Yemeni and Saudi branches, after the Saudi group was effectively crushed by that country's government, forcing its members to seek sanctuary in Yemen.

The group is said to have found a haven in the remote eastern parts of Yemen, with some early members looking there for refuge after escaping the crackdown in Saudi Arabia.