Country Reports on Terrorism 2015

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Chapter 1

Strategic Assessment

The global terrorist threat continued to evolve rapidly in 2015, becoming increasingly decentralized and diffuse. Terrorist groups continued to exploit an absence of credible and effective state institutions, where avenues for free and peaceful expression of opinion were blocked, justice systems lacked credibility, and where security force abuses and government corruption went unchecked.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) remained the greatest threat globally, maintaining a formidable force in Iraq and Syria, including a large number of foreign terrorist fighters. ISIL's capacity and territorial control in Iraq and Syria reached a high point in spring 2015, but began to erode over the second half of 2015. ISIL did not have a significant battlefield victory in Iraq and Syria after May. At the end of 2015, 40 percent of the territory ISIL controlled at the beginning of the year had been liberated. In Syria, local forces expelled ISIL fighters from several key cities along the routes connecting the two ISIL strongholds of Raqqa and Mosul, and reclaimed about 11 percent of the territory ISIL once controlled. These losses demonstrated the power of coordinated government action to mobilize against and confront terrorism.

ISIL's loss of territory it governs and controls in Iraq and Syria in 2015 also diminished funds available to it. ISIL relies heavily on extortion and the levying of "taxes" on local populations under its control, as well as a range of other sources, such as oil smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, looting, antiquities theft and smuggling, foreign donations, and human trafficking. Coalition airstrikes targeted ISIL's energy infrastructure – modular refineries, petroleum storage tanks, and crude oil collection points – as well as bulk cash storage sites. These airstrikes have significantly degraded ISIL's ability to generate revenue. The United States led the international effort, including through the UN, to confront ISIL's oil smuggling and its antiquities dealing, delivering additional blows to its financial infrastructure.

Toward the end of 2015, ISIL fighters conducted a series of external attacks in France, Lebanon, and Turkey, demonstrating the organization's capabilities to carry out deadly plots beyond Iraq and Syria and also exposing weakness in international border security measures and systems. These attacks may also have been staged in an effort to assert a narrative of victory in the face of steady losses of territory in Iraq and Syria.

Along withISIL, al-Qa'ida (AQ), and both groups' branches increased their focus on staging mass-casualty attacks. This included attacks on international hotel chains in Burkina Faso,Mali, and Tunisia; other popular public locations; and the bombing of a Russian passenger plane. These plots were designed to undermine economic security, damage fragile economies, diminish confidence in governments, and foment further discord along religious and sectarian fault lines.

In 2015, ISIL abducted, systematically raped, and abused thousands of women and children, some as young as eight years of age. Women and children were sold and enslaved, distributed to ISIL fighters as spoils of war, forced into marriage and domestic servitude, or subjected to physical and sexual abuse. ISIL established "markets" where women and children were sold with price tags attached and has published a list of rules on how to treat female slaves once

captured. Boko Haram has also abducted women and girls in the northern region of Nigeria, some of whom it later subjected to domestic servitude, other forms of forced labor, and sexual servitude through forced marriages to its members. (For further information, refer to the *Trafficking in Persons Report 2015*,http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/index.htm.)

Although ISIL did not claim responsibility, it was likely responsible for several attacks involving chemical-filled munitions in Iraq and Syria, including a sulfur mustard attack in Marea on August 21, 2015. The United Statesworkedwith the counter-ISIL coalition to dismantle this chemical weapons capability, as well as deny ISIL and other non-state actors access to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN)-useable materials and expertise through interdictions and strengthening the ability of regional governments to detect, disrupt, and respond effectively to suspected CBRN activity.

While ISIL lost significant territory in Iraq and Syria during the second half of 2015, the group made gains in Libya amidst the instability there. According to open-source reporting, ISIL's branch in Libya was estimated to have up to 5,000 terrorist fighters. The group expanded its territorial control in Sirte and its surrounding coastline. It also conducted attacks in Libya's oil crescent and in Sabratha, near the border with Tunisia. However, ISIL also suffered losses in Libya in confrontations with militia groups, in particular in the eastern Libyan city of Darnah.

ISIL's branch in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula (ISIL Sinai Province or ISIL-SP) increased its attacks against Egyptian security forces and become more sophisticated, exemplified by ISIL-SP's multi-pronged attack in the North Sinai town of Sheikh Zuweid in July. The group also claimed responsibility for an operation that brought down Russian Metrojet 9286 in October 2015 that killed 224 passengers and seven crew members.

On January 26, 2015, ISIL publicly announced the establishment of an affiliate, known as ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K), in Afghanistan and Pakistan. At year's end, the group had focused the majority of its attacks against Afghan government and civilian targets, although the group has also claimed a small number of attacks in Pakistan's settled areas. ISIL-K gained a small foothold in southern Nangarhar province in Afghanistan, but was significantly challenged by the Afghan government, Coalition Forces, and the Taliban, and had little support among the region's population.

ISIL-aligned groups have also emerged in other parts of the Middle East, Africa, the Russian North Caucasus, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, although the relationship between most of these groups and ISIL's leadership remained symbolic in most cases. Many of these groups are made up of pre-existing terrorist networkswith their own local goals and lesser capabilities than ISIL.

In March, the Nigeria-based terrorist group Boko Haram declared its affiliation to ISIL. During 2015, Boko Haram killed thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands in the Lake Chad Basin region of Africa. Regional military forces made progress during 2015 in degrading the group's territorial control, in particular following the election of Nigerian President Buhari, but Boko Haram responded by increasing its use of asymmetric attacks. Of particular concern, Boko Haram continued and even increased its practice of using women and children as suicide bombers.

Beyond affiliated groups, ISIL was able to inspire attacks in 2015 by individuals or small groups of self-radicalized individuals in several cities around the world. ISIL's propaganda and its use of social media have created new challenges for counterterrorism efforts.Private sector entities took proactive steps to deny ISIL the use of social media platforms by aggressive enforcement of violations to companies' terms of service. Twitter reported in 2015 that it had begun suspending accounts for threatening or promoting terrorist attacks, primarily related to support for ISIL.

While AQ's central leadership has been significantly weakened, the organization remained a threat and continued to serve as a focal point of inspiration for a network of affiliated groups, including al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP); al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM); al-Nusrah Front; al-Shabaab, and al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent. The tensions between AQ and ISIL escalated in a number of regions during 2015 and likely resulted in increased violence in several parts of the world as AQ tried to reassert its relevance.

AQAP remained a significant threat to Yemen, the region, and to the United States, as efforts to counter the group were hampered by the ongoing conflict in that country. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Yemen also exploited the political and security vacuum to strengthen its foothold inside the country.

Efforts by French and regional military forces – notably Chad and Niger – have significantly degraded the capacity of AQIM and al-Murabitun in northern Mali and across the wider Sahel. However, in 2015, these groups reverted to asymmetric warfare using remnant groups still located in northern Mali. AQIM increased its attacks on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Toward the end of the year, AQIM also directed attacks on hotels in Mali and Burkina Faso.

In East Africa, al-Shabaab continued to commit deadly attacks in Somalia, seeking to reverse progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia and weaken the political will of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop contributing countries. In the first half of 2015, al-Shabaab launched attacks across the border in northern Kenya, including one against a university in Garissa in April that left nearly 150 people dead. While attacks in Kenya decreased in the second half of 2015, al-Shabaab reportedly maintained access to recruits and resources throughout southern and central Somalia.

Regional forces from Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda continued to contribute troops to AMISOM in 2015 despite a number of mass-casualty attacks by al-Shabaab that killed hundreds of AMISOM soldiers. With U.S. support and in partnership with Somali forces, AMISOM maintained pressure on al-Shabaab and weakened the group's territorial control in parts of Somalia. In particular, a coordinated operation by Ethiopian and Kenyan AMISOM forces pushed al-Shabaab from major strongholds in southern Somalia in the second half of 2015. However, al-Shabaab increased its attacks on AMISOM forward operating bases, resulting in increased AMISOM troop casualties and stalled offensive operations.

* * *

In addition to working to degrade these groups, countries across the international community mobilized to put in place fundamental reforms to address the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to and from these conflict zones and to increase their counterterrorism capabilities.

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 – adopted at a UN Security Council session in September 2014 chaired by President Obama – provided a framework for this effort, with countries taking steps to bolster their ability to tackle the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. Partner nations also actively implemented sanctions against ISIL pursuant to the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime, which obligates all member states to freeze the assets and ban the travel of AQ-associated individuals and entities, including ISIL. In February, the UNSC adopted UNSCR 2199 to degrade ISIL, al-Nusrah Front, and other AQ-associated groups' financial support networks, paying particular attention to halting oil smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, and the illicit trade of antiquities from Syria. On December 3, each of the Global Coalition partners reaffirmed their commitment to counter-ISIL financing in a joint statement at the Global Coalition Ministerial in Brussels.

In all, 45 countries passed or updated existing laws to more effectively identify and prosecute foreign terrorist fighters. Thirty-five countries reported arresting foreign terrorist fighters, and 12 have successfully prosecuted at least one foreign terrorist fighter. Turkey – a critical geographic chokepoint in the flow of foreign terrorist fighters – increased detentions, arrests, and prosecutions of suspected foreign terrorist fighters, increased its information sharing with international partners, and is taking steps to improve the security of its borders. By the end of 2015, the United States had information-sharing arrangements with more than 50 international partners to assist efforts to identify, track, and deter the travel of suspected terrorists.

The United States also continued to work with partners to increase security at their borders and eliminate existing security vulnerabilities, enabling them to better identify, restrict, and report travel of suspected foreign terrorist fighters. There has been a significant increase in coordination among partners adding suspects to terrorist watchlists and sharing that information more broadly, however more work remains to be done.

Notably, in December, the EU took steps towards adopting an EU-wide Passenger Name Records (PNR) system, with agreement between the Council and Parliament on a draft directive that would require airlines to share passenger data with all EU member states and enable this information to be shared within the EU.A European Counter Terrorist Centre at Europol, and mechanisms to expand information sharing on the migration of foreign terrorist fighters, were also established in 2015.

President Obama convened the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February 2015, in which more than 60 countries, 12 multilateral bodies, and representatives from civil society, business, and the faith community launched a global "whole-of-society" effort to tackle the broad range of factors fueling violent extremism. The Summit underscored the need for a comprehensive approach that seeks to both limit the growth of current extremist groups and prevent new ones from emerging. Algeria, Australia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mauritania, and Norway hosted regional CVE summits in 2015 to engage additional states, municipal governments, and civil society and private sector participants in preventive approaches to violent extremism. A number of countries have developed National CVE Action Plans charting their way forward. And on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2015, mayors from around the world launched a new Strong Cities Network to identify and share community-level best practices for building social cohesion and resilience against violent extremism.

* * * *

Iran remained the foremost state sponsor of terrorism in 2015, providing a range of support, including financial, training, and equipment, to groups around the world – particularly Hizballah. Iran continued to be deeply involved in the conflict in Syria, working closely with the Asad regime to counter the Syrian opposition, and also in Iraq where Iran continued to provide support to militia groups, including Foreign Terrorist Organization Kata'ib Hizballah. In addition, it was implicated for its support to violent Shia opposition group attacks in Bahrain. Iran was joined in these efforts by Hizballah, which continued to operate globally, as demonstrated by the disruption of Hizballah activities in Peru in 2014 and Cyprus in 2015.

Chapter 2
Country Reports

AFRICA

Africa experienced significant levels of terrorist activity in 2015. In East Africa, the Somalia-based terrorist group al-Shabaab proved its resilience and re-emerged from a series of significant setbacks it suffered in the first half of 2015, which included the death of key operatives and the loss of strongholds and safe haven in parts of south-central Somalia. Despite these losses, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) struggled to counter al-Shabaab, as the terrorist group adopted increasingly aggressive tactics. Later in the year, factions formed and defections increased as the appeal of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) created divisions within al-Shabaab's core leadership. The organization maintained its allegiance to al-Qa'ida, however, in spite of public appeals from other terrorist groups in Africa to join the ranks of those aligned with ISIL.

Al-Shabaab established new safe havens and continued launching attacks and suicide bombings in Somalia, many of which targeted Mogadishu International Airport, Somali government facilities, and select hotels popular with government officials and business people. While still focused on striking targets outside of Somalia, particularly within countries contributing troops to AMISOM, al-Shabaab attempted to delegitimize the Federal Government of Somalia and weaken AMISOM's resolve by launching several successful attacks against AMISOM forward-operating bases in southern Somalia and killing several hundred AMISOM and Somalia National Army soldiers. Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Uganda did not suffer an al-Shabaab attack in 2015, but Kenya suffered one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in its history in April when al-Shabaab operatives assaulted the Garissa University College using light arms and suicide vests and killed more than 145 Kenyans, most of whom were students.

The United States continued to support counterterrorism capacity building throughout the Horn of Africa, including bolstering AMISOM's operational efficacy, contributing to the development and professionalization of Somalia's security sector, and improving regional critical incident response capabilities of law enforcement. In the wake of the 2015 Garissa University College attack, Kenya and other East African countries refocused their efforts to secure their borders as well as detect, deter, disrupt, investigate, and prosecute terrorist incidents. In September, Kenyan Defense Forces launched Operation Linda Boni in the northern coastal area of Kenya in an effort to clear al-Shabaab operatives from the Boni Forest, a known base of operations and cross-border transit hub for al-Shabaab.

In the Lake Chad Basin, the Nigerian, Chadian, Cameroonian, and Nigerien governments took a number of steps in 2015 to increase counter-Boko Haram efforts. Bilateral and multilateral efforts by these regional military forces successfully challenged Boko Haram's hold on territory, forcing it to abandon major military-style campaigns and revert back to the asymmetric tactics seen in previous years. Despite these setbacks, Boko Haram withstood and adapted to the military offensives. The group carried out kidnappings, killings, bombings (including with child suicide bombers), and attacks on civilian and military targets throughout the Lake Chad Basin, resulting in thousands of deaths, injuries, and significant destruction of property. In Nigeria, the northeast states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe experienced significant terrorist attacks. Boko Haram's violence also spilled over into neighboring northern Cameroon, Chad, and southeast

Niger. In March, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in an audiotaped message.

To coordinate counter-Boko Haram efforts in the Lake Chad Basin, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria formed a Multi-National Joint Task Force.

France's Operation Barkhane, a counterterrorism operation focused on countering terrorists operating in the Sahel, continued and was supported by important contributions of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali to bolster and restore that country's stability.

TRANS-SAHARA COUNTERTERRORISM PARTNERSHIP

Established in 2005, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is a U.S.-funded and -implemented, multi-faceted, multi-year effort designed to build the capacity and cooperation of military, law enforcement, and civilian actors across North and West Africa to counter terrorism. Areas of support include:

1. Enabling and enhancing the capacity of North and West African militaries and law enforcement to conduct counterterrorism operations;
2. Integrating the ability of North and West African militaries and law enforcement, and other supporting partners, to operate regionally and collaboratively on counterterrorism efforts;
3. Enhancing border security capacity to monitor, restrain, and interdict terrorist movements;
4. Strengthening the rule of law, including access to justice, and law enforcement's ability to detect, disrupt, respond to, investigate, and prosecute terrorist activity;
5. Monitoring and countering the financing of terrorism (such as that related to kidnapping for ransom); and
6. Reducing the limited sympathy and support among communities for violent extremism.

TSCTP partners include Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia.

TSCTP has built capacity and cooperation despite setbacks caused by a restive political climate, violent extremism, ethnic rebellions, and extra-constitutional actions that interrupted work and progress with select partner countries.

Regional cooperation, a strategic objective of U.S. assistance programming globally, has increased substantially in West and Central Africa among most of the partners of TSCTP. Nigeria and its neighbors agreed to form a Multinational Joint Task Force to combat Boko Haram, and remained actively engaged in countering the group throughout the region. The TSCTP partners were joined in this effort by the AU and by the country of Benin, which is not a member of TSCTP.

PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL EAST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM

First established in 2009, the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT) is a U.S.-funded and -implemented multi-year, multi-faceted program designed to build counterterrorism capacity and cooperation of military, law enforcement, and civilian actors across East Africa to counter terrorism. Areas of support include:

1. Reducing the operational capacity of terrorist networks;
2. Developing a rule of law framework for countering terrorism in partner nations;
3. Enhancing border security;
4. Countering the financing of terrorism; and
5. Reducing the appeal of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.

Active PREACT partners include Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Burundi, Comoros, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Sudan, and Sudan are also members of PREACT.

In 2015, the U.S. government, through PREACT, continued to build the capacity and resilience of East African governments to contain the spread of, and ultimately counter the threat posed by, al-Qa'ida, al-Shabaab, and other terrorist organizations. PREACT complements the U.S. government's dedicated efforts, including support for AMISOM, to promote stability and governance in Somalia and the greater East Africa region. PREACT additionally serves as a broader, U.S. government interagency mechanism to coordinate counterterrorism and countering violent extremism programming. Joint training exercises for Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan first responders and law enforcement professionals support efforts to enhance regional coordination and cooperation, protect shared borders, and respond to terrorist incidents.

BURKINA FASO

Overview: After a year of political transition following the 2014 popular uprising that pushed Burkina Faso's longtime president Blaise Compaore from power, Burkina Faso held presidential and legislative elections on November 29, 2015. The new president, Roch Marc Christian Kabore, sworn in on December 29, stated that security and counterterrorism were top priorities for his government.

Burkina Faso faced four terrorist attacks in 2015, including kidnapping for ransom. This was a marked departure from previous years when Burkina Faso experienced no terrorist incidents. These cases remained under investigation at the end of the year.

Burkina Faso's willingness to engage in regional counterterrorism and stability operations was facilitated by assistance provided to its security forces through the Department of State's Africa Peacekeeping Program (AFRICAP) II, Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) contracts, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), and National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 2282 funding initiatives. Bilateral and regional counterterrorism cooperation increased. The United States supported USAFRICOM's FY 2015 proposals to augment and build upon Burkina Faso's Gendarmerie Border Security and Counterterrorism Company capabilities. U.S. support worked to directly develop Burkina Faso's counterterrorism capabilities to contain, disrupt, degrade, and defeat terrorist organizations.

The long-term sustainability and effectiveness of all counterterrorism units was severely hampered by logistical and professional shortfalls in the Burkinabe military. In 2015, U.S.

funding supported the establishment of a 150-person counterterrorism logistics company. The company helped to address maintenance shortfalls within the country's counterterrorism forces. Elements of the Presidential Security Regiment, which launched an attempted coup d'etat in September and was immediately dissolved after, reportedly abused civilians. The most significant of these reported abuses included killing civilians and violently harassing journalists and members of civil society.

Burkina Faso relies on the Terrorist Interdiction Program's Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) to conduct traveler screening and watchlisting. The country is also engaged with the International Organization of Migration to provide limited traveler screening at select border control points.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: According to local police sources, Burkina Faso endured four significant incidents believed to be terrorist-related or perpetrated:

- A Romanian national was kidnapped near the Tambao manganese mining site in April, reportedly by the terrorist group al Murabitoun.
- Two cross-border attacks on gendarmerie outposts, one in Oursi in August, that resulted in one death, and one in Samorogouan in October, which resulted in three deaths.
- A complex attack in November on a gold convoy, near Djibo, involving IEDs, rocket-propelled grenades, and small arms. The attack resulted in one death.

Investigations of these incidents were ongoing at year's end.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Burkina Faso's counterterrorism strategy involves deploying the counterterrorist task force to the north of the country, establishing new police and military counterterrorism units, strengthening intelligence collection, building new border control stations, and increasing the size of the gendarmerie and police force. In accordance with the strategy, the government deployed a joint Army-Gendarmerie counterterrorism task force known as the Groupement des Forces Anti-Terroristes (GFAT) to the north in January 2013. Due to multiple peacekeeping operation deployments, this force, originally projected to possess 1,000 troops, had 500 troops in 2015. Burkinabe security and law enforcement officials continued to cite border security as a major area of concern. Due to political unrest, some Department of State Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) programming was delayed in 2015.

Burkina Faso law enforcement officials actively sought training from the United States and other countries. Recent U.S. assistance included workshops on cross-border security, criminal investigation techniques, and prosecutorial skills training, often under the auspices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ). For example, representatives from Burkina Faso participated in two courses developed by the Global Center for Cooperative Security and conducted at the IIJ focusing on non-coercive interviewing and interrogation techniques and the use and protection of intelligence-derived information in rule of law-based investigations and prosecutions.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Burkina Faso is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), a Financial Action Task Force-style body that is part of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Its

financial intelligence unit, Cellule Nationale de Traitement des Informations Financières, (CENTIF), is composed of magistrates, police, gendarmerie, and financial experts under the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and is a member of the Egmont Group. The Government of Burkina Faso has a three-year (2014-2016) strategy for fighting financial crime, but due to recent political uncertainty, much of this strategy has not been implemented. Furthermore, although Burkinabe law enforcement had the will to improve its ability to counter terrorism financing, it lacked the necessary resources and experience. In 2015, Burkina Faso worked on developing a special court for terrorism financing. CENTIF reported that between January 1 and November 26, a total of 68 Suspicious Transaction Reports were filed, and 17 individuals were being prosecuted for money laundering or other financial crimes, including three new cases in 2015. It can take years for criminal cases in Burkina Faso to reach a conclusion, however, and there were no convictions in 2015. While Burkina Faso has many of the laws and regulations required for an anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism regime, other laws and customs make implementing these difficult. For example, Burkina Faso is a cash society, making money difficult to track. Also, an agreement between West African countries for the free movement of people and goods allows individuals uninhibited entry to and exit from Burkina Faso with any amount of money.

There were no reports of inappropriate use of regulations to target political appointments. However, in late September 2015, the government froze the assets of 14 individuals and four political parties suspected of involvement in the failed coup, which took place earlier that same month.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, we refer you to the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Burkina Faso did not have any formal programs to counter violent extremism. However, several international organizations funded vocational training and economic development programs designed to provide positive alternatives for populations vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment into terrorist organizations.

International and Regional Cooperation: Burkina Faso was active in regional organizations and international bodies, as demonstrated by increased collaboration with the UN on counterterrorism matters and its active participation in international fora, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum's Sahel Working Group. During an event of this working group, Burkina Faso's Ministry of Territorial Administration and Security presented the country's strategic counterterrorism plan. Burkina Faso was a member of the TSCTP, was active in ECOWAS, and is a member of the G-5 Sahel group that was created in February 2014.

BURUNDI

Overview: Burundi continued to deploy six battalions to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Of serious concern, Burundian security forces, in particular the Burundian National Police, were increasingly credibly implicated in widespread human rights abuses in 2015 as a result of the Government of Burundi's determination to crack down on political opponents.

Burundi demonstrated its continued commitment to addressing international terrorism in 2015 primarily through its six battalion contribution to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). However, the Burundian National Police (BNP) was hampered by a lack of training, resources, and infrastructure. In addition, the BNP focused its investigative efforts on political opposition in Burundi.

Burundi's porous land and water borders posed significant border security challenges.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Burundi has provisions in its penal code defining forms of terrorism. Sentences for acts of terrorism range from 10 to 20 years in prison to life imprisonment if the act results in the death of a person. The Judicial Police was responsible for terrorism investigations. A counterterrorism unit, formed in 2010, consists of elements of the BNP, the military, and the Burundi National Intelligence Service.

Burundi's participation in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program and the International Law Enforcement Academy was suspended in mid-2015 due to the lack of accountability for human rights abuses perpetrated in Cibitoke Province in January.

Burundi used laws related to threats to internal and external state security to suppress dissent during the electoral cycle. Several journalists, human rights defenders, and opposition politicians – including Bob Rugurika of African Public Radio and Pierre Claver Mbonimpa of the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Prisoners – denounced government activities and consequently faced jail time and repeated court hearings, and were forced to flee the country due to credible threats to themselves and their families, or were severely injured or killed.

Burundi's judicial system was characterized by corruption, incompetence, and an overwhelming backlog of cases.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Burundi is not a member of a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body; however, it is an observer of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group.While the government has created counterterrorist financing laws, it has yet to commit funding, provide training, or implement policies. Burundi has laws that criminalize terrorist financing, but it does not implement these laws consistently. No terrorist assets were frozen in 2015.

Burundi's anti-money laundering/counterterrorism finance regime is incomplete. It does not include regulatory requirements or supervision of money/value transfer services, precious metal and jewelry dealers, real estate agents, exchange houses, non-profit organizations, the informal financial sector, and money service businesses, but Know Your Customer practices are implemented regularly in the formal financial sector. In addition, very few people in the country have access to the formal banking sector. Each local commercial bank operation is recorded within the bank's system and the banks exchange information with their foreign correspondent banks through their compliance officers. Banks are not asked to share this information with the Government of Burundi's financial intelligence unit, however.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Burundian government does not have any formal programs to counter violent extremism. Due to concerns about abuses allegedly perpetrated by Burundian security forces, several of Burundi's partners, including international organizations, reduced funding for vocational training and economic development programs designed to provide positive alternatives for populations vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment into terrorist organizations.

International and Regional Cooperation: Burundi is a member of the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism, although the United States did not provide assistance in 2015 because of its failure to hold police and military personnel accountable for human rights abuses. Burundi contributed six battalions to AMISOM.

CAMEROON

Overview: Cameroon became a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2014. Countering terrorist threats remained a top security priority for the Government of Cameroon in 2015, and it continued to work with the United States to improve the capacity of its security forces. Boko Haram took advantage of weaknesses in Cameroon's border security to conduct a number of terrorist attacks in the country's Far North Region in 2015, including targeted killings and kidnappings of Cameroonians, and raids on villages, fields, and livestock. On July 12, Boko Haram launched the first-ever suicide bombing campaign on Cameroonian soil in the Far North Region that continued throughout the remainder of the year. Cameroon responded to the attacks with a significantly increased security presence in the Far North Region.

Boko Haram's bombing campaign had a fundamental impact on the Cameroonian people, government, and security forces, ultimately leading to a drive to professionalize security force and government operations. Cameroon shifted security and financial resources from the restive eastern border with the Central African Republic to the North and Far North Regions. This bolstered its counter-Boko Haram efforts, but left a vacuum in the east that was exploited by criminal groups, wildlife traffickers, and smugglers. Cameroon also created a system of Vigilance Committees (VC), officially sanctioned and registered neighborhood watch groups that have successfully thwarted or limited the damage caused by suicide attacks. In addition to combat deaths among security forces, several VC members were killed by Boko Haram.

In 2015, the United States continued to provide an expanding number of training programs on terrorism and security to help Cameroon address the Boko Haram threat in the Far North Region.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Boko Haram was responsible for suicide bombings, raids and targeted killings of Cameroonians in the Mayo-Sava, Mayo-Tsanaga, and the Logone and Chari Divisions of the Far North Region – including the villages of Amchide, Blabline, Bia, Fotokol, Kolofata, Waza, and other localities at the border with Nigeria. Although their precise citizenship has been difficult to ascertain, evidence suggested that most Boko Haram assailants and suicide bombers to date have been Nigerian and Nigeria-based. However, the Government

of Cameroon acknowledged there were Cameroonian members of the group in both Cameroon and Nigeria.

From July 12 until December 31, there were 37 known suicide bombing attacks which resulted in an official count of 131 civilian casualties. The actual number of casualties is likely to be higher as many victims died of their wounds days and weeks after the attacks, but were not counted in the official tally. Throughout the year, Boko Haram conducted almost daily raids that resulted in as many as 1300 casualties, although conclusive figures were difficult to obtain. Specific terrorist incidents included:

- In mid-January 2015, Boko Haram kidnapped 80 people in Mayo Tsanaga and killed four villagers.
- On April 9, Boko Haram fighters wearing Nigerian Army uniforms infiltrated the village of Guoues, located nine kilometers from the Dabanga border post. The attackers killed eight people including Issa Sale, the village chief.
- On April 16, a large Boko Haram force attacked the villages of Blabline and Bia, in the Kolofata district. They killed 24 civilians, set fire to houses, and stole a large number of cattle.
- In early May, Boko Haram killed 19 people in Tchebe-Tchebe and Ldaoutsaf, burned 76 market stands, and killed two members of the security forces in Zelevet.
- On July 12, two suicide bombers wearing niqabs blew themselves up in Fotokol, on the border with Nigeria, killing 10 civilians and a soldier from neighboring Chad. On July 22, two bombers detonated themselves near the central market in Maroua and its adjoining Hausa neighborhood, killing 21 persons and wounding 85 others, according to official figures. These were the first two suicide attacks in Cameroon.
- On July 19, Boko Haram killed 24 civilians, including multiple children in Kamouna, Far North Region. More than 80 assailants stormed and set fire to the village, located near Lake Chad in the northern strip of Cameroon.
- On July 26, in Afade, in the Logone and Chari division of the Far North Region, Boko Haram set the gendarmerie post on fire, killing four people who were in the station's detention cells, including a suspected Boko Haram member who was being held by the gendarmes.
- On July 25, in Maroua, a suicide attack killed 23 civilians and wounded more than 80.
- On September 3, a double suicide attack hit the locality of Kerawa, some 10 kilometers from Kolofata district in the Far North Region, killing at least 40 people and injuring more than 150 others.
- On December 28, in Bodo, Far North Region, two female attackers self-detonated, but did not cause any civilian casualties.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The December 2014 law on terrorism and certain provisions of the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Military Justice Code were used to prosecute acts of terrorism.

The 2014 Law for the Fight Against Terrorism confers the death penalty for those found guilty of carrying out, abetting, or sponsoring acts of terrorism, including any activity likely to incite revolt in the population or disturb the normal functioning of state institutions. The bill was controversial, and members of the political opposition claimed that the definition of terrorism

was too broad and could be used as a tool for political repression. Such criticisms have continued but have become more muted in the face of increased terrorist attacks in the Far North.

Faced with Boko Haram's shift towards suicide bombings, and security challenges at its borders with Nigeria and the Central African Republic, the Cameroonian government increased coordination and information sharing among law enforcement, military, and intelligence entities, including the Directorate General for External Research, the National Army, the Rapid Intervention Unit (BIR), and the National Gendarmerie. During the year, the Government of Cameroon continued to receive U.S. capacity building training to improve its counterterrorism and law enforcement efforts, including programs on the civil-military response to terrorism, border security, and information-led policing. The United States sent military personnel to conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations as part of the fight against Boko Haram. These measures supported improvements in Cameroon's ability to detect and respond to Boko Haram in general, and terrorist attacks specifically, although further efforts are needed for the country to become more effective in deterring terrorist incidents, to improve interagency coordination, and to become more professional in its response to terrorism.

Cameroon continued to issue regional biometric passports aimed at providing enhanced security for residents of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States zone. In response to terrorist incidents, Cameroon reinforced its border security by establishing more control posts and deploying additional military units, including the BIR, to the Far North. The government also increased screening efforts at ports of entry and highways, using terrorist screening watchlists as well as biographic information and biometric technology. The capacity of security forces to patrol and control all land and maritime borders remained limited, however, due to inadequate staffing and resources, leading to some uncontrolled border crossings. In many cases, residents of the Cameroon-Nigeria border area did not carry identification documents, making it difficult for officials to determine the identity of those seeking to cross the border.

Cameroonian military and police units proactively confronted and disrupted the activities of suspected Boko Haram members. Several significant arrests were made.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Cameroon is a member of the Task Force on Money Laundering in Central Africa (GABAC), which became a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body in October 2015 and is a body of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa. Cameroon has adopted a legislative architecture to implement anti-money laundering and financial supervision actions. It established a financial intelligence unit, the National Financial Investigation Agency, which processes suspicious transaction reports and initiates investigations and is a member of the Egmont Group. Cameroon has undergone a mutual evaluation by GABAC.

There were no reports of prosecutions or convictions for money laundering during the year. Under the newly adopted legislation, any person convicted of financing or using financial proceeds from terrorist activities would be sentenced to death.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, we refer you to the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Cameroon participated in the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in February as well as subsequent CVE meetings. Cameroonian authorities have taken a series of measures to counter violent extremism, including forming partnerships with local, traditional, and religious leaders to monitor preaching in mosques. The Government of Cameroon partnered with faith-based organizations such as the Council of Imams and Religious Dignitaries of Cameroon (CIDIMUC) to educate citizens on the dangers caused by radicalization to violence and violent extremism,promote religious tolerance, and present religion as a factor for peace. This objective was furthered through targeted messaging in mosques, special prayer sessions, press releases, and through roundtable discussions and conferences bringing together people from various religious backgrounds. One of CIDIMUC's strategies has been to work to improve the living conditions of imams.

International and Regional Cooperation: Cameroon actively participated in AU and UN peacekeeping operations, and its military schools trained soldiers and gendarmes from neighboring countries. Cameroon contributed forces to regional efforts to fight Boko Haram via the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force. The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) visited Cameroon from March 16 to 18 to assess Cameroon's implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 1624; and to assess what type of technical assistance might be beneficial to Cameroon.In addition, Cameroon participates in regional trainings for criminal justice actors on a range of counterterrorism topics hosted by the IIJ.

CHAD

Overview: The Government of Chad made countering potential terrorist attacks and threats from across the Sahel region a priority at the highest level. By engaging in the fight against Boko Haram in northern Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria;supporting the French-led mission in northern Mali; and passing counterterrorism legislation; Chad's counterterrorism strategy focused on promoting internal and regional stability. Chad provided combat forces to the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that also includes Benin, Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria, and continued to take an active role in that coalition and fighting violent extremists in the Lake Chad region, Nigeria, and neighboring states. This follows Chad's important contribution in 2013 to the French intervention in northern Mali, Operation Sabre, and its contribution to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

2015 Terrorist Attacks: Boko Haram attacked Chad in retribution for Chad's role in the MNJTF and for countering Boko Haram in Nigeria and elsewhere in the region. Boko Haram's attacks on villages, internally displaced persons camps, and military installations in the Lake Chad region represented a significant increase above and beyond the attacks on villages that were perpetrated in 2014. Attacks included:

- On three days immediately before and during Ramadan, several attacks struck Chad's capital N'Djamena:
    - On June 15, three suicide attacks against two police targets killed 33;
    - On June 27, five policemen and six terrorists were killed during a police raid; and

- On July 11, a suicide bomber killed 15 in N'Djamena's main market.
- OnNovember 8, suicide bombings killed two and injured 14 in Ngouboua, Lake Chad Region, following the withdrawal of Chadian troops**.**

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Throughout the year, Chadian security forces executed several cordon and search operations in the Lake Chad region in an effort to prevent spillover from ongoing security operations in Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon that effectively squeezed Boko Haram further into Chadian territory. Following twin attacks in N'Djamena in June, the Government of Chad found and arrested the leadership of the Boko Haram cell in N'Djamena, leading to the discovery of a Boko Haram safe house in June and a large weapons cache in early July. The Government of Chad passed counterterrorism legislation on August 5. Law 034/PR/2015 explicitly criminalizes terrorism and provides penalties for those convicted of terrorist acts. The law imposes the death penalty on any person who commits, finances, recruits, and/or trains people for participation in acts of terrorism, regardless of where the act was intended to be carried out. The law extended the pre-trial detention period to 30 days, renewable twice on authorization from the public prosecutor. Penalties for lesser terrorist offenses were increased to life imprisonment.

On January 16, the Government of Chad received parliament's approval to send troops to the northern regions of Cameroon near the Nigerian border. This decision, which received broad popular support, came amid rising concerns about the economic impact of the siege on the Chadian economy, as Chad depends heavily on the importation of goods that transit through Nigeria and northern Cameroon.

On July 12, Prime Minister Pahimi Kalzeubé Deubet addressed representatives of political parties and civil society leaders regarding terrorist threats as well as measures taken by the Government of Chad, and called for collaboration to increase vigilance and awareness to root out suspicious persons and accomplices. He praised the crucial role played by the entire political class and civil society in the fight against terrorism. He reiterated the measures taken in the context of the fight against Boko Haram, such as the ban on burqas and vehicles with tinted windows, and the cantonment of refugees from Nigeria in Baga Sola and specific camps.

On August 29, the Government of Chad tried, convicted, and executed 10 members of Boko Haram found guilty of planning the June 15 and July 11 suicide bombings that killed more than 48 people and wounded hundreds in N'Djamena. The alleged Boko Haram members were tried by Chad's highest criminal court magistrates in a three-day Special Criminal Session that began on August 26. The trial was open to the press on its first day, but then moved to an undisclosed location and was closed to the media and public due to concerns that Boko Haram might attack the court or attempt to free the defendants. The accused were prosecuted by Chad's Procurer General and represented by assigned lawyers. As the attacks took place before the August 5 passage of new counterterrorism legislation, the suspects were tried under non-terrorism related charges, including murder, causing destruction using an explosive device, fraud, illegal possession of firearms, and abuse of psychotropic drugs. The defendants were convicted based on a public admission of guilt by some members before the court and no physical evidence against them was reportedly presented.

While Chadian law enforcement units displayed basic command and control capacity, the Director-General of the Chadian National Police has requested more training in investigation,

crisis response, and border security capacity. All 22 police brigades performed counterterrorism functions. Law enforcement leadership professed publicly the requirement for all law enforcement officers to respect human rights.

The Director-General of the police has shown dedication to the improvement of the Chadian National Police, including through information sharing within the various police units, new uniforms, new weapons, and a pay raise.

The Government of Chad increased screenings at border-crossings to try to prevent infiltration by members of Boko Haram and Central African militias, and the transit of illegal arms, drugs, weapons, and other contraband into the country. Border patrol was provided by a combination of border security officials, gendarmes, police, and military. Border officials, particularly police at the Ngueli bridge border crossing between N'Djamena and Kousseri, Cameroon; took security measures that included controlling of taxi and motorcycle traffic; searching cars, trucks, and pedestrians at points-of-entry to screen for weapons, drugs, explosives, and other contraband; and continuing the use of the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) biometric screening system that was adopted in 2013. Chad has the capability to conduct biographic screening at multiple land and air ports of entry.

Chadian security forces executed several cordon and search operations in the Lake Chad region in an effort to prevent spillover from ongoing security operations in Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon. Chad continued its participation in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program. In 2015, the Government of Chad signed an accord with the U.S. Embassy for the designation of a police response unit to U.S. facilities and personnel under the Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response (SPEAR). This multi-year U.S.-funded program directly supports the Chadian National Police with the necessary training and equipment to respond to a terrorist incident, particularly targeting U.S. facilities.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Chad is a member of the Task Force on Money Laundering in Central Africa (GABAC), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Chad's financial intelligence unit, the National Agency for Financial Investigation (ANIF), is a member of the Egmont Group.

Chad's underdeveloped financial sector is primarily cash-based and lacks sufficient capacity to enforce banking security. ANIF continued to face serious resource constraints rendering financial intelligence reporting and analysis limited. Additionally, law enforcement and customs officials require further training in financial crimes enforcement. Several banks reported suspicious transactions. The government lacked equipment to monitor transactions and did not track money transactions through wire transfer services (i.e. Western Union), *hawala* remittance systems, or SMS mobile money transfers.

In September, the Bank of the Central African States (BEAC) took measures to strengthen information technology resources vigilance, to improve detection, automated alerts, and tracking to identify sensitive or suspicious transactions.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: On July 17, Prime Minister Kalzeubé informed national religious leaders of the measures the government took following the terrorist attacks in N'Djamena and asked them to educate their followers on the government's security measures. The next day, in Amdjarass, Region Ennedi-East, President Déby Itno received religious, administrative, and traditional authorities. Ten members of the Higher Council of Islamic Affairs attended the meeting. Members of the Islamic Committee of Ennedi-East reaffirmed their determination to encourage compliance with the law. On September 24, during Eid celebrations in N'Djamena, the imam of the grand mosque welcomed Government of Chad efforts against Boko Haram and urged Muslims to show solidarity and unity.

As a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), Chad continued to participate in targeted projects to counter violent extremism. Activities included youth empowerment, amplification of moderate voices, capacity building of national civil society organizations, and promotion of community governance. Two new community radio stations were added to the media landscape and two training centers were created to provide Muslim youth with marketable skills.

International and Regional Cooperation: Chad participated in the Global Counterterrorism Forum's Sahel Region Capacity Building Working Group in March in Dakar, Senegal. Chad is a member of the TSCTP, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and the AU. Chad participated in the Lake Chad Basin Commission's effort to establish the MNJTF, and deployed a contingent of 700 troops along Chad's Lake Chad border to prevent infiltration by Boko Haram. It has also cooperated actively with Cameroon and Nigeria in operations to counter the threat of Boko Haram in its border regions, and continued to work with Sudan on the joint border commission the two countries had established in 2012 to better control the Chad-Sudan eastern border. It also began talks with Niger and Libya to form a tripartite border commission.

At an August 3 meeting held in Libreville, the heads of intelligence and security in the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) developed measures against terrorism that include creation of specialized units, a regional institutional platform for information exchange, and improved cooperation and collaboration among security services and information.

In 2015, Chad hosted the multinational Special Operations-focused FLINTLOCK exercise. The exercise united more than 1,000 military and security sector personnel from more than 20 countries. The exercise focused on developing interoperable security capacity, building professionalism, and strengthening multinational bonds.

The G-5 Sahel was created in February 2014 to enable region-wide collaboration on the Trans-Sahara region's political and security situation, and Chad participated in G-5 Sahel meetings held among the five member countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali,Mauritania, and Niger, along with representatives of the AU, UN, the Economic Community of West African States, the EU, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Chad continued to host the French government's Operation Barkhane, a successor to Operations Serval and Epervier, formerly based in Chad and Mali, respectively.

DJIBOUTI

Overview: Djibouti remained an active and supportive counterterrorism partner in 2015. Djibouti hosts Camp Lemonnier, which serves as headquarters to the U.S. Africa Command's Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. Djibouti's notable counterterrorism activities in 2015 included increased training through the Department of State's Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program and the deployment of a second battalion of soldiers to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

As a result of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris and Bamako, Djibouti implemented enhanced security measures throughout Djibouti City. Separately, more than 30,000 people fled from Yemen to Djibouti from March to December as a result of the conflict in Yemen. This influx of people taxed government resources and revealed vulnerabilities in port and immigration security procedures. The United States provided Djibouti with significant capacity-building assistance through counterterrorism training and equipment from a variety of courses and programs sponsored by the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice. Djibouti publicly condemned Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) acts such as beheadings, as well as ISIL's focus on recruiting vulnerable youth and its misuse of Islam to advance its goals.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Counterterrorism remained a high priority for all Djiboutian law enforcement entities due to Djibouti's geographic location, porous borders, and an al-Shabaab attack in Djibouti City in May 2014. Djibouti has a legal framework for prosecuting terrorism-related crimes and can try terrorists in criminal courts using its penal code. However,Djibouti had not prosecuted any terrorism-related cases by the end of 2015. Djiboutian officials arrested and detained individuals connected to the 2014 terrorist attack, but no dates had been set for their prosecution by the end of 2015.

Djibouti's most visible counterterrorism efforts were checkpoints and cordon-and-search operations within the capital city. There was also an increased emphasis at border control points to screen for potential security threats.The Government of Djibouti maintained enhanced protection of soft targets, including hotels and grocery stores, which it first implemented after the May 2014 attack. After the Paris and Bamako attacks in November 2015, Djibouti declared a two-month State of Emergency and implemented additional security measures throughout Djibouti City, including enhanced protection of popular hotels. Djibouti law enforcement extended vehicle searches throughout the city in an effort coordinated through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Djibouti also conducted various counterterrorism exercises at various sites in the capital in the wake of the Paris and Bamako attacks.

Djibouti's law enforcement organization is composed of the Djiboutian National Police (DNP), the Djiboutian National Gendarmerie, the National Security Judiciary Police (NSJP), and the Djiboutian Coast Guard. In 2015, the DNP, National Gendarmerie, and the NSJP received training through the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program as well as the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Gaborone.ATA assistance focused primarily on building technical capacity for improved crisis response and border security capabilities. The DNP, National Gendarmerie, and the NSJP also received training through the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's Legal Attaché office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Djibouti's law enforcement organizations routinely interacted with U.S. government counterparts and frequently sought U.S. input to identify potential terrorist suspects. Separately, the Combined Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), headquartered at Camp Lemonnier, provided the Djiboutian Armed Forces (DAF) with two counter-IED training programs, intended to instruct Djiboutian military personnel on how to recognize, find and counter, or avoid an IED.

Djibouti continued to process travelers on entry and departure at its international airport and seaport with the Personal Identification Secure Comparison Evaluation System (PISCES). While the airport and seaport are important entry points, the vast majority of travelers cross into Djibouti by land at one of three land border points, one of which is the Loyada border crossing at the Somali border.In 2015, the United States assisted in the successful implementation of PISCES at both the Loyada border crossing and the Obock Port where Yemeni refugees are processed.

Djiboutian law enforcement personnel acknowledged the difficulty of securing their land borders as well as the coast. The DNP controls border checkpoints, and the DAF has responsibility for patrolling the border,with support from the Gendarme patrolling between border posts. In 2015, the DNP did not hesitate to close the southern border with Somalia based on the evaluation of credible threat information. The DAF also increased patrols during the year in response to threats.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Djibouti is not a member of a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body.The Central Bank of Djibouti houses a financial intelligence unit known as the Fraud Investigation Unit (FIU). Given its limited financial and human resources, the FIU has been unable to perform its core functions and instead focuses on banking supervision. The FIU made no referrals of cases to law enforcement involving suspected terrorism financing in 2015.

Djibouti's Central Bank places the responsibility for staying updated on sanctions lists with the financial institutions themselves. Many of the financial institutions operating in Djibouti have software packages that include links to the UN sanctions lists and the lists of designated terrorists or terrorist entities from the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control and the EU. The Djiboutian Central Bank monitors compliance with these lists through routine supervision and audits of the financial institutions.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, we refer you to the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Djibouti participated in the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism(CVE) in February, as well as all subsequent ministerial-level CVE meetings. The Djiboutiangovernment also agreed to host an East Africa CVE Center of Excellence and Counter-Messaging hub that will serve as a platform to allow the development and exchange of ideas, best practices, and solutions to help counter extremist ideology and narratives throughout the Horn of Africa.

Separately, the Government of Djibouti, via the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, continued to implement a law on state control of mosques to address political activity from mosques and

counter the potential for violent radicalization. The law required the conversion of imams into civil service employees and transferred mosque property and assets to the government.

International and Regional Cooperation: Djibouti is a member of the AU and deployed its second battalion of troops to AMISOM in January 2015. Djibouti is also a member of the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism.

ERITREA

Overview: The Government of Eritrea continued to make regular public statements about its commitment to fighting terrorism. Additionally, it participated in the Countering Violent Extremism Conference in Kenya in June and the UN Global Counterterrorism Forum Conference in Morocco in July, making strong statements at both international gatherings. Also, on December 21, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press statement expressing its support for the Saudi initiative to form an alliance against terrorism.

In May, the United States re-certified Eritrea as "not cooperating fully" with U.S. counterterrorism efforts under Section 40A of the Arms Export and Control Act, as amended. In considering this annual determination, the Department of State reviewed Eritrea's overall level of cooperation with U.S. efforts to combat terrorism, taking into account U.S. counterterrorism objectives and a realistic assessment of Eritrean capabilities.

The Government of Eritrea has been under UNSC sanctions since December 2009 as a result of past evidence of support for al-Shabaab and regional destabilization. UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1907 (2009) and 2013 (2011) continued an arms embargo on Eritrea and a travel ban and asset freeze on some military and political leaders, calling on the nation to "cease arming, training, and equipping armed groups and their members, including al-Shabaab, that aim to destabilize the region." The Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group's 2014 and 2015 reports found no evidence that Eritrea is supporting al-Shabaab.

Lack of transparency on how governing structures function means that there is not a clear picture of the methods the Government of Eritrea uses to track terrorists or maintain safeguards for its citizens. For a number of years, members of the police have refused to meet with security officials from western nations to discuss policy matters, although the U.S. government had informal contact with law enforcement counterparts in 2015.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Articles 259-264, 269-270, and 282 of the Eritrean Penal Code, grandfathered into present-day law from Ethiopia's 1957 code, criminalize terrorist methods; measures of intimidation or terrorism; acts of conspiracy carried out by organized armed bands; offenses that make use of arms, means, or support from foreign organizations; use of bombs, dynamite, explosives, or other methods constituting a public danger; genocide; and war crimes against the civilian population. Other sections of Eritrean law could also be used to prosecute terrorism, including acts related to offenses against public safety; offenses against property; offenses against the state; offenses against the national interest; offenses against international interests; attacks on the independence of the state; impairment of the defensive power of the state; high treason; economic treason; collaboration; and provocation and preparation.

The Government of Eritrea does not share information about its ports of entry, law enforcement actions, arrests or disruptions of terrorist's activities or prosecutions. Entities including the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF), the National Security Agency (NSA), the Police, and Immigration and Customs authorities all potentially have counterterrorism responsibilities. There are special units of the NSA that monitor fundamentalism or extremism. Chain of command may work effectively within some security and law enforcement elements, but there are rivalries and responsibilities that overlap between and among the various forces. Whether information sharing occurs depends on personal relationships between and among particular unit commanders. Many soldiers, police officers, and immigration and customs agents, are young national service recruits or assignees, performing their jobs without adequate training.

The Eritrean government closely monitors passenger manifests for any flights coming into Asmara, and scrutinizes travel documents of visitors, but does not collect biometric data. Government officials lack the training and technology to recognize fraudulent documents.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Eritrea is not a member of a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. This gap impedes any overall assessment of the risks the country faces in regards to terrorism financing. Eritrea's general lack of transparency on banking, financial, and economic matters makes the gathering of definitive information difficult. There is no available information to indicate that Eritrea has identified any terrorist assets or prosecuted any terrorism financing cases. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In June,Eritrea participated in the regional Countering Violent Extremism conference hosted by Kenya in Nairobi. While Eritrea's laws and the public statements of Eritrean officials stressed the importance of preventing violent extremism in Eritrea, the lack of transparency from the government made it impossible to assess whether they have implemented initiatives aimed at prevention, counter-messaging, or rehabilitation and reintegration.

International and Regional Cooperation: Eritrea is a member of the AU. In 2015, Eritrea increased its military cooperation with the Gulf States and increased its political support for the Saudi Arabia-led military campaign in Yemen. Eritrea would like to reactivate its membership in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); however, Eritrea's return to IGAD is opposed by Ethiopia and Djibouti, both of whom had military conflicts and have ongoing border disputes with Eritrea.

ETHIOPIA

Overview: The continuing threat of al-Shabaab emanating from Somalia dominated the Government of Ethiopia's security posture and the Ethiopia National Defense Force's (ENDF's) counterterrorism efforts in Somalia.Therefore, the Government of Ethiopia's counterterrorism efforts focused on fighting al-Shabaab in Somalia and pursuing potential threats in Ethiopia. In 2015, the Government of Ethiopia collaborated with the United States on regional security issues and participated in capacity building trainings.

In April, the Government of Ethiopia denounced the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in response to a video released by ISIL in Libya that showed the beheading of 30 Ethiopian migrants. In October, the Government of Ethiopia arrested 20 Ethiopians alleged to support ISIL, which marked the first time the Ethiopian government arrested alleged ISILsupporters.

On December 11, an unknown attacker threw a hand grenade at a crowd that injured about 10 outside the Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa. The motive and other details of the attack were unclear.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Government of Ethiopia uses the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP), implemented in 2009, to prosecute crimes associated with terrorist activity. It also continued to use the ATP, however, to detain and prosecute journalists, opposition figures, and activists – including Muslim activists, releasing some but also making new arrests during the year. However, prosecutors are increasingly focusing on evidence-based prosecutions. Prior to the court reaching a decision, the prosecution examined its evidence against five Zone 9 bloggers and dismissed the cases for lack of sufficient evidence in July.

The ENDF, the Ethiopian Federal Police (EFP), Ethiopian intelligence, and regional special police worked successfully to block al-Shabaab attacks in Ethiopia. The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), which had broad authority for intelligence, border security, and criminal investigation, was responsible for overall counterterrorism management in coordination with the ENDF and EFP. The three security organizations comprise the Ethiopian Task Force for Counterterrorism, a federal-level committee to coordinate counterterrorism efforts. NISS facilitated some coordination with the United States.

Border security was a persistent concern for the Government of Ethiopia, and the government worked to tighten border controls with Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan. Ethiopia employed the Terrorist Interdiction Program's Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) to conduct traveler screening and watchlisting at airports and other points of entry.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Ethiopia is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body, and its mutual evaluation was adopted by that body in March 2015. Ethiopia has yet to finalize its National Risk Assessment for money laundering and terrorism finance. The Government of Ethiopia's poor recordkeeping system in general, and lack of centralized law enforcement records in particular, hindered the country's ability to identify and investigate trends in money laundering and terrorism financing. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Ethiopia prioritized countering violent extremism initiatives in 2015, which included participating in theSeptember Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York. The Government of Ethiopia adopted strategies and programs to counter violent extremism, the most noteworthy of which was the Growth and Transformation Plan II, a five-year plan that seeks to address the socio-economic factors that terrorists exploit for recruitment. The Government of

Ethiopia planned to support the CVE Center for Excellence in Djibouti to discuss prevention and counter-messaging strategies.

At the same time, the Government of Ethiopia's continued restrictions on funding to civil society and NGOs under the Charities and Societies Proclamation limited NGO activity – including countering violent extremism programming targeting at-risk youth and engaging communities and credible leaders.

International and Regional Cooperation: The Government of Ethiopia participated in AU-led counterterrorism efforts as part of AMISOM forces in Somalia. At the AU, Ethiopia participated in counterterrorism-related efforts. Ethiopia is chair member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and participated in its counterterrorism programs and trainings; and the IGAD Security Sector Program, which builds the capacity of criminal justice officials in the region to implement rule of law-based approaches to preventing and responding to terrorism.

The Government of Ethiopia also supported counterterrorism efforts in Somalia with the Somali National Army (SNA) and other regional security initiatives. In multilateral efforts against terrorism, the Government of Ethiopia generally supported international directives that sought to stem terrorism, including IGAD's efforts to encourage the dissemination of information concerning cross-border terrorist activity. Ethiopia participated in the inaugural meeting of the Border Security Initiative, which was held in Morocco under the auspices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. Ethiopia is an active member of the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism.

KENYA

Overview: Kenya is a strong partner of the United States in the fight against terrorism throughout East Africa. Kenya faced an ongoing terrorist threat from the Somalia-based terrorist group al-Shabaab, against which the Kenya Defense Forces have engaged in military operations in Somalia since 2011 as part of the African Union Forces in Somalia (AMISOM). Kenya continued to face serious terrorism challenges within its own borders in 2015. Most notably, the April al-Shabaab attack on Garissa University College killed at least 147, mostly students, and there were other fatal attacks, particularly in Mandera, Garissa, and Lamu counties near the border with Somalia. There were no major terrorist incidents in Kenya's two largest cities, Nairobi and Mombasa. Reports of violations of human rights by Kenya's police and military forces during counterterrorism operations continued, including allegations of extra-judicial killings, disappearances, and torture.

Kenyan officials cooperated closely with the United States and other partner nations on counterterrorism issues, including investigating and prosecuting terrorism cases. Kenya is one of six countries participating in the President's Security Governance Initiative (SGI) announced at the 2014 U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit. SGI focuses on the management, oversight, and accountability of the security sector at the institutional level. In Kenya, SGI program priorities include border security and management, administration of justice, and police human resource management.

The Kenyan government focused increased attention on preventing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, including Kenyans and other nationals, to join al-Shabaab in Somalia, as well as on

Kenyan national fighters returning from abroad. Kenyan officials and civil society representatives participated in global events focusing on countering violent extremism and stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, including the February White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremismand the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism that took place on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September; both events were hosted by President Obama. The Kenyan government also fulfilled its pledge to host a regional CVE conference, which took place in June.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The April al-Shabaab attack on Garissa University College left at least 147 people dead, most of them students, more than twice the death toll of the 2013 al-Shabaab attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi. The attack in Garissa was the worst single terrorist incident in Kenya since the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.

Mandera, Garissa, and Lamu counties near the border with Somalia all experienced multiple terrorist incidents during 2015. In July, presumed al-Shabaab attacks killed 14 people near a military camp and 11 quarry workers in Mandera County, and five people in a firebomb attack on a vehicle in Lamu County.

In other incidents, al-Shabaab fighters temporarily took over small villages in Kenya near the Somali border and threatened villagers. There were no major terrorist incidents in Nairobi or Mombasa. This was significant given a number of very high profile international events that took place in Kenya over the year, including the visits of President Obama and Pope Francis, as well as Kenya's hosting of the Global Entrepreneurship Summit and the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Nairobi.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Kenya's 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2011 Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act, and 2010 Prevention of Organized Crime Act together provide a strong legal framework under which to prosecute acts of terrorism. In late 2014, President Uhuru Kenyatta signed into law the Security Laws (Amendment) Act of 2014 (SLAA), a set of provisions that altered 20 existing laws to further strengthen Kenya's legislative framework to fight terrorism. Positive steps contained in the SLAA include the criminalization of participating in terrorist training, laying out the foundation for a coordinated border control agency, strengthening the mandate of Kenya's National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), and broadening evidentiary standards to allow greater use of electronic evidence and recorded testimony in terrorism prosecutions. Civil society groups, the political opposition, and the Commission on Human Rights contested several provisions of the SLAA, including those that affected freedom of speech, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the rights of the accused and refugees, arguing they violated constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties and contravened Kenya's international obligations. In February 2015, the High Court struck down eight provisions of the SLAA as unconstitutional.

The Kenyan judiciary demonstrated independence, exemplified by the actions of the High Court in relation to the SLAA, and competence in cases related to terrorism. However, the judiciary remained hampered by a lack of sufficient procedures to allow the effective use of plea agreements, cooperation agreements, electronic evidence, and other undercover investigative tools. Allegations of corruption in the judiciary, including in the High Court, have persisted.

In April, in the aftermath of the Garissa University College attack, the Inspector General of National Police Service released via the official Kenya Gazette a list naming 87 individuals and organizations, including financial institutions and NGOs, suspected of associating with terrorist organizations. Following the Gazette notice, the Central Bank issued orders to freeze the funds of those organizations and individuals and the NGO Coordination Board took steps to cancel the licenses of three NGOs: human rights groups Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) and Haki Africa, as well as the Agency for Peace and Development (APD). All three organizations challenged the deregistration decisions in court. In June, 13 money transfer organizations mainly serving the Somali community included in the Gazette Notice were reinstated by presidential decree. In September, authorities re-registered APD. In November, Haki Africa and MUHURI succeeded in a legal challenge to their inclusion in the list and the Kenyan High Court ruled that their funds should be unfrozen.

In line with the security sector reorganization outlined in the 2010 Kenyan Constitution, the Government of Kenya divided counterterrorism functions among the three branches of the National Police Service – the Kenya Police [including the paramilitary General Service Unit (GSU)], the Directorate of Criminal Investigations [including the investigative Anti-Terrorism Police Unit], and the Administration Police [including the Rural Border Patrol Unit] – as well as non-police agencies such as the National Intelligence Service and elements of the Kenya Defense Forces. Operational effectiveness remained impeded by limited interagency coordination, resources, and training, as well as corruption among some personnel and unclear command and control. The response to the attack at Garissa University College, while slowed by command, control, and logistics support issues, exhibited better interagency coordination between police and military elements than the 2013 Westgate attack, and police tactical units resolved the situation swiftly once deployed.

Kenyan security and justice sector officials participated in a range of U.S. government-sponsored capacity-building programs funded and implemented by the U.S. Departments of State, Homeland Security, Justice, and Defense. These programs included training in crisis response, border operations, investigations, and prosecutions. Notable among these was the Department of State's second annual East Africa Joint Operations Capstone exercise, a month-long crisis response training series hosted in Kenya for Kenyan, Ugandan, and Tanzanian law enforcement personnel; the exercise culminated in a large-scale simulation of a response to a terrorist incident, including a cross-border pursuit that also featured community engagement and human rights-related issues.

Border security remained a challenge for Kenya due to its vast, sparsely populated border regions and largely uncontrolled borders. This was exacerbated by security agency and other government resource gaps and corruption at multiple levels. However, there were signs of improved interagency cooperation, exemplified by the successful joint police-military-intelligence operation to rescue a kidnapped aid worker 30 km inside Somalia in October.

Kenyan officials emphasized the importance and challenges of border security in their ongoing discussions with U.S. counterparts, particularly in the context of the SGI, which has included successful exchange visits with U.S. border security officials that helped increase Kenyan government interagency cooperation on border security, leading to the development of a draft Kenyan government border-control strategy. A lack of capacity on border security and inadequate systems of national identification hampered law enforcement agencies' ability to

identify and detain potential terrorists entering and leaving Kenya. Terrorist screening watchlists, biographic and biometric screening, and other measures were largely in place at major Kenyan ports of entry, but screening procedures were sometimes inconsistently or minimally applied, particularly at smaller border posts. Large stretches of the Kenya's land borders are relatively uncontrolled. Kenya continued its partnership with the United States to strengthen Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) border controls at major ports of entry.

The Kenyan government focused increased attention on preventing the transit of foreign terrorist fighters, including Kenyan nationals attempting to join al-Shabaab in Somalia, as well as Kenyan national fighters returning to the country from abroad. A high-level Kenyan government delegation and civil society representatives participated in the September Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkon the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), as well as participated in other UNGA side events regarding foreign terrorist fighters.

Kenyan security services detected and deterred terrorist plots during 2015 and responded to dozens of claimed, or presumed, terrorism-related incidents. Kenyan law enforcement did not repeat the widely-criticized large-scale security operations of 2014 that appeared to target communities. Nonetheless, Kenyan military, paramilitary, and police forces were accused of serious abuses. A draft report by the government-funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights implicated Kenyan security forces in 25 extrajudicial killings and the disappearances of 81 civilians. The government took limited steps to address cases of alleged unlawful killings by security force members. Kenya's Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) continued to make progress in fulfilling its mandate by investigating multiple cases of police misconduct and referring more than 20 of these to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

At the end of 2015, several major terrorism cases remained ongoing, including the trial of four Kenyans and one Tanzanian charged in June in connection with the Garissa University College attack. That trial was postponed in August for administrative reasons, and had not resumed by year's end. In December, the Mombasa High Court sentenced British terrorist suspect Jermaine Grant to nine years on charges related to trying to obtain Kenyan citizenship illegally. At the end of the year, Grant still faced separate explosives-related charges in a second, ongoing trial.

Kenyan law enforcement agencies worked with regional organizations and the broader international community, including the United States, to increase its counterterrorism capacity and to secure land, sea, and air borders. Kenyan law enforcement has benefited from U.S.-funded trainings including, for example, those to increase its capacity to respond to incidents of terrorism and improve the capacity of airport security staff to better recognize man portable air defense systems (MANPADs).

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Kenya is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Kenyan government is working to implement relevant UN Security Council Resolutions to restrict terrorism financing. Kenya made further progress in implementing its anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism regime in 2015 following its 2014 removal from the FATF's continuing monitoring process.

Kenya's Financial Reporting Center (FRC) made progress in becoming fully operational and continued to build its capacity to monitor the formal financial system. The organization has not yet appointed a permanent director. The FRC remained hampered by a lack of essential resources and faced challenges meeting minimum staffing, physical security, and information technology requirements. The FRC also lacks an electronic reporting system for suspicious transactions. The Central Bank of Kenya continued to encourage Kenyan citizens and residents to use the formal financial sector, which is subject to regulatory oversight and would increase overall financial transaction integrity, though use of unregulated informal financial mechanisms, including *hawalas,* continued.

Kenya's NGO Coordination Board came under fire in October for announcing the de-registration of more than 900 civil society organizations for allegedly failing to comply with mandated NGO financial reporting requirements. Following intense criticism from NGOs and others, including prominent politicians, the government reversed its decision and gave the groups more time to comply. The Kenyan government made a similar move to deregister more than 500 NGOS in 2014, which also was reversed following strong civil and political opposition.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes:* http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: During 2015, the Kenyan government improved its engagement with civil society, particularly communities at risk of radicalization in the northeast of the country. It also increased its efforts and coordination with international partners to advance CVE efforts, including prevention of radicalization, counter-messaging, and the reintegration of foreign terrorist fighter returnees. The government made some gains in CVE efforts, including the large-scale redeployment of ethnic Somali police officers to their home counties in Northeast Kenya to improve public confidence in the police with communities at risk of radicalization. The government also undertook some small-scale efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate former al-Shabaab fighters, facilitators and sympathizers, but efforts were constrained by the lack of a defined strategy, clear legal framework, or supportive public messaging. Senior Kenyan officials and civil society representatives participated in the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremismin February and the Kenyan government hosted a regional CVE conference in June. Kenyan civil society organizations worked to address the drivers of radicalization and violent extremism in Kenya, often with assistance from the United States and other international partners.

International and Regional Cooperation: Kenya is an active member of the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism and the AU, including on the Peace and Security Committee, and as a troop-contributing country to the African Union Mission in Somalia. Kenya remains engaged with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and hosted an IGAD Security Sector Program validation workshop on a countering violent extremism study in October. Although not a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), Kenya is an active participant in GCTF activities, agreed to serve as a pilot country for the GCTF-endorsed International CT/CVE Clearinghouse Mechanism, and hosted a GCTF Border Security Initiative workshop for the Horn of Africa in December. Kenya also organized and hosted a regional CVE conference as a follow-up to the White House February CVE Summit. These events were

Kenya's major contribution to regional capacity building. In December, Kenya was selected as a beneficiary of the Global Community Engagement and Resiliency Fund.

MALI

Overview: The Government of Mali remained a willing U.S. counterterrorism partner despite serious challenges. Continued terrorist activity spread beyond Mali's largely ungoverned northern regions, and lackluster implementation of the June peace accord between the Malian government and two coalitions of armed groups hampered the return of public services and security to the north. Mali continued to rely heavily on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and French forces to provide a measure of stability and security to the northern regions. As the government and northern armed political movements slowly began to implement the peace accord from October to December, terrorist groups increased their attacks on all parties to the accord, including former rebel groups with which they had briefly allied. There was also a growing concern about terrorist activities in the central and southern regions.

The French military continued its integrated counterterrorism mission for the Sahel region under Operation Barkhane, based out of Chad. In cooperation with Malian forces, Barkhane launched numerous operations to degrade the remaining violent extremist elements operating in northern Mali, including al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Murabitoun (AMB), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), the Macina Liberation Front (MLF), and Ansar al-Dine (AAD). Domestic and international security forces believed most, if not all of these groups, were coordinating their efforts. Other significant counterterrorism efforts included Operation Seno, which the Malian military launched in October to combat terrorism and banditry in the Mopti Region. MINUSMA consolidated its northern presence in 2015, particularly in the Kidal region, and continued its work with the Malian government and signatory armed groups to facilitate the redeployment of Malian administrators and security forces to the north.

Despite significant security improvements in some parts of the northern region, terrorist groups remained active, exploiting the lack of effective governmental control. Troop drawdowns linked to the reconfiguration of French military operations added to the lack of security. IEDs and land mines were used for the majority of attacks against UN peacekeepers. MINUSMA noted an approximate 42 percent increase in such attacks from January to November, compared to the same period in 2014.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: AQIM, MUJAO, AMB, and AAD continued to conduct terrorist attacks in 2015, primarily targeting international and Malian military forces. In January, attacks by violent Islamist extremist groups began moving beyond the traditional conflict zone in the north to the center and south of the country. Terrorist incidents included:

- On March 6, an attack later claimed by AMB killed five civilians at La Terrasse nightclub in Bamako.
- A July 2 attack claimed by AQIM on the Goundam Road near Timbuktu killed six Burkinabe soldiers with the MINUSMA peacekeeping mission and injured five others.
- AMB and MLF claimed responsibility for an assault on the Byblos Hotel in Sevare near the Mopti airport that took place August 7-8. The attack resulted in the deaths of five civilians and four Malian soldiers.

- AQIM, AMB, AAD, and MLF all claimed responsibility for a November 20 attack on the Radisson Hotel in Bamako that resulted in the deaths of 19 civilians, including one U.S. citizen.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Implementation of Mali's new penal code of 2013, intended to help counter terrorism and transnational organized crime, continued during 2015. The judiciary prosecuted one terrorism-related case during the year. The National Assembly passed a law on November 9 that defined the composition, structure, and functions of a special judicial unit focused on the fight against terrorism and transnational crime. Created in 2013 and staffed since 2014, the now fully-established unit took the lead in the investigation into the November 20 attack on the Radisson hotel.

Malian security forces and law enforcement responsible for counterterrorism efforts participated in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program and DoD-facilitated trainings that included – but were not limited to – border security, crisis management, and police reform and effectiveness. The Malian Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and police agencies worked directly with the United States on efficient practices and counterterrorism-related training. More than 100 members of the National Police and Gendarmerie participated in a February IED recognition course that was held in Bamako and Mopti. The courses were sponsored by the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program and funded by the Department of State. The international team of instructors included officials from the FBI, UN, and the EU. Select Malian counterterrorism officials also participated in trainings conducted under the auspices of the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law. Training topics included preventing and denying the benefits of kidnapping for ransom, enhancing the role of parliamentarians in building effective counterterrorism systems, and countering foreign terrorist fighters.

The Malian Armed Forces and Air Force under the Ministry of Defense (MOD) remained the primary entities responsible for securing Mali against terrorist threats. The General Directorate of State Security under the Ministry of Security had the authority to investigate and detain persons for terrorism offenses. There were no specialized law enforcement units to conduct investigations, respond to crises, or ensure border security. Missions between law enforcement and military units that have a counterterrorism mission lacked delineation and coordination. Law enforcement units had a poor record on accountability and respect for human rights.

Although Mali has basic border security enforcement mechanisms, law enforcement units lacked capacity, training, and the necessary equipment to secure Mali's porous borders. The United States worked with the Malian security forces at the Senou International Airport to expand the U.S.-funded Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) program to the newly installed VIP terminal. The gendarmerie, which reports to both the MOD and the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), and the national border police, which reports to theMOI, both provide paramilitary support to prevent and deter criminal activity at borders. Customs officials under the Ministry of Economy and Finance monitor the flow of goods and enforce customs laws at borders and ports of entry. Mali receives INTERPOL notices, but the INTERPOL database is unavailable at some points of entry into Mali.

Customs officials use travel forms to collect biographical information from travelers at airports and manifests for information on goods transiting borders. When conducting investigations,

customs officials and border police compare the biographic data on these forms against travel documents and the manifests against goods possessed. The exit and entry stamps used by border officials are inconsistent in size and shape, undermining efforts to authenticate travel documents.

In May 2012, Mali introduced an updated machine-readable passport linked to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Mali's passports, including the diplomatic and official versions, now incorporate additional security measures, including micro-printing, UV features, and a full-color digital photo. Unfortunately, many of the relatively sophisticated anti-fraud characteristics of the new Malian passport are rendered moot by the relative ease with which imposters can obtain fraudulent documents, such as birth and marriage certificates (which are still chiefly handwritten or typed on carbon paper, then tracked via municipal ledgers that are also handwritten).

Over the course of the year, the government opened 69 terrorism-related cases and detained 30 people for terrorism-related crimes. On June 15, the Malian courts sentenced Boubacar Abdou Maiga to two years in prison for his association with MUJAO and for killing one person. As in 2014, resource constraints, a lack of training in investigative techniques, and inexperience with trying terrorism cases continued to plague a weak judicial system.

Mali was very cooperative in working with the United States to prevent acts of terrorism against U.S. citizens in the country. The Malian judicial system welcomed the cooperation of U.S. law enforcement agencies in the investigation into the November 20 attack on the Radisson Hotel in which one U.S. citizen was killed. An Antiterrorism Assistance/Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response team of 24 National Guard members were activated in October as a Quick Reaction Force for Embassy Bamako in the event of another crisis.

The Malian military continued to struggle with command-and-control capacity. It remained insufficiently resourced and lacked personnel trained in effective law enforcement, counterterrorism investigative techniques, and enhanced border security operations. An interagency working group, within the Ministry of Internal Security and Civilian Protection, first conceived in 2013 and designed to reform the security sector, had not moved beyond the discussion phase at the end of 2015. MINUSMA continued to work with the government throughout 2015 to move this initiative from discussion to action.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Mali is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Mali's financial intelligence unit, the Cellule Nationale de Traitement des Informations Financières (CENTIF-Mali), is a member of the Egmont Group.

Seizure of assets must first be authorized by a judge within the judicial unit focused on the fight against terrorism and trans-border crime. Assets can be frozen indefinitely during the investigation period. Coordination between investigative agencies is poor, however, and not all suspected cases make it to court.

The majority of transactions in Mali are cash-based and difficult to regulate given resource constraints. Non-financial businesses and professions are not subject to customer due diligence requirements. Significant challenges to the CENTIF-Mali include a lack of training – especially for investigators who handle terrorism financing cases – as well as a lack of

resourcestoadequately publicize regulations and provide training for bank and public sector employees outside of Bamako.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: While Mali has no official countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy in place, the Ministry of National Reconciliation developed a National Reconciliation Policy in 2014 that references the need to delegitimize violent extremist ideologies and promote social cohesion between communities. CVE considerations were also integrated into Mali's "Program for Accelerated Development in the Northern Regions," as well as a draft decentralization policy. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for working with the High Islamic Council and other religious associations to promote moderate Islam and maintain a secular state. Conversely, efforts to prevent increased radicalism and recruitment by violent extremist groups were hindered by the absence of Malian government control in much of the north.

International and Regional Cooperation: Mali remained active in regional organizations and international bodies including the Economic Community of West African States, the UN, and the AU. Mali remained active in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and also participated in Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) events. In an effort to implement the GCTF good practices on foreign terrorist fighters, Mali self-selected to serve as an initial pilot country for a Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) funding mechanism that emphasizes sustainability for local organizations, while supporting national Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategies and convening multiple stakeholders to provide relevant expertise and enable communities to develop localized CVE responses.

At a November 20 meeting in Chad, the heads of state of the G-5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad,Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) announced plans to create a joint regional force and military school. The Malian military participated in multinational counterterrorism operations in 2015, including with Operation Barkhane and the Mauritanian military. The AU created a follow-up and support group for the political and security situation in Mali and has held six meetings in Mali with international partners on enhancing international cooperation to bring political stability and security in Mali. In his address to the 2015 UN General Assembly, President Keita called on the international community to help rid the Sahel region of terrorism. He also expressed concern about the spread of terrorist organizations, including ISIL, saying such challenges called attention to the urgent need to reform the UN's peacekeeping doctrine.

MAURITANIA

Overview: Mauritania remained a key regional counterterrorism partner in 2015. The Mauritanian government actively and effectively countered terrorism, building on an approach that hinges on improving the capacity of security forces and securing the country's borders. As in years past, the Mauritanian authorities cooperated with U.S. counterterrorism efforts and took advantage of opportunities to participate in U.S.-sponsored training on counterterrorism tactics and techniques.

Mauritania is not a safe haven for terrorists or terrorist groups, although regions in the interior are imperfectly monitored as a result of their geographic isolation from population centers and inhospitable desert conditions. Al-Murabitoun and similar violent Islamist extremist groups have a presence in the region, although al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) remained the leading terrorist threat to Mauritania.

Government authorities were alert to the threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Mauritania, as evidenced by a series of arrests of subjects suspected of recruiting for, or those purporting to swear allegiance to the group. Mauritanian political and religious personalities periodically condemned ISIL's aims, methods, and activities in their public statements.

The Mauritanian government continued to develop its counterterrorism capabilities in order to implement UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015), and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Mauritania's counterterrorism legal framework is relatively new. Enacted in 2010, the national counterterrorism laws define terrorism as a criminal act, describe court procedure in terrorism cases, and prescribe punishment for perpetrators. The Mauritanian government continued to send prosecutors and investigative magistrates to terrorism prosecution training organized by the United States through the Department of Justice (DOJ) and other international partners. On November 3, Mauritanian representatives attended a DOJ workshop in Rabat, Morocco, focused on building the institutional architecture needed to combat transnational crime and terrorism through effective regional cooperation, mutual legal assistance, and extradition laws.

Although Mauritanian security forces successfully deterred or prevented acts of terrorism in 2015, they did not face any great tests of capacity. Mauritania's National Gendarmerie, a paramilitary police agency, and its National Security Directorate, which falls under the Ministry of Interior, were the primary law enforcement units performing counterterrorism functions. Cooperation and information sharing between the two organizations occurred sporadically.

Mauritania is committed to improving its counterterrorism capacity. Throughout the year, security forces personnel participated in eight separate courses funded by the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program.

In early December in Nouadhibou, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Mauritanian Ministry of Justice, the UN Development Program, and the French Cooperation Agency co-sponsored a seminar aimed at strengthening the criminal justice system in the northern regions of Mauritania. Over three days, U.S. experts and Mauritanian practitioners discussed best practices in the fight against organized crime and the ways to improve international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Border security is a priority of the Mauritanian government, yet it remained far from perfect in 2015 due to a lack of capacity and a standing policy that accords responsibility for different sections of the country's long land borders to different formations of the security forces. Mauritania's border forces employ biometric screening capabilities at some – but not all – ports of entry. Information-sharing efforts within the government and with other countries are nascent.

Mauritanian authorities arrested terrorist suspects in 2015. On April 20,a former member of al-Qa'ida (AQ), Abdul Rahman Ould Mohamed Hussein (alias Younis Al Mauritanie), was sentenced to 20 years after being convicted on terrorism-related charges. Younis was born in Saudi Arabia and joined AQ in 2001, where he was arrested by Pakistani authorities and transferred to Mauritania in 2011.

On June 16, a Nouakchott court convicted three young men – Mohamed Ould Ely Lasfar, Yacoub Ould Miyah Ould Balah, and Bukhari Ould Dahane – to 10, seven, and five years in prison, respectively, for belonging to an organization committed to performing terrorist crimes, incitement to violence, the use of religious symbols in a terrorist organization, and providing a meeting place for people involved in a terrorist organization.

On August 3, Mauritanian authorities released Sanda Ould Bounama, alias Sidi Mohamed Ould Bouama, a former spokesman of terrorist group Ansar al-Dine. Bounama had been held under an international arrest warrant issued on February 8, 2013 by a Malian court.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Mauritania is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body, and maintained observer status within the Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa. The Financial Information Analysis Commission is Mauritania's financial intelligence unit, which includes representatives of several ministries and agencies working together to counter financial crimes.In January, the Mauritanian government submitted to parliament a draft amendment to the 2005 law on money laundering and terrorism financing that aimed to harmonize legislation with its obligations under international law, including the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. Although passed by the legislature, this bill had not been signed into law at year's end.

Although legislation regulating alternative remittances exists, the Mauritanian government neither has the resources to monitor sizable flows of funds through the informal *hawala* money transfer system, nor considers doing so a priority.Terrorism financing is difficult to detect in Mauritania because of the informal nature of much of the economy and speculation that large amounts of drug money pass through the economy.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The government continued to manage programs designed to counter violent extremism and offer alternatives to "at-risk" individuals. For example, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Education inaugurated 17 pilot *mahadras* for 2015. Each *mahadra* supports a workforce of at least 30 students (boys and girls) who each receive a monthly grant of approximately US $34. The government also continued to collaborate with independent Islamic religious organizations to promote moderation, sponsoring radio and television programming on the themes of temperance in Islam, and paying monthly stipends to imams who fulfilled the government's selection criteria.

The government coordinated with the Mauritanian Institute for Strategic Studies to host a regional conference entitled, "The Culture of Peace and Moderation as a Way to Counter Violent Extremism: the Mauritanian Approach," in Nouakchott on August 19-20. Approximately 200 representatives from governments in West Africa and the Sahel and Maghreb regions, multilateral bodies, faith-based organizations, the international donor community, and other civil society members attended the conference. Building on many of the core themes of the February White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, the conference explored ways to research and identify the tools necessary to understand the local drivers of violent extremism; how to engage the whole-of-society in building and securing resilient communities by addressing social, political, and economic grievances; how to assess the factors that contribute to youth involvement in violent extremism; and how to evaluate the roles civil society, youth, women, and faith-based leaders can play in partnership with local and national governments to prevent violent extremism

International and Regional Cooperation: Mauritania remains an active member of the UN, the AU, and the Sahel G-5, a regional cooperation partnership. The G-5 Sahel was created in February 2014 to enable region-wide collaboration on the Sahel-Sahara region's political and security situation, and Mauritania participated in G-5 Sahel meetings held among the five member countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, along with representatives of the AU, UN, the Economic Community of West African States, the EU, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.Mauritania is also an active member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

NIGER

Overview: In 2015, Boko Haram repeatedly crossed the border from Nigeria to launch multiple attacks in the Diffa Region of Niger, leading to numerous civilian and security forces deaths. Additionally, hundreds of Nigerian soldiers and tens of thousands of displaced persons fleeing from Boko Haram crossed into Niger, further adding to tensions in Diffa. The Government of Niger deployed additional military and law enforcement resources to this area.

Suspected members of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and other terrorist organizations continued to transit through the vast northern part of Niger in the areas bordering Algeria, Chad, Libya, and Mali. Weapons and contraband were moved through these areas, some of which were interdicted by the Nigerien military. During 2015, using foreign assistance, the Nigerien military continued to increase its capability to patrol, collect information, and interdict terrorists in the north.

Niger remained an outspoken opponent of terrorism in the region, continued to cooperate with international partners – including the United States – and received substantial international counterterrorism assistance. Niger is one of six countries participating in President Obama's Security Governance Initiative (SGI). The United States and Niger signed a Joint Country Action Plan for SGI in October 2015, focusing on developing a national security review and strategic framework, aligning existing human and material resources more efficiently to address short- and long-term security needs, and external communications.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: There were dozens of localized attacks in the Diffa Region, many leading to loss of life, injury, and loss of property. Attacks included:

- On February 6, Boko Haram terrorists attacked Diffa town and Bosso town in Diffa; one civilian was killed.
- On September 25, approximately 10 Boko Haram terrorists attacked N'Gourtouwa village in Diffa, killing 15 villagers, including the village chief.
- On October 4, four individuals detonated suicide bombs in two locations near Diffa town, killing five civilians and one police officer.
- On October 27, Boko Haram terrorists killed 13 civilians in the village of Ala in Diffa.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Niger's laws criminalize acts of terrorism consistent with international instruments on terrorism. Recent amendments to the code of criminal procedure created a specialized counterterrorism jurisdiction and authorized stronger investigative techniques. Niger's interagency counterterrorism investigative entity, the Central Service for the Fight against Terrorism (SCLCT), includes a separate operational cell in the regional capital of Diffa, where the majority of terrorist attacks occur.

The law enforcement and security services of Niger were actively engaged in detecting, deterring, and preventing acts of terrorism in Nigerien territory. A lack of sufficient manpower, funding, and equipment made this more difficult, however. Counterterrorism investigations in Niger are primarily the responsibility of the SCLCT, which is made up of representatives from Niger's three primary law enforcement organizations: the National Police, the National Guard, and the Gendarmerie. Information sharing occurred among the law enforcement agencies of SCLCT.

Niger's long borders and areas of harsh terrain make effective border security a challenge, specifically in the north along the borders with Algeria, Libya, and Mali. These borders are very difficult to secure and patrol, and are often exploited by smugglers. Niger attempted to improve its border security by increasing the number of border control facilities and requesting assistance from partners to construct and equip facilities. Niger continued to use rudimentary terrorism watchlists that it shares with the security services and at border checkpoints, although the lists were not frequently updated. The ability to conduct biographic and/or biometric screening remained limited to Niamey's international airport and one border control point. Niger's air surveillance capability increased. Niger has the ability to collect advance Passenger Name Records and is able to use these records in counterterrorism efforts.

Information sharing within the Government of Niger is sometimes slow between services due to stove-piping or a lack of communications equipment. Resource constraints across the spectrum of basic needs, such as electricity, radios, reliable vehicles, computers, technology, and personnel, along with resource constraints within the Ministries of Justice and Interior, made it difficult for the Government of Niger to provide strong law enforcement and border security. Additionally, effective whole-of-government coordination in the fight against terrorism continued to present challenges, and capacity remained lacking in areas such as proactive investigations and non-confession-based prosecutions.

Throughout 2015, the SCLCT arrested terrorist suspects on charges that included planning acts of terrorism, association with a terrorist organization, recruitment, and terrorism financing. At year's end, approximately 1,200 terrorism suspects were detained in Niger awaiting trial, including at least 70 minors. Most of the cases were under review by investigating judges.

Niger continued to receive counterterrorism assistance from a variety of international partners, including the United States, the EU, France, and the UN. Niger continued to permit French forces to be based in Niamey, as well as in other locations to conduct operations such as ground and air surveillance. The United States provided terrorism assistance to Nigerien law enforcement – primarily through the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, a Resident Legal Advisor from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Global Security Contingency Fund, a joint interagency program between the Departments of Defense, Justice, and State.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Niger is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Niger's porous borders and historical trafficking routes make it easy for terrorists to transfer large sums of cash. At year's end, suspected AQIM and Boko Haram members were awaiting trial on charges of terrorism financing. In 2015, Niger's financial intelligence unit, CENTIF,joined the Egmont Group. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Niger's strategy to counter violent extremism included the Sahel-Sahara Development and Security Strategy (SDSS), which aimed to improve security through access to economic opportunities and employment, especially for youth; access to basic social services; good governance at the community and local authority level; and reintegration of forced returnees from Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Libya, and Nigeria. The SDSS launched four years ago, but it was not fully funded; therefore, results were limited.

Niger's SDSS, supported by USAID's Peace through Development II program, helped reduce the risk of instability and increased resiliency to violent extremism through such activities as strengthening moderate, non-extremist voices through radio, social media, and civic education; and working with religious leaders who promote religious tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflict.

The Resilient Voices program supported credible Nigerien voices to promote peace, tolerance, and respect for Nigerien identity. In 2015, the Ministry of Justice's Director of Reinsertion and Rehabilitation worked with the DOJ Resident Legal Advisor to identify and address needs in the prison system, including the lack of programs that focused specifically on rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners into mainstream society.

International and Regional Cooperation: Niger supported the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali by contributing an infantry battalion. Additionally, Niger worked with Algeria, Mali, and Mauritania at the General Staff Joint Operations Committee in Tamanrasset, Algeria. Niger participates in a judicial cooperation organization, the Sahel Judicial Platform, with other countries in the region.

Niger increased its efforts to improve joint patrols and operations with Algeria, conducted joint patrols with Chad and Nigeria, and increased its cooperation with Lake Chad Basin Commission member countries to fight against Boko Haram. Nigerien officials hosted and attended multiple international meetings concerning international efforts to counter the threat of Boko Haram.

Niger is a member of and contributes troops to the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) along with Benin, Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria.

Niger is an active member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. Nigerien officials continued to participate actively in regional programs organized by the Global Counterterrorism Forum Sahel and Rule of Law Working Groups. Niger contributed forces to regional efforts to fight Boko Haram via the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force

The G-5 Sahel was created in February 2014 to enable region-wide collaboration on the Sahel-Sahara region's political and security situation, and Niger participated in G-5 Sahel meetings held among the five member countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, along with representatives of the AU, UN, the Economic Community of West African States, the EU, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

NIGERIA

Overview: Boko Haram continued to carry out kidnappings, killings, bombings, and attacks on civilian and military targets in northern Nigeria, resulting in thousands of deaths, injuries, and significant destruction of property in 2015. The states where attacks occurred most frequently were in Nigeria's northeast, particularly Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states. Attacks were also launched in Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Niger, Plateau, and Taraba states; and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Nigeria and its neighboring countries continued their military counter-offensive, forcing the terrorist group to abandon territories it had once controlled. In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); ISIL subsequently accepted Boko Haram's pledge. While Nigeria and regional partners have made progress in driving Boko Haram from much of the territory it held in northern Nigeria, the group kept control over some territory and maintained its ability to carry out asymmetric attacks. Boko Haram increased its use of suicide bombings against civilian targets, including places of worship, markets, and bus stations. Throughout the year, suspected Boko Haram members killed Nigerian security officials and civilians of both the Islamic and Christian faiths.

The Nigerian government took a number of steps to increase counter-Boko Haram efforts in 2015. Nigeria worked with other Boko Haram-affected neighbors to form and lead the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that facilitated collaboration and coordination on counter-Boko Haram efforts. In cooperation with regional partners, Nigeria regained control over much of the territory in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states that had been captured by Boko Haram. Upon taking office in May, President Muhammadu Buhari ordered the military command relocated to the newly created Maiduguri Command and Control Center in Borno State. President Buhari gave the armed forces a deadline of the end of December to complete the conventional campaign against Boko Haram, although the Nigerian government acknowledged that this ultimatum was ambitious and asymmetric attacks would likely continue.

Over the course of the year, members of the Nigerian military reported they increasingly received the resources needed to carry out counter-Boko Haram operations once Buhari took office and made significant changes to military leadership. The state of emergency that provided the Government of Nigeria additional authorities to prosecute a military campaign against the Boko Haram insurgency expired in November 2014, but this did not have a notable negative impact on counter-Boko Haram operations. The Nigerian military, with help from its Lake Chad

Region partners, freed thousands of people who had been living in villages under Boko Haram control. Despite reports of multiple attempts at negotiations with Boko Haram, there was no progress in freeing the girls abducted by Boko Haram from Chibok in April 2014. By December, Boko Haram was increasingly confined to the Sambisa Forest area of southern Borno State, as the Nigerian military attempted to isolate Boko Haram while preparing to clear Boko Haram camps in the area.

The Nigerian government began to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons to their home communities, although often without providing adequate security. With international partners, the Nigerian government set up several institutions to coordinate the reconstruction of Boko Haram-affected areas in the Northeast. However, by the end of 2015 there was no evidence of a coordinated plan to restore civilian security in recaptured territories.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Although Boko Haram suffered setbacks in 2015, it withstood and adapted to the military offensive, and in just a few months managed a resurgence by returning to its previous practice of conducting asymmetric attacks on civilians, significantly escalating the number of suicide attacks in the region. In the span of two days in July, for example, Boko Haram attacked a mosque in Kano (Kano State) and a university in Zaria (Kaduna), and mounted mass-casualty attacks in Jos (Plateau), which included a suicide car bomb at a church, a suicide attack at a popular restaurant, and a rocket attack at a mosque. These three cities had previously been targeted by Boko Haram; they are outside of the majority ethnic-Kanuri parts of northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin region where Boko Haram's influence is strongest. There were more than 1,240 persons killed by terrorist attacks in Nigeria in 2015. Some of the more notable attacks are listed below:

- On February 24 at a Kano bus station in Kano State, 34 persons were killed by three suicide bombers.
- On March 6 in Maiduguri in Borno State, the Baga Fish market, mosque, and bus terminal were attacked with 54 persons killed.
- On July 5 in Jos in Plateau State, 51 were killed in a bombing of a mosque.
- On November 30 in Maigumeri LGA in Borno State, Boko Haram killed seven civilians and a soldier in Bam and Gajigana villages. They also abducted an unspecified number of teenage girls.
- Also on November 30 in Kano, Kano State, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on a Shiite Muslim procession that killed 22 people.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Nigeria's criminal law explicitly criminalizes terrorism, and the National Assembly has enacted the Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act of 2013 as Nigeria's major counterterrorism legislation. In May 2015, the Administration of Criminal Justice Act came into force; it regulates the procedure of all criminal investigations and trials (including terrorism cases) in the federal courts.

Several Nigerian government agencies performed counterterrorism functions, including the Department of State Security (DSS), the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), and the Ministry of Justice. The Nigerian military had primary responsibility for combating terrorism in northeast Nigeria. While the counterterrorism activities of these agencies and ministry were ostensibly coordinated by the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA), the level of interagency cooperation and information sharing was limited.

In 2015, the Nigerian government participated in or hosted several multilateral efforts. The Nigerian government participated in U.S. counterterrorism capacity-building programs under the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, including the training of NPF members in the detection and handling of IEDs, which increased the NPF's awareness and capacity to protect and preserve evidence from crime scenes of suspected terrorist acts. Through the Global Security Contingency Fund Counter-Boko Haram program, Nigerian police, customs officials, and immigration officers participated in interagency rural border patrol training to build the law enforcement sector's ability to use all agencies to tackle rural border security challenges in an effective manner. The Nigerian government worked with the FBI to investigate specific terrorism matters, predominantly through its DSS. The Nigerian government provided IED components to the FBI for analysis at the Terrorist Device Analysis Center; and ONSA, DSS, the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency, and NPF explosive ordnance and post-blast personnel, worked with FBI special agents and special agent bomb technicians. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and NPF also received crime-scene training relevant to counterterrorism investigations.

Border security responsibilities are shared among NPF, DSS, Customs, Immigration, and the military. Coordination among agencies is often determined at a local level. Cooperation and information sharing in the Northeast increased between the Immigration Service and the Nigerian Army. The Government of Nigeria instituted the collection of biometric data for passport applications of all Nigerian citizens. Screening at the ports of entry of major airports in Nigeria, including in Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt, continued to improve in 2015, with Passenger Name Records being collected in advance for commercial flights. The capacity of security forces to control land and maritime borders remained a challenge.

Nigerian implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2178, 2199, and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime continued to evolve as the Buhari administration has made national security a priority.

Significant law enforcement actions against terrorists and terrorist groups in 2015 included:

- Aminu Ogwuche, the alleged planner of the April 14, 2014 Nyanya motor park bombing, was arrested in Sudan and extradited to Nigeria.
- The case against Nigerians Abdullahi Mustapha Berende and Saidi Adewumi, charged under Section 5(1) 8 of the Terrorism Prevention Act of 2013 with terrorist recruitment remained pending at the end of 2015. A six-count charge by the Government of Nigeria stated the subjects traveled to Iran and rendered support to an Iran-based terrorist organization via provision of matériel and terrorism training on the use of firearms and other weapons. The two were said to have collected the sum of US $4000 and US $20,000 from the terrorist group to source and train terrorist-minded Nigerian English speakers.

Among the problems that deterred or hindered more effective law enforcement and border security by the Nigerian government were a lack of coordination and cooperation between Nigerian security agencies; a lack of biometrics collection systems and the requisite databases; corruption; misallocation of resources; the slow pace of the judicial system, including a lack of

timely arraignment of suspected terrorist detainees; and lack of sufficient training for prosecutors and judges to understand and carry out the Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2011 (as amended).

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Nigeria is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) is a member of the Egmont Group. However, the autonomy of the NFIU is still undecided, as the legislation that would grant the NFIU independence from the EFCC has not been signed into law by the end of 2015. In addition, the EFCC – the agency whose remit includes all financial crime investigations and which houses the financial investigative expertise – is often excluded from participating in terrorism investigations, and is thus unable to fully contribute. The Nigerian government froze and confiscated terrorist assets as designated by U.S. Executive Orders and by UNSCRs; however, delays sometimes occurred. The Nigerian government did not monitor non-profit organizations to prevent misuse and terrorism financing. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm

Countering Violent Extremism: In an effort to better equip local communities with the means to prevent and counter violent extremism, Nigeria agreed to serve as an initial pilot country for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). GCERF requires beneficiary countries to establish a multi-stakeholder "country support mechanism" that brings together government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector to enable communities to develop localized CVE responses. Nigeria also agreed to serve as a pilot country for the Global Counterterrorism Forum-endorsed International CT/CVE Clearinghouse Mechanism, which is being developed as a means to help countries and donors optimize civilian counterterrorism and CVE capacity-building programs. CVE efforts continued to be hindered by the security forces' harsh treatment of civilians, lack of trust between security services and communities, and lack of economic opportunities in the northeast.

An English language program to promote leadership, tolerance, and civic engagement was implemented to provide training of trainers – teachers and students – in Kano and Jos. English language clubs were also used to expand the teaching and themes of the program to youth in these states.

Dandal Kura, a shortwave radio program targeting northeastern Nigeria, continued to provide access to credible information for its listeners. *Dandal Kura*, which also uses a combination of high-tech and low-tech tools – including SMS, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, and a website – to reach and interact with its audience, has developed a tremendous following since it went live in January 2015.

International and Regional Cooperation: Nigeria concluded its term as an elected member of the UN Security Council on December 31, 2015. Throughout 2015, Nigeria participated in presidential and ministerial-level meetings to address insecurity in northeastern Nigeria. Dialogue between Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria focused on strengthening regional cooperation, both bilaterally and under the auspices of the Multi-National Joint Task Force.

In September, President Buhari led a delegation to participate in the UN General Assembly and the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York. Nigeria sought greater cooperation and coordination with neighboring countries to counter the effects of Boko Haram, yet has resisted taking control of the regional response. Nigeria is a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the GCTF, and is also a participant in President Obama's Security Governance Initiative.

SENEGAL

Overview: The Government of Senegal continued to take a firm stance against terrorism as international and regional terrorist activity led to growing concern that Senegal itself could become a target for terrorist attacks. The government worked closely with U. S. military and law enforcement officials to strengthen its counterterrorism capabilities. The risk of violent extremism and terrorist activity in Senegal arises from transnational threats due to the Senegalese military presence in several theaters of operation, including the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Senegal has no comprehensive counterterrorism legislation. In 2007, however, the government amended the criminal code to establish criminal offenses for terrorist acts as defined in the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The result of this amendment, Article 279 of the criminal code, allows the state to prosecute an individual or group that "intentionally undertakes an act to disturb public order, or the normal functioning of national and international institutions, through intimidation or terror." The maximum penalty is life in prison.

Senegal's gendarmerie, national police, customs, and national intelligence organizations lack capacity to detect, deter, and prevent acts of terrorism in their own territory. Senegal is working to improve its law enforcement capacity by participating in multilateral efforts, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum's (GCTF's) Border Security Initiative and programs of the AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Senegal also participated in U.S. government counterterrorism capacity-building programs, such as the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program, and received significant funding and training from the French government.

Senegalese officials have identified a lack of border resources and regional cooperation as major security vulnerabilities. Areas in the southern and eastern portion of the country have far fewer resources to detect and deter extremists from traveling through this area. Additionally, there is a lack of interagency cooperation and coordination across several of the government entities that deal with terrorism.

Significant law enforcement actions against terrorists in 2015 included the arrest of several religious leaders who were accused of having links with terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram and al-Qa'ida. In October, police made several arrests in order to expose a network of violent extremists who were associated with suspected Boko Haram leader Makhtar Diokhané.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Senegal is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Senegal's financial intelligence unit, the National Financial Intelligence

Processing Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group. At the regional level, Senegal implements the anti-money laundering/counterterrorism financing (AML/CFT) framework used by member states of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Among WAEMU countries, Senegal was the first to domesticate the regional AML/CFT legal framework.

Senegal did not enact any new laws or regulations on countering terrorism finance in 2015, nor did they prosecute anyone under their 2009 AML/CFT regulations. For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Strong cultural and religious traditions have made Senegalese society resistant to violent extremist ideologies. Islam in Senegal is organized around several influential brotherhoods which are generally tolerant and do not preach extremist ideology. These brotherhoods are also fairly resistant to external influences. The government has reached out to the brotherhoods to offer support in resisting violent extremism.

International and Regional Cooperation: Senegal is a member of the UN, AU, ECOWAS, OIC, and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. The government also participates in the GCTF's Sahel Regional Capacity Building Working Group and hosted the 2015 African Land Forces Summit in collaboration with the U.S. Africa Command. Senegal hosted a second annual International Forum on Peace and Security in November. In May, President Macky Sall was elected as the Chairman of the ECOWAS committee and has put regional security cooperation at the top of his agenda.

SOMALIA

Overview: Security and counterterrorism efforts in Somalia continued to progress in 2015 through a combination of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) offensives, U.S. military strikes against al-Shabaab operatives, law enforcement assistance, and countering violent extremism initiatives. However, despite significant security gains, including liberating key sections of rural areas in south-central Somalia, AMISOM, the Somali National Army (SNA), and other associated militias were unable to degrade effectively al-Shabaab's ability to plan and execute attacks. Al-Shabaab leveraged clan politics and disputes to encourage distrust and noncooperation among local communities toward security forces operating in these areas. Al-Shabaab also exploited poor economic conditions to recruit new fighters. These vulnerabilities helped to undermine territorial gains that AMISOM and the SNA have achieved in the past few years.

An increasing division within the leadership of al-Shabaab was reported as some members sought to affiliate with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Despite internal divisions and increasing numbers of defections towards the end of 2015, al-Shabaab continued to conduct asymmetric attacks throughout Somalia and showed no indications of decreased operational capability. Al-Shabaab also exhibited the capacity to execute attacks against harder targets in Mogadishu, including the Mogadishu International Airport, Villa Somalia Presidential Compound, and popular hotels, and conducted a greater number of assassinations of government and security officials. Federal, local, and regional security authorities lacked sufficient capacity to prevent most al-Shabaab attacks. Somalia remained a terrorist safe haven, where members of

al-Shabaab continued to plan and mount operations within Somalia and in neighboring countries, particularly in Kenya.

Somalia was an active supporter of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Specifically, Somalia participated in the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group and the Stabilization Support Working Groups. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud also attended the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkon the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Al-Shabaab conducted complex suicide attacks, remote-controlled roadside bombings, ambushes, and assassinations of government personnel and military forces, security officials, and civil society leaders throughout Somalia. It also executed complex attacks in Mogadishu in a targeted campaign against Somali security forces and other government officials, government and foreign buildings, convoys, and popular gathering places for government officials, the Somali diaspora, and foreigners. Notable incidents in 2015 included:

- In March, al-Shabaab terrorists launched a complex attack against the Hotel Maka al-Mukaram in Mogadishu, detonating a vehicle-borne IED (VBIED), followed by a ground assault using small weapons and grenades. Al-Shabaab controlled the hotel for at least four hours until security agents from the National Intelligence and Security Agency's (NISA) elite paramilitary unit "Gaashaan" regained control. At least 13 people were killed, while approximately 20 others sustained injuries, according to NISA officials.
- In May, al-Shabaab terrorists launched a complex attack against the Somali Parliament compound in Mogadishu using a VBIED and a ground assault team of about seven to eight attackers armed with AK-47s. Two members of Parliament reportedly sustained injuries when the terrorists detonated the VBIED at the main gate. Security forces reportedly killed all the terrorists during the attack. Casualties included around 12 security officials from AMISOM, NISA, SNA, and the Somali Police Force (SPF). In addition, about 24 security officials and civilians sustained injuries.
- In June, al-Shabaab executed a complex attack on the popular Sahafi Hotel in Mogadishu, detonating two VBIEDs and executing a ground assault by a small group of attackers. Up to 15 individuals were reportedly killed.
- In September, al-Shabaab attacked a Ugandan AMISOM forward-operating base in Janale, Lower Shabelle region, killing between 20 and 50 Ugandan AMISOM soldiers. After breaching the gate with a VBIED and bombing a bridge to cut off a potential escape route and AMISOM reinforcements, al-Shabaab was able to enter and take over the base for a limited amount of time until AMISOM troops retook the area.
- Also in September, al-Shabaab attacked a UN convoy as it was exiting the Somali Presidential Palace in Mogadishu, killing approximately 11 people, including two soldiers and the bomber, in addition to injuring several other victims. Nobody in the UN delegation was harmed in the attack, according to the Ministry of Internal Security.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) continued efforts to improve security in Mogadishu. It conducted security operations targeting known locations of weapons caches in private homes and businesses, but lacked counterterrorism laws and possessed limited investigative and enforcement capacity to prosecute terrorists successfully. Somalia followed an outdated penal code, last updated in 1962. Ministries responsible for drafting and submitting legislation to Parliament lacked the capacity to

draft comprehensive counterterrorism laws. Due to the lack of civil judiciary capacity, the FGS tried all terrorism cases in a military court system.

There was some movement toward addressing these issues. The U.S.-trained SPF Joint Investigative Team (JIT) exhibited operational capacity to secure tactically and exploit counterterrorism-related crime scenes, as well as develop counterterrorism cases to launch prosecutions. The Attorney General's office, with support from the UK and the United States, increased the number of prosecutors to 28, eight of whom possessed specific counterterrorism case training. Puntland lacked regional counterterrorism legislation and tried all terrorism cases using its state military court.

Somali law enforcement requires additional training to build basic police investigation skills, capacity to conduct cordon and search operations, and effective police coordination with the judiciary. The United States made considerable contributions towards the development and capacity building of the law enforcement sector. The U.S.-funded SPF JIT responded to multiple terrorist incidents, during which they secured the scene, collected evidence, maintained the integrity of the evidence by following chain of custody protocols, and ensured a safe hand-over of the evidentiary materials to the Criminal Investigative Division (CID) for further processing. NISA, Somalia's lead counterterrorism organization, also began coordinating with the JIT during responses to critical incidents. While the SPF made measurable gains to manage terrorist incidents, the judicial system remained weak and underdeveloped, suffering from minimal interagency coordination and a lack of capacity and technical expertise.

Somalia has porous borders, and most countries do not recognize Somali identity documents, leaving Somalia with little to no travel document security. Somalia does not have a central or shared terrorist screening watchlist, nor does it possess biographic and biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry. There was minimal law enforcement cooperation between the federal and regional governments and U.S. law enforcement to investigate suspected terrorists, kidnappings, and other incidents of terror committed inside and outside of Somalia.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Somalia has observer status in the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body, but in 2015 had no laws criminalizing money laundering and terrorism financing. The Central Bank of Somalia drafted a comprehensive anti-money laundering/combatting the financing of terrorism law with assistance from the World Bank. At year's end, the bill was approved by the Council of Ministers (Cabinet) and passed by the Parliament. Somalia continued efforts to formalize its nascent financial sector, and develop the Central Bank's capacity to supervise and regulate this sector, including *hawalas* (money service businesses). In 2015, Somalia did not have laws or procedures requiring the collection of data for money transfers or suspicious transaction reports, nor did it distribute the UN sanctions lists to financial services. Somalia lacks the funding and capacity to investigate and prosecute incidents of terrorism financing. The supervisory and examining section of the Central Bank began limited on- and off-site inspections and instituted procedures governing the licensing of commercial banks. However, federal authorities responsible for monitoring and regulating the financial sector suffered from limited staffing, funding, and technical expertise.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Somali government improved its al-Shabaab counter-messaging efforts. It established a new position within the Ministry of Internal Security to develop and implement countering violent extremism (CVE) strategies and promote greater community involvement to counter al-Shabaab's messaging and influence. Working with international partners, clan elders, and media experts, the Ministry began building greater awareness among communities of the destructive nature of violent extremism. The Ministry also solicited recommendations from populations with experience with al-Shabaab to help guide the design of CVE programs. The Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs completed its Wadajir (or "A Joint Project") Framework on local governance, which outlines for international partners future local governance initiatives intended to complement ongoing stabilization efforts in newly-recovered areas. The Framework also empowers local community groups and government by providing local control over planning and contracting decisions.

Radio Mogadishu and state-owned TV stations broadcast counter-messaging programming. The Islamic Lecture Series (ILS), an hour-long, call-in radio talk show designed to promote a moderate form of Islam, helped undercut al-Shabaab's message of violent extremism. The Ministry of Information aired the ILS on radio stations in Abudwaq, Baidoa, Beledweyne, Bossasso, Bulo Burte, Cadaado, Galkayo, Garowe, and Mogadishu.

International and Regional Cooperation: Somalia is a member of the AU, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism, League of Arab States, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Federal Government of Somalia expressed greater interest in increasing intelligence sharing and conducting joint operations against al-Shabaab with its Horn of Africa neighbors.

SOUTH AFRICA

Overview: Following the September 2013 Westgate Mall attack in Kenya, the South African Police Service (SAPS) began engaging with U.S. law enforcement agencies to advance its preparedness for similar terrorist attacks in South Africa. U.S. law enforcement interacted primarily with Crimes Against the State (CATS) within the SAPS Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI). The Foreign Branch (SSA/FB) of South Africa's State Security Agency (SSA) and SAPS Crime Intelligence were also involved in counterterrorism.

The South African government has not publicly provided estimates of the number of South African nationals who have traveled to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-controlled territories and joined ISIL, but media have reported on multiple confirmed cases in 2015, in addition to the 140 cases estimated in 2014. Some travelers reportedly set up social media accounts to help recruit additional South Africans to join ISIL. Authorities kept track of those suspected of being part of terrorist groups, particularly those who have traveled and returned from Syria and Iraq. In January, one prominent South African family left Port Elizabeth to join ISIL. In April, SSA Minister David Mahlobo confirmed that a teenage girl detained at the airport in Cape Town was recruited by ISIL and intended to travel to Syria. An SSA spokesman confirmed there had been other "possible recruitments."

In November, a South African driver's license was found near the body of an ISIL terrorist killed in a blast in Iraq. Authorities were working at the end of 2015 to verify that the deceased was, in fact, the South African national.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorist and Related Activities Act, 2004, regulates counterterrorism activity in South Africa. The Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act, 1998 applies to nationals who attempt to join and have enlisted with ISIL. The SAPS Crime Intelligence Division, CATS, DPCI, and SSA are tasked with detecting, deterring, and preventing acts of terrorism within South Africa. The SAPS' Special Task Force is specifically trained and proficient in counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and hostage rescue. The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is committed to prosecuting cases of terrorism and international crime.
In an attempt to tighten its borders and enhance national security, South Africa proposed amendments and made changes in 2015 to its immigration regulations. South Africa opened seven new visa facilitation centers in India and two in China to facilitate applications. Citizens of neighboring countries are no longer required to obtain visas for temporary visits, however, and regulation of visa, passport, and identity documents remained a challenge. The SAPS internal affairs office investigated allegations of corruption within the Department of Home Affairs concerning the sale of passports and identity documents, but the use of illegitimately obtained identity documents persisted.

Counterterrorism measures at borders include screening with advanced technology x-ray machines. U.S. and South African agencies shared best practices to enhance risk management efforts and better identify challenges at their borders.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: South Africa is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF); and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, a FATF-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC), is a member of the Egmont Group. The FIC Act Amendment Bill, 2015, proposed amendments to the act governing the FIC's responsibilities that address "threats to the stability of South Africa's financial system posed by money laundering and terrorism financing." Among the amendments, the bill assigns responsibility to the FIC to freeze the assets of persons on UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions lists. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: South African efforts to counter violent extremism have not been publicly released.

International and Regional Cooperation: South Africa is a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the AU.

TANZANIA

Overview: In 2015, Tanzania's security services were involved in investigations and active operations against alleged violent extremists who conducted numerous attacks on police and police installations. Security services made multiple arrests of alleged violent extremists and

officials were prosecuting these cases at year's end. Tanzania's National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) reported concerns over escalating radicalism and inadequate border security. While Tanzanian government officials have expressed support for the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Tanzania is not a coalition partner.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: In July, an al-Shabaab attack on the Stakishari police station near the Dar es Salaam airport resulted in the deaths of seven people. Press reports indicated that four police officers, two civilians, and one attacker were killed. The assailants stole a number of weapons from the police station during the attack.

In several other instances, police on patrol and police stations have been attacked. During these incidents, attackers stole weapons from police stations and injured or killed police officers.

Several IEDs were found in Zanzibar after the October 25 elections. No serious injuries were reported, and authorities were able to conduct a controlled detonation on two of the devices. The explosives were not publicly linked to any specific group, although the motivation was widely believed to be political.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Tanzania's counterterrorism legal framework is governed by the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002. The implementing regulations for the Act were published in 2012. The only major effort to strengthen criminal justice institutions undertaken in 2015 was the National Counterterrorism Strategy process, which remained under discussion at year's end.

Tanzanian officials continued interagency coordination efforts in 2015, and the government sought to use investigative forensic techniques to detect, investigate, and fully prosecute suspected terrorists. NCTC is an interagency unit composed of officers from the Intelligence, Police, Defense, Immigration, and Prison sectors who worked collectively on counterterrorism issues. The organization lacks specialized equipment and basic infrastructure, especially for border security, and NCTC officers need training on intelligence analysis and crime scene investigation. The Tanzania Intelligence and Security Service worked in conjunction with the police and other security services on investigations. Once an investigation is completed, the case goes to the Director of Public Prosecutions before being brought to court. Government agencies have demonstrated an ability to coordinate in a crisis, but lack the ability to implement a comprehensive plan of action on counterterrorism that formalizes interagency cooperation.

Tanzanian law enforcement officials participated in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program to strengthen capacity in the areas of crisis response, border operations, and counterterrorism investigations. Notable among these activities was the Department of State's second-annual East Africa Joint Operations Capstone exercise, a month-long training series hosted in Kenya for Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan law enforcement personnel. The exercise culminated in a large-scale simulation of a response to a terrorist incident, including a cross-border pursuit that also focused on community engagement and human rights-related issues.

Border security in Tanzania remained a challenge for a variety of reasons, including problems of corruption; the lack of a dedicated border security unit in the Tanzania Police Force; and vast, porous borders. All major airports and border crossings used the PISCES border management

system. Tanzania's NCTC and Immigration Service generally worked to ensure that all border posts had updated terrorist watchlists, although smaller border posts often must check passports against paper copies of the list. There were several media reports of Tanzanians engaging in violence as foreign terrorist fighters, particularly with regard to al-Shaabab operations in Kenya and Somalia. Tanzanian authorities liaised with Kenyan counterparts to share information and discussed how to more effectively counter violent extremist recruitment efforts and track returned foreign terrorist fighters.

In February, police and military units worked collaboratively to corner suspects of a police attack near the town of Tanga, which is located close to the Kenyan border. Security services engaged in a days-long siege, but some suspects eventually escaped.

Tanzania was constrained from greater action on counterterrorism efforts by a lack offinancial resources, capacity, and interagency cooperation, as well as having no national counterterrorism strategy.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Tanzania is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit is a member of the Egmont Group. There were no known prosecutions or asset freezes related to counterterrorism finance in 2015. Tanzania continued to work in accordance with the 2014 implementing regulations that assigned specific responsibilities to various government entities to implement the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The current focal point of NCTC's countering violent extremism strategy is its community policing program. Through this initiative, which has been active in many perceived radicalization hot spots for several years, officials believe they are building better relations with key communities and have been better able to detect threats tied to radicalization. In addition, police enforced laws against spreading messages advocating violence by confiscating cassettes containing violent extremist messaging that are sold on the streets. NCTC would also like to implement community awareness programs with a counter-radicalization focus, but it lacked the funds to develop such an initiative.

Tanzania's nascent efforts at counter-messaging included outreach to religious leaders to encourage moderate voices and to discourage guest preachers who might seek to spread extremist ideologies in houses of worship. Some sectors of the government have discussed the need for a counterterrorism public relations campaign, although such an effort was not funded or implemented in 2015.

International and Regional Cooperation: Tanzania is a member of the AU, the Southern African Development Community, and the East African Community, all of which implemented counterterrorism initiatives. In addition, Tanzania participated in counterterrorism training programs sponsored by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development even although Tanzania is not a full member of the group. Tanzania is an active member of the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism and participated in the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

Tanzania's NCTC coordinated with partner organizations although the East African Police Chiefs' Organization and the Southern African Police Chiefs' Organization. Police officials also worked closely with INTERPOL. Tanzania had close relations with police and counterterrorism officials in Kenya and Uganda, although they would benefit from better mechanisms to share information electronically.

UGANDA

Overview: In 2015, the Government of Uganda continued to be a strong advocate of cross-border solutions to regional security issues, effectively supported U.S. counterterrorism efforts, and showed strong political will to apprehend suspected terrorists and disrupt terrorist activity in its territory. Al-Shabaab continued to put pressure on Uganda's security apparatus, however, primarily due to Uganda's troop contributions to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Uganda's ability to respond to such threats was inconsistent, given its resource and capacity limitations, porous borders, and corruption at all levels of government.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: On March 30, Joan Kagezi, Assistant Director of Public Prosecution and Head of the International Criminal Division in Uganda's Ministry of Justice,was shot and killed while shopping at a local market. Kagezi was prosecuting individuals associated with the Lord's Resistance Army as well as suspects in the 2010 World Cup terrorist bombings in Kampala that killed 76 people, including one American. The Government of Uganda officially labeled this a "terrorist-affiliated assassination act." At year's end, no one had been charged with Kagezi's murder.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Uganda's Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002, which has been Uganda's primary legal framework for deterring, detecting, and prosecuting terrorist activity and incidents, was revised in June. Parliament adopted the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2015,to expand the list of terrorist acts to include indirect involvement in terrorist activities as well as: electronic attacks, acts against national security or public safety, acts of terrorism committed in a foreign state, and unlawful possession of materials promoting terrorism. At the end of 2015, the Ugandan government intended to further amend the act.

The Uganda Police Force (UPF) Directorate of Counterterrorism is the lead Ugandan law enforcement entity charged with investigating, disrupting, and responding to terrorist incidents. While Ugandan law enforcement officers assigned to this directorate were highly motivated, the UPF overall was limited in its capacity to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents due to the lack of manpower, resources, basic skills, and competencies. Further hindering the UPF's ability to combat terrorism, Ugandan police officers in general were particularly susceptible to corruption due to the generally low level of pay and late disbursement of salary payments.

In the wake of increased terrorist activity and violent crime in the East Africa region, the UPF established an interagency unit to better coordinate counterterrorism efforts across Ugandan security agencies.

The bulk of the counterterrorism police and other law enforcement elements was centrally located in the capital, which limited the effectiveness of law enforcement in the border regions and other areas outside Kampala. The UPF lacked the technological resources needed to conduct comprehensive terrorism investigations in the most effective manner, although the UPF held

regular interagency meetings in an attempt to ensure coordination among its security and intelligence agencies.

The United States continued to provide significant counterterrorism training assistance to the UPF, specifically through the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, which builds capacity in the areas of counterterrorism investigations, crisis response, and border security. Border security remained a persistent concern for the Ugandan government, which continued work to expand its enforcement and monitoring capacity. Notable among these activities in 2015 was the Department of State's second-annual East Africa Joint Operations capstone exercise, a month-long training series hosted in Kenya for Kenyan, Ugandan, and Tanzanian law enforcement personnel; the exercise culminated in a large-scale simulation of a response to a terrorist incident, including a cross-border pursuit, that also focused on community engagement and human rights-related issues. Uganda relied on the Terrorist Interdiction Program's Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) to conduct traveler screening and watchlisting, incorporating biographic and biometric screening at the country's major points of entry.

The UPF cooperated with the United States on terrorism-related cases, and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) maintained strong relationships with the UPF. Uganda was prosecuting the 12 individuals arrested for orchestrating the July 2010 al-Shabaab bombings following the World Cup, and was working closely with the FBI since one of the victims of those attacks was an U.S. citizen. The FBI continued to work with the Ugandan government on other terrorism investigations.

The United States and UPF continued to try to operationalize a 2013 Memorandum of Cooperation to modernize the UPF's criminal records management system to replace the outdated system used to identify criminal and terrorist suspects.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Uganda is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. In 2015, Uganda was under review by the FATF itself, due to a number of strategic deficiencies in its anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime. In July, Uganda made further progress toward implementing the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) of 2013 when the finance minister constituted a five-member board of the Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA), which under the AMLA is responsible for monitoring and regulating remittance services and wire transfer data. However, at year's end the FIA has not become fully functional due to a lack of staffing and funding from the central government.

A significant portion of financial transactions in Uganda takes place in the form of "mobile money" payments and transfers, which could be abused by individuals and entities engaged in money laundering, terrorism financing, or other forms of financial crime. At the same time, money transfers and payments through mobile phones are a key provider of basic financial services for low-income earners who cannot afford the charges levied by banks. While the AMLA requires financial institutions to conductcomprehensive customer due diligence, it does not put the same requirements on mobile money transfers.

Uganda has made some progress toward, but still falls short of, meeting its international obligation to criminalize terrorism financing and it continues to have significant deficiencies

with respect to its procedures for implementing targeted financial sanctions.Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Bank of Uganda, the government routinely distributes UN lists of designated terrorists or terrorist entities to financial institutions.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Uganda recognizes the importance of countering violent extremism (CVE) and has shown interest in partnering with the U.S. government and Ugandan Muslim leaders to conduct more systematic and targeted outreach to counter violent extremism. These efforts included the Ugandan government's attendance at the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremismconvened in Washington, DC, in February 2015, and follow-on regional meetings. Local NGOs were involved in counter-messaging focused on the Muslim community. While the government recognized the need for CVE programs, the success of its efforts has generally been hindered by the lack of a clearly defined programmatic response and an unorganized methodology for assigning Ugandan government offices and personnel to address CVE issues.

International and Regional Cooperation: Uganda is a strong force for regional stability, security coordination, and counterterrorism efforts, and is an active member of the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African Community, the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Uganda contributed troops to AMISOM to stabilize Somalia and counter al-Shabaab. In July, Uganda signed a memorandum of understanding with Ethiopia to strengthen defense ties. The agreement focuses on the security situation in South Sudan and Somalia and terrorism in the region.

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Throughout 2015, countries in the East Asia and Pacific region faced the threat of terrorist attacks, flows of foreign terrorist fighters to and from Iraq and Syria, and groups and individuals espousing support for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In response, governments across the region actively sought to address threats and degrade the ability of terrorist groups to operate. Governments worked to strengthen legal frameworks, investigated and prosecuted terrorism cases, increased regional cooperation and information sharing, and addressed critical border and aviation security gaps. Countering and preventing violent extremism in partnership with civil society also became a priority for many countries. Despite all of these efforts, the region remained a target for terrorist group recruitment.ISIL released several videos showing Indonesian, Malaysian, and Australian fighters in Syria.

Southeast Asian countries actively participated in regional, international, and multilateral efforts to counter terrorism. Singapore and Malaysia joined the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL in 2015. Indonesia and Australia continued their co-chairmanship of the Global Counterterrorism Forum's (GCTF's) Detention and Reintegration Working Group (DRWG), which grew out of the former GCTF Southeast Asia Working Group. EAP countries were also well-represented at the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremismin February and the Leaders' Summit

to Counter ISIL and Violent Extremismhosted by President Obamaand held on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September. At the Leaders' Summit, Prime Minister Najib announced Malaysia's intent to create a regional counter-messaging center.

Cooperation between domestic law enforcement and judicial authorities throughout Southeast Asia, including in Thailand, Indonesia, Australia, and Malaysia, resulted in high numbers of terrorism-related arrests and, in many cases, successful prosecutions. Moreover, as a result of the Philippine government's strong and continued pressure, terrorist groups including U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations such as the Abu Sayyaf Group, Jemaah Islamiya, and the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army; and other militant groups such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), were unable to conduct major attacks, although sporadic fighting did displace locals.

The Government of New Zealand established an ambassador for counterterrorism citing a desire to strengthen engagement with key partners in the Asia-Pacific region and to increase counterterrorism policy cooperation and capacity building.

The Japanese government continued to participate in international counterterrorism efforts at multilateral, regional, and bilateral levels, particularly in the aftermath of the executions of two Japanese citizens by ISIL in early 2015. Japan has identified counterterrorism as one of its priorities for its G-7 presidency.

China's focus on terrorism intensified in 2015, largely in response to several reported domestic terrorist and other violent incidents. China's primary focus has been on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and its purported influence in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. The Chinese government strongly condemned ISIL's claimed execution of Chinese citizen Fan Jinghui in November. China continued to express concerns that Chinese citizens have traveled to Iraq and Syria to associate with ISIL.

AUSTRALIA

Overview: Australia is a key partner in the global fight against terrorism, and leads regional efforts to counter radicalization and violent extremism. In 2015, Australian authorities conducted 10 domestic counterterrorism operations, resulting in 25 people being charged. The Australian Attorney General estimated there were 110 Australian foreign terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq, approximately 190 persons in Australia providing support to individuals and groups in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and 400 high-priority counterterrorism investigations. In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, there were also 536 suspected terrorism financing cases in Australia.

The Australian government took significant actions to counter terrorism by: providing additional funding to intelligence agencies and enhancing their ability to access communications data; creating the roles of the National Counterterrorism Coordinator and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counterterrorism; attending the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February; hosting a Regional Countering Violent Extremism Summit; co-hosting the first Southeast Asian Counter-Terrorism Financing Summit; developing a Combating Terrorist Propaganda initiative to monitor and contest online terrorist messages; and developing a revised National Terrorism Threat Advisory System.

On October 15, the Prime Minister convened a National Meeting on Countering Violent Extremism that included policy and law enforcement officials from federal, state, and territory agencies. In July, the federal and state governments released "Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy."

In 2015, Australia was a major contributor of military assistance to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Since May, Australia deployed 300 military personnel to contribute to the international Building Partner Capacity (BPC) mission in Iraq, following the September 2014 announcement of sending 200 personnel to "advise and assist" Iraqi forces and about 400 personnel to support Australian air operations against ISIL. Australia began air strikes against ISIL targets in Iraq in October 2014 and extended strikes into Syria in September 2015 using six FA-18s. Australia and the United States regularly discussed counterterrorism cooperation, including at the annual AUSMIN Foreign and Defense Ministers' meeting.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: On October 2, 15-year-old Farhad Jabar (Australian) killed New South Wales police employee Curtis Cheng outside a police station in the Sydney district of Parramatta. Australian authorities believe this was a terrorist incident and Jabar was subsequently killed in a shoot-out with police. Three men were also arrested on terrorism and criminal offenses related to the incident.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Australia's legal framework to counter terrorism includes significant penalties for the following: committing terrorist acts; recruiting for and supporting terrorist organizations; financing terrorism; urging violence and advocating terrorism; and traveling abroad to commit terrorist acts and recruitment offenses. Authorities are authorized to detain individuals under "preventative detention orders" for a maximum of 48 hours, and to restrict activities and movement of individuals under "control orders."

Since mid-2014, five tranches of national security legislation have been enacted. In October 2014, parliament passed legislation targeting returning foreign terrorist fighters which includes granting additional powers to security agencies, strengthening border security measures, and cancelling welfare payments for persons involved in terrorism. In May 2015, parliament passed legislation requiring telecommunications providers to retain and to secure data for two years, and the government appointed the first Commonwealth Counterterrorism Coordinator. On July 1, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service were merged into a single Department of Immigration and Border Protection. On August 13, parliament passed legislation strengthening the combined agency's biometric program into a single updated framework used by border agents to collect biometric identity information. In December, parliament passed legislation allowing for the revocation of citizenship for dual nationals involved in terrorism, established the crime of advocacy of genocide, and lowered the minimum age for which control orders can be imposed from 16 to 14. (A control order is issued by a court [at the request of the Australian Federal Police] to allow obligations, prohibitions and restrictions to be imposed on a person, for the purpose of protecting the public from a terrorist act.)

Since the terrorism alert level was raised to "High" in 2014, security and law enforcement agencies have foiled six attacks, and police conducted 10 counterterrorism operations in Australia resulting in 26 people being charged with terrorism-related offenses. Australian

Border Force Counter-Terrorism Units, established in August 2014, offloaded 336 passengers from commercial flights through June 2015, which according to an ABF press release, prevented a number of minors from travelling to the conflict areas in Syria and Iraq. The number of high priority targets investigated by the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) doubled to more than 400. From September 2014 to the end of 2015, the number of Australian foreign terrorist fighters in Iraq and Syria identified by Australian security services grew from 70 to 110; the number of suspected Australians killed in the conflict rose from 15 to at least 41; the number of people suspected in Australia of providing support to individuals and groups in the conflict grew from 110 to 190; and the number of passports cancelled to prevent travel to the conflict expanded from 60 to 146. In July 2015, the Council of Australian Governments (the Prime Minister, state and territory Premiers and Chief Ministers, and the President of the Australian Local Government Association), agreed to develop a new threat advisory system, which was unveiled in November. The new five-tiered threat system provides ASIO with greater flexibility to make terrorist threats clearer to the public. At the end of 2015, the level was set at "Probable," the third highest tier.

Arrests included:

- On February 10, police arrested and charged Omar Al-Kutobi (Iraqi born, naturalized Australian citizen) and Mohammad Kiad (Kuwaiti citizen with Australian spousal visa) in Sydney with planning to carry out an imminent terrorist attack against a civilian.
- On April 18, five teenage Australian boys were arrested in Melbourne following a counterterrorism operation in relation to a planned terrorist act, which included targeting police officers. One was charged with terrorism offenses; one was charged with weapons offenses; and one had terrorism charges dropped and pleaded guilty to weapons offenses. The other two were released without charges.
- On May 8, police raided a Melbourne home and arrested a 17-year-old Australian man after finding three IEDs.

Australian law enforcement entities, such as the Australian Federal Police (AFP), have clearly demarcated counterterrorism units, as well as effective working relationships with provincial and municipal law enforcement. In September, the State of Victoria Police Department established a Counterterrorism Command, and in November, counterterrorism funding to the Victorian police almost doubled when the State of Victoria allocated $49.4 million for hiring additional intelligence experts and analysts. Australia has an extensive border security network and makes excellent use of travel document security technology, biographic and biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry, information sharing with other countries, and collection of advance Passenger Name Record information on commercial flights. Australian security forces effectively patrolled and controlled land and maritime borders.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Australia is a member ofthe Financial Action Task Force. Australia served as the organization's President from July 1, 2014 until June 30, 2015. Australia is a founding member and co-chair of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body. In 2015 Australia's mutual evaluation, executed jointly by FATF and APG, was adopted. The assessment concluded that Australia has strong legal, law enforcement and operational measures for combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

Australia faces a range of terrorism financing risks, largely motivated by international tensions and conflicts, and counters the risks with a comprehensive legal and administrative framework.

Australia can automatically freeze UN-designated terrorism-related assets and has made numerous domestic designations as well.

As a founding member of the Egmont Group, AUSTRAC, Australia's financial intelligence unit, assisted the Southeast Asian region to develop a regional profile of financial characteristics of foreign terrorist fighters. Australia implements its obligations to restrict terrorism financing, including funding to violent extremist groups operating in Syria and Iraq, as well as freezing assets and economic resources in accordance with UNSCRs 1373 (2001) and 2253 (2015; which updates UNSCRs 1267 and 1989), as well as UNSCRs 2178 (2014), 2170 (2014), and 2199 (2015).

AUSTRAC detects, prevents, and deters money laundering and financing of terrorist activities. In addition, AUSTRAC regulates money transfers and remittance services, however, charities are not a regulated sector for the purposes of suspicious matter reports (SMRs). Using its rigorous detection and monitoring processes, AUSTRAC referred 536 SMRs in the 2014-2015 fiscal year to the AFP and the ASIO on suspicion of terror financing links, a 300 percent increase from the year before. Amounting to more than $37.6 million, the 536 reports were linked primarily to Australians traveling to join terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. As of June 30, 2015, AUSTRAC stated that it was monitoring more than 100 persons of interest. AUSTRAC is also a core member of a multilateral information-sharing project on the financing of foreign terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq. In November in Sydney, Australia and Indonesia co-hosted the first Counterterrorism Financing Summit in the Asia-Pacific Region, attended by more than 150 people from 19 countries. Australia is also a member of the Counter-ISIL Finance Working Group and co-chairs its Foreign Terrorist Fighter sub-group.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Australian Attorney-General's Department leads the implementation of the government's four main goals to counter violent extremism (CVE): building strength in diversity and social participation; targeted work with vulnerable communities and institutions; addressing terrorist propaganda online; and diversion and de-radicalization. The Australian Government created the Living Safe Together website (http://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/), which offers multiple resources and perspectives on building community resilience to violent extremism.

In February, the Australian Attorney-General attended the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and announced the $12.8 million Combatting Terrorist Propaganda in Australia initiative focused on the internet and social media. In June, Australia hosted the Regional Summit to Counter Violent Extremism to further goals outlined at the White House CVE Summit and to build on UNSCR 2178and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Following the October shooting in Parramatta, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull convened an urgent meeting of officials from Federal, State, and Territory agencies and Muslim leaders to discuss Australia's approach to countering violent extremism. On November 2, the New South Wales Premier announced a $33.4 million CVE package to stop radicalization of young people focused primarily on schools and community organizations. In December, Prime Minister

Malcolm Turnbull stated that the government would provide $1.78 million over five years to the Commonwealth Secretariat dedicated to countering extremism and radicalization.

Building on its experience partnering with the UAE through the Sawab counter-messaging center in 2015, Australia is supporting Malaysia in the development of its regional counter-messaging center in Kuala Lumpur.

International and Regional Cooperation: Australia is a regional leader in the fight against terrorism, and worked to strengthen the Asia-Pacific region's counterterrorism capacity through a range of bilateral and regional initiatives in organizations such as ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the Pacific Island Forum. Australia participated in the APEC Counter-Terrorism Task Force, the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism, and worked closely with NATO, including in the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Australia is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and co-chair of the Forum's Detention and Reintegration Working Group (DRWG), which grew out of the former Southeast Asia Working Group. In April, Australia and the EU agreed to intensify counterterrorism cooperation, building on the launch of the first EU–Australian Counterterrorism Dialogue in November 2014.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop attended the GCTF Ministerial in September. Australia's Ambassador for Counterterrorism played a key role in coordinating policy cooperation, capacity building, and operational collaboration between Australian agencies and international counterterrorism partners. Australia signed 19 counterterrorism memorandums of understanding with partners around the world. Australia increasingly collaborates with India on counter-messaging and counterterrorism legal reforms.

CHINA (HONG KONG AND MACAU)

Overview: China's attention to terrorism in 2015 intensified as the country reacted to several incidents that it characterized as domestic terrorism. China continued to escalate its security and surveillance in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region to prevent additional unrest, including the implementation of stricter controls and curbs on religious practice. The primary focus of China's international counterterrorism efforts remained on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), an organization that China alleges is behind violent incidents in Xinjiang. Government officials often characterized China's restrictive policies in Xinjiang as an effort to prevent additional acts of terrorism and violent extremism.

The Chinese government reported that Chinese citizens operated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Middle East, and has taken action to prevent its citizens from traveling to Syria and Iraq. In November, ISIL claimed to have executed Chinese citizenFan Jinghui, which prompted strong condemnation from President Xi Jinping. Two weeks later, ISIL posted a song online in Mandarin calling for Chinese Muslims to take up arms against their country.

Counterterrorism cooperation between the United States and China remained limited. The two countries initiated a technical workshop on countering the spread of IEDs and increased consultations aimed at stemming the transnational flow of foreign terrorist fighters, countering

terrorist funding networks, increasing information sharing on terrorist threats, and sharing evidentiary best practices.

China held bilateral dialogues on counterterrorism with five countries in 2015, including with the United States in August. China remained engaged in counterterrorism efforts in the Asia-Pacific region and Central Asia. It conducted bilateral and multilateral joint exercises with regional neighbors and through other frameworks, such as the Shanghai Cooperative Organization.

Chinese authorities criticized the United States when it did not follow China's example in characterizing some incidents of violence in China as terrorism. As in previous years, China accused Uighur activists abroad – including in the United States – of complicity in supporting terrorist activity, but has not provided credible evidence to support the claims. China also appeared to apply inconsistent labels to incidents of mass violence involving Han Chinese suspects. For example, and in contrast to the examples discussed below, China designated a series of 17 explosions in September that damaged government buildings and neighborhoods in the Guangxi Autonomous Region, killing seven people and injuring more than 50, a criminal rather than a terrorist act and arrested a suspect surnamed Wei.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The lack of transparency and information provided by China about violent incidents in China that the government characterized as terrorism greatly complicated efforts to verify details of those and other violent acts. In many of the domestic incidents that China characterized as terrorism, China alleged that ETIM influenced or directed the violence through its online propaganda. China often prevented foreign journalists and international observers from independently verifying official media accounts, which are often the only source of reporting on violent incidents in its territory. Government authorities heavily restricted foreign and non-state media access to information about 2015 incidents and often limited reporting to official accounts that were not timely and typically lacked detailed information.

The following incidents are examples of incidents the central government considered to be terrorism:

- On March 6, three knife-wielding assailants stabbed and injured nine people at a Guangzhou Railway Station before police fatally shot one of the suspects and captured a second. According to a leaked Guangdong Provincial Public Security document obtained by the media, the attack was likely reprisal for an alleged anti-terrorism raid on an apartment in Shenyang by 200 police officers that left four dead and captured 16 Uighur terrorism suspects.
- On June 24, local police attributed an attack that left 18 people dead (including 15 attackers) to purported ethnic Uighur terrorists. Suspects allegedly attacked police with knives and bombs at a security checkpoint in Kashgar's Tahtakoruk district in Xinjiang.
- Assailants armed with knives attacked the Sogan coal mine in Xinjiang's Aksu Prefecture on September 18, killing approximately 50 people (most of Han Chinese ethnicity), according to official media, which did not report on the attack until November, when reports appeared that a Special Forces unit had conducted a raid and killed 28 suspects from the mine attack. Official accounts eventually described the attackers as part of an alleged terrorist gang who had been radicalized by online overseas propaganda and had been directed by unspecified overseas extremist groups. An official statement from the Ministry of Public Security lauding the raid as a victory in the fight against terrorism was

deleted without explanation hours after being posted online. On December 16, the Chinese government posted details and photos of the November raid online.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In May, the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and China's State Council issued new measures designed to intensify surveillance and security throughout the country. In addition to increased inspections at all main transportation hubs, including bus and train stations, railways, airports and ports, police would patrol key public sites such as schools, shopping malls, and banks. The measures included an enhanced and vastly expanded video and data surveillance network. More surveillance cameras would be installed and a national population database would be established with citizen identification and credit information.

In December 2015, the National People's Congress Standing Committee approved the country's first comprehensive counterterrorism law to "provide legal support for counterterrorism activities as well as collaboration with the international community." The law broadened China's definition of terrorism and the scope of its counterterrorism measures, and made provisions to establish a counterterrorism intelligence center to better coordinate terrorism response and information sharing across different Chinese government agencies. The law also required foreign firms to provide technical and decryption assistance to Chinese authorities as part of terrorism-related investigations. The legislation stipulated measures on tightening internet security management, inspection of dangerous materials, prevention of terrorism financing, and border controls. The law's broad definition of terrorism and its new technology-related requirements for foreign telecommunications firms and internet service providers elicited concerns from human rights organizations and business interest groups. Under the new law, the Central Military Commission may authorize the People's Liberation Army to perform counterterrorism operations abroad. The law also provided for punishing news media that reports counterterrorism operations without approval from government authorities.

According to state media, law enforcement authorities in Xinjiang had disrupted181 "terrorist gangs" since the launch of the 2014 "strike hard" campaign. Extended through 2015, the campaign was an amalgamation of enhanced cultural restrictions and security measures. Meng Jianzhu, Secretary of the Communist Party's Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, stated at a December 2015 counterterrorism conference in Urumqi that 98 percent of terrorist plots in Xinjiang had been stopped at the planning stage. Due to restrictions on independent reporting, it was difficult to corroborate this as well as other counterterrorism-related claims.

At the same conference, Meng announced several new guidelines regulating Chinese government activities in the fight against terrorism, including several on the use of internet and social media. The new guidelines called for greater cooperation with international counterterrorism bodies; maximum protection for overseas Chinese citizens; destruction of terrorism-related audio and video material; prevention of the dissemination of terrorist information via social media and other online methods; strengthened border controls to prevent terrorists entering China; elimination of religious extremism; and the "education and transformation" of terrorist offenders using "authentic" religious teachings.

Government authorities continued to act against what it alleged were suspected Uighur militants traveling through Southeast Asia. According to international media reports, Thailand repatriated more than 100 Uighur refugees to China after receiving pressure from Chinese authorities. The

UN High Commissioner for Refugees criticized Thailand's decision as a violation of international law, and human rights groups voiced concerns that the repatriated group could face harsh treatment once returned to China. State media reported that 13 of those repatriated were involved in terrorist activities, but did not provide evidence to support those claims. According to foreign press reports, some of the refugees were featured in a subsequent media campaign discouraging illegal emigration from Xinjiang.

China continued to stress the importance of counterterrorism cooperation with the United States, but Chinese law enforcement agencies generally remained reluctant to conduct joint investigations or share specific threat information with U.S. law enforcement partners. Despite multiple requests to Chinese law enforcement officials for more detailed background information on Chinese media-reported arrests and operations, U.S. law enforcement agencies received little new information. Overall, China's counterterrorism cooperation with the United States remained limited and was further constrained by China's conflation of religious expression with violent extremism.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: China is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), as well as the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, both of which are FATF-style regional bodies.China and the United States have met at least once a year (for the last four years) to engage in a technical discussion related to anti-money laundering (AML) and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT). This meeting is known as the AML/CFT Working Group under the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED). At the December 2015 meeting, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), the U.S. financial intelligence unit (FIU), signed a memorandum of understanding with the China Anti-Money Laundering Monitoring and Analysis Center (CAMLMAC), China's FIU, to support its efforts to combat money laundering, related crimes, and terrorism financing. China's CAMLMAC is not a member of the Egmont Group.

The Chinese government has strengthened its preventive measures to counter terrorism financing, with an emphasis on requiring financial institutions to collect and maintain beneficial ownership information, and making suspicious transaction reports more comprehensive. Additional issues remain to be addressed, including guidance for designated non-financial businesses and professions; procedures for individuals and groups who seek to be delisted; and defining the rights of bona fide third parties in seizure/confiscation actions. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2015/

Countering Violent Extremism: Although China does not have an official strategy or program in place to counter violent extremism, the government implemented a number of programs aimed at countering radicalization and violent extremism, concentrating much of its efforts in Xinjiang. Local counterterrorism working groups have been established at the county, municipal, and provincial levels across China to coordinate "stability maintenance," law enforcement, ethnic and religious affairs. Xinjiang government officials required imams to take political education classes as a means of persuading them to discourage extremism and condemn violence. In Xinjiang, authorities placed restrictions on religious expression, banning the burqa in public

spaces in Urumqi and criminalizing unspecified "extremist garments" – clothes or symbols the government associates with terrorism and extremism.

Many Chinese government policies may have exacerbated ethnic tension in Xinjiang and could contribute to increased violent extremism. For further information, please see the Department of State's *2015 Report on International Religious Freedom*:http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm and the *2015 Report on Human Rights:*http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/

International and Regional Cooperation: China continued to promote its commitment to working with the international community on UN Security Council (UNSC) counterterrorism issues. In May 2015 in Nanning, China hosted the 13th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime. China also regularly participated in other multilateral fora that address counterterrorism issues such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the APEC Counter-Terrorism Working Group. China also held bilateral counterterrorism dialogues with the Egypt, India, Indonesia, Russia, and the United States.

China cooperated with other nations on counterterrorism efforts through military exercises and assistance. China conducted joint military training with several nations that focused on improving counterterrorism capabilities. In September, China and Pakistan staged "Joint Field Exercise Warrior III," an annual counterterrorism exercise. In October, China and India held "Hand-in-Hand 2015," the fifth counterterrorism drill of its kind since 2007. That same month China hosted members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for "Xiamen 2015," an online counterterrorism exercise. In August, China and Russia held their largest-ever joint maritime drill in the Sea of Japan, "Joint Sea II," that included a joint counterterrorism amphibious assault component.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong continued its effective security and law enforcement partnership with the United States through the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department's successful joint operation of the Container Security Initiative; through participation in U.S. government-sponsored training in related topics; and through engagement with U.S. counterterrorism agencies.

Counterterrorism remained an operational priority for the Hong Kong Police Force, as demonstrated by existing policies on prevention, protection, and preparedness. The Police Security Wing shares potential terrorist threat information with relevant counterterrorism units. The Police Counterterrorism Response Unit provides a strong deterrent presence, assisting police districts with counterterrorism strategy implementation, and complementing the tactical and professional support of existing police specialist units – such as the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Bureau, Special Duties Unit, Airport Security Unit, and VIP Protection Unit. The Security Bureau in November 2015 conducted a large-scale, inter-departmental counterterrorism exercise to test and enhance city-wide counterterrorism coordination and response capabilities. This exercise was the first of its kind in terms of scale and scope.

Hong Kong is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body. Its Joint Financial Intelligence Unit is a member of the Egmont Group. Terrorism financing is a criminal offense in Hong Kong, and

financial institutions are required to continuously search for terrorism financing networks and screen accounts using designations lists provided by the United States under relevant authorities, as well as the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida and1988 (Taliban) sanctions regime. Filing suspicious transactions reports irrespective of transaction amounts is obligatory, but Hong Kong does not require mandatory reporting requirements for cross-border currency movements.

Hong Kong's strategic trade regime buttresses U.S. efforts to restrict commodities, software, and technology to terrorist organizations or individuals. Hong Kong law enforcement officers attended U.S. government-sponsored capacity building training at the International Law Enforcement Academy on advanced post-blast investigations, personnel and facility security, law enforcement techniques to counter terrorism, and financial investigations. Select Hong Kong Police officers also attended Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) courses, DoD sponsored conferences, and conducted subject matter exchanges and training with U.S. Military units.

Macau

The Police Intervention Tactical Unit (UTIP), which falls under the Macau Public Security Police Force, is responsible for protecting important installations and dignitaries, and for conducting high-risk missions such as deactivation of IEDs. UTIP's Special Operations Group's mission is counterterrorism operations. Macau law enforcement officers attended U.S. government-sponsored capacity building training at the International Law Enforcement Academy on personnel and facility security, financial and crime scene investigations, countering terrorism, computer investigations, and evidence protection. U.S. Consulate law enforcement personnel also provided training in fraudulent document recognition to Macau border security authorities.

Macau is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body, and its Financial Intelligence Office is a member of the Egmont Group. Terrorism financing is a criminal offense in Macau, and banks and other financial institutions are required to continuously search for terrorism financing networks and screen accounts using designations lists provided by the United States under relevant authorities, as well as the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida and the 1988 (Taliban) sanctions regime. Filing suspicious transactions reports irrespective of transaction amounts is obligatory, but Macau does not currently require mandatory reporting requirements for cross-border currency movements.

Macau cooperated internationally on counterterrorism efforts through INTERPOL and other security-focused organizations, including through FATF and APG.

INDONESIA

Overview: Indonesia uses a civilian law enforcement-led, rule-of-law-based approach in its domestic counterterrorism operations. Since the 2002 Bali bombings, Indonesia has applied sustained pressure to successfully degrade the capabilities of terrorists and their networks operating within Indonesia's borders. There was no major attack against Western interests in Indonesia in 2015. There is growing concern that foreign terrorist fighters returning from Iraq

and Syria with new training, skills, and experience could conduct attacks against Indonesian government personnel or facilities, Western targets, or other soft targets.

As of December, Indonesian officials estimate that there are approximately 800 Indonesian foreign terrorist fighters in Iraq and Syria, though official estimates fluctuate between agencies and services. Indonesian officials say they have identified 284 Indonesian citizens actively involved in fighting in Iraq and Syria and are investigating an additional 516. They also believe that 52 Indonesian foreign terrorist fighters have died in Syria and estimate that another 60 to 100 have returned to Indonesia. The bulk of this number of estimated returnees includes those Indonesians and their families who have been detained and deported by authorities in transit countries while en route to Syria and Iraq. Fighters may also return undetected by exploiting vulnerabilities in the land and sea borders of this vast archipelagic nation.

Abu Wardah (also known as Santoso) is the leader of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) and is Indonesia's most-wanted terrorist. He remained at large in the remote jungle area near Poso, Central Sulawesi. In July 2014, Santoso publicly pledged allegiance to ISIL. Several terrorist convicts were paroled in 2015 after completing their prison terms, including senior leaders of Jemaah Islamiya; these senior leaders are counter-ISIL. There is a growing government- and civil society-led effort to promote Indonesian Islam as a peaceful and moderate alternative to violent extremist teachings elsewhere in the world.

Indonesia does not provide a safe haven for terrorists. However, members of the terrorist group MIT meet and train in the isolated area near Poso, Central Sulawesi. Indonesian officials are committed to eliminating this threat.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: In 2015,MIT was blamed for the murders of three civilians. In August, a member of the Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) was killed in a shootout with a suspected MIT terrorist. In late November, a member of the Indonesian military (TNI) was shot and killed by an MIT member in another confrontation.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Indonesia follows a strong rule-of-law-based counterterrorism approach. After investigation by the police, terrorist suspects' dossiers are sent to the Task Force on Counterterrorism and Transnational Crimes (SATGAS), which is part of the Attorney General's Office, for prosecution. Relevant legislation includes the Law on Combating Criminal Acts of Terrorism (15/2003), the Law on Prevention and Eradication of Anti-Terrorist Financing (9/2013), the 1951 Emergency Law, and Indonesia's Criminal Code.

Counterterrorism efforts are police-led, with Detachment 88 – the elite counterterrorism unit of the police – leading operations and investigations. Counterterrorism units from the Indonesian military may be called upon to support domestic counterterrorism operations and responses on an as-needed basis. Law enforcement units are increasingly able to detect, and in some cases prevent, attacks before they are carried out.

Law enforcement personnel participated in a range of training and professional development activities, including through the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, with training focused on building sustainable police capacity in tactical crisis response and investigative skills.

Indonesia recognizes the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and was a co-sponsor of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178. The government has repeatedly and forcefully denounced ISIL, but it has yet to pass laws explicitly criminalizing material support, travel to join foreign terrorist organizations, or commission of extraterritorial offenses related to counterterrorism. Since mid-2014, officials have been considering amending Law 15/2003 or issuing a Presidential Decree in Lieu of Law to more effectively prosecute Indonesians traveling to join terrorist groups abroad or providing material support to foreign terrorist organizations.

Indonesian prosecutors stated that they prosecuted 56 terrorism-related cases between January and October 2015. Of those, 16 cases are related to ISIL activity and five have resulted in convictions, with the remaining cases ongoing. For example, charges were filed against Afif Abdul Majid, former Central Java branch head of Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), not only for his role in providing funding for a JAT training camp in Aceh in 2010, but for joining and participating in exercises with ISIL while in Syria. He was convicted in June for the former charge and sentenced to four years in prison, but the judge could not convict Majid for ISIL-related activities due to insufficient evidence under Indonesia's current counterterrorism law. On March 21, six individuals were arrested by Detachment 88 for allegedly funding or recruiting for ISIL. Two of those arrested, Amin Mude and Tuah Febriwansyah, aka Muhammad Fachry, acted as key facilitators sending Indonesians to Syria to join ISIL. In November, Amin Mude was successfully convicted under 15/2003 and 9/2013 and sentenced to five years and six months in prison. Despite some domestic convictions, Indonesian law lacked the provisions to criminalize and prosecute acts of, and support for, terrorism committed abroad. Frequent personnel rotation at various agencies – including the police, legal cadres, and the judiciary – represents a challenge to building long-term institutional expertise.

The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) is responsible for coordinating terrorism-related intelligence and information among stakeholder agencies, and comprises detailees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the TNI, and the Indonesian National Police (POLRI). In September, President Joko Widodo (known as Jokowi) called for concrete steps to strengthen the BNPT's interagency coordination role.

Violent extremist groups exploited social media and mobile phone applications to spread propaganda and recruit people to their cause. In March, the Minister of Communications and Information declared the government had blocked 70 ISIL-related blogs and websites at the request of the BNPT. On occasion, the BNPT will also request that specific social media accounts be suspended. The BNPT maintains multiple websites and social media accounts, publishes books, and organizes public discussion forums to counter extremist narratives. While legislative reform to tackle foreign terrorist fighters is still pending, some of Indonesia's efforts dovetailed with obligations outlined in UNSCR 2178. For example, Indonesia condemned ISIL and sought to prevent the movement of terrorists, including through enhanced controls related to the issuance of identity papers. Indonesia also implemented several of the Global Counterterrorism Forum's (GCTF's) good practices for a more effective response against foreign terrorist fighters.

In early 2015 POLRI launched Operation Camar Maleo, a significant and sustained police operation in Poso, Central Sulawesi, in an effort to root out members of MIT. The operations have involved a thousand personnel from the Brimob, Detachment 88, and members of the Indonesian military. At least 10 alleged terrorists have been arrested in the province and two

were killed. MIT is reported to have approximately 20-40 members left in Poso. In December, MIT leader Santoso issued a message online calling for Indonesians to join ISIL in Iraq or Syria and to execute attacks on Indonesian authorities. Santoso also threatened to destroy the Jakarta Metropolitan Police. On September 13, 2014, police in Central Sulawesi arrested seven people, including one Turkish national and three ethnic Uighurs from China's Xinjiang Province, for alleged links to MIT. In July 2015, the Turkish national and Uighurs were convicted of conspiring to join MIT and sentenced to six years in prison.

Also in July, police arrested three people deemed a threat to public safety in East Nusa Tenggara province for alleged involvement in ISIL and on suspicion of spreading ISIL ideology. On August 12, three suspects were arrested by Detachment 88 for suspected involvement in a plot involving improvised explosive devices in Solo, Central Java. The ringleader, Ibadurahman, allegedly received assistance from other Indonesians in Syria. On December 18 and 19, Detachment 88 conducted raids in East and Central Java, arrested several suspected terrorists, and seized bomb-making equipment.

As of early November, there were 230 terrorist prisoners held in 26 prisons throughout Indonesia, overseen by the Directorate General of Corrections under the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. Some of Indonesia's most hardened terrorists and ideologues are incarcerated in several prisons on the island of Nusakambangan, off the southern coast of Java. Authorities remained concerned about the potential recidivism of released terrorist prisoners. In addition, terrorists convicted on non-terrorism charges are not always counted or tracked through the justice system as convicted terrorists, creating a potential loophole in disengagement and de-radicalization efforts.

Immigration officials at major ports of entry, especially larger international air and seaports, have access to biographic and biometric domestic-only databases. Military and police personnel are often posted at major ports of entry to ensure security. Police maintained a watchlist of suspected terrorists, but there are not always clear lines of coordination among stakeholder agencies. Indonesia shares information through INTERPOL but does not regularly screen through INTERPOL at immigration checkpoints. Information sharing with countries in the region is often on an ad hoc basis, and there is no centralized database or platform for the sharing of information with countries in the region or internationally.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Indonesia is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center is a member of the Egmont Group. In June, Indonesia achieved milestone progress by being removed from FATF's International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) after five years of being named on the Public Statement. This determination was based on Indonesia's passage of key legislation criminalizing money laundering and terrorism financing, and by implementing terrorist asset freezing pursuant to UNSCR 1373 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. Implementation of asset freezes is known to take some time and Indonesia needs to find a way to expedite the implementation of asset freeze provisions.Indonesia adopted a joint resolution to further implement asset freezing as required under UNSCR 1373 and 2253. Indonesia continued to issue orders to freeze the assets of all UNSCR 2253 (ISIL and al-Qa'ida)-sanctioned individuals and entities and is working to implement an electronic process to ensure that its

freezing process is “without delay.” Santoso was put on Indonesia’s list of domestic terroristsin 2015.

The passage of the terrorism financing law was an important step forward, and Indonesia has filed cases under this new legislation. In 2015, Indonesia brought 13 cases and obtained nine convictions. Indonesia must continue to develop investigative resources and intelligence to counter international organizations engaging in money laundering and terrorist finance. Although non-profit organizations such as religious and charitable organizations are licensed and required to file suspicious transaction reports, the terrorism financing law does not require monitoring or the regulation of such organizations to prevent misuse, including terrorism financing.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Indonesian officials recognize the importance of addressing radicalization to violence and countering violent extremism (CVE). Vice-President Jusuf Kalla led the Indonesian delegation to the Leader’s Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkin September. In his address, he stressed that military intervention alone cannot defeat violent extremism and instead highlighted an approach that focuses on improving social welfare and equity, strengthening legal frameworks, and de-radicalization and counter-radicalization efforts. He said that Indonesia will continue to promote the spirit of tolerance by empowering moderates through dialogue and actively engaging civil society, including the two largest Islamic organizations Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, to provide counter-narratives to terrorist ideology.

CVE programs are included in counterterrorism efforts, but because of limited resources and the vast amount of territory of the Indonesian archipelago, CVE efforts are not yet comprehensive. Government efforts are augmented by contributions from various civil society organizations. Some of the groups offered positive alternatives, such as sports, film-making, camps, and rallies, for populations vulnerable to violent extremism, especially youth. However, civil society efforts suffered from similar challenges of scale in reaching at-risk populations across the archipelago.

The BNPT has expanded the Terrorism Prevention Coordination Forum (FKPT) to 32 of Indonesia’s 34 provinces, and leverages these groups to broaden community engagement. Forum members are usually civic and religious leaders who coordinate CVE-related programming and activities within their communities. The level of engagement and activities of each FKPT varies by region and available resources. For example, the BNPT collaborated with FKPTs in Mataram, Semarang, and Yogyakarta, to organize workshops to help young student leaders develop counter-narratives and amplify these messages using social media platforms. Through presentations from former terrorists, survivors of terrorist attacks, law enforcement personnel, and religious leaders, the BNPT encouraged discussion of religious tolerance and CVE.

With respect to ISIL, Indonesian government efforts to develop a counter-messaging strategy are nascent. In addition to the BNPT, the Indonesian National Police are training officers in the Public Relations Division on effective counter-messaging approaches. The Jokowi

administration is promoting the concept of Indonesian Islam as a positive and tolerant form of Islam practiced by the majority of Indonesia's Muslims and an alternative to violent extremist ideologies. The two largest Islamic civil society organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, are at the forefront of this effort. In November, NU released a 90-minute film titled the "The Divine Grace of Islam Nusantara" (Rahmat Islam Nusantara) which directly challenges and denounces ISIL interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith.

A de-radicalization blueprint for terrorist prisoners issued by the BNPT in late 2013 has yet to be fully implemented. Counterterrorism officials, in coordination with the Directorate General of Corrections and other relevant law enforcement agencies, planned to open a de-radicalization center in Sentul, south of Jakarta, but it was not operational at the end of 2015. There was ongoing debate about how to handle the most hardcore violent extremists, but the evolving consensus is to confine these prisoners in one of Indonesia's maximum security detention centers.

International and Regional Cooperation: Indonesia participated in counterterrorism efforts through several international, multilateral, and regional fora including: the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), ASEAN, APEC, and others. Indonesia expanded regional and international cooperation, especially in response to the foreign terrorist fighter issue. With Australia, Indonesia co-chaired the GCTF Working Group on Detention and Reintegration, and it participated in a range of GCTF workshops. Indonesia remained active in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meetings on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) and the APEC Counter-Terrorism Working Group. In November, Indonesia and Australia co-hosted a Counterterrorism Financing Summit in Sydney, Australia. Indonesia continued to use the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) as a regional resource in the fight against transnational crime with a focus on counterterrorism. The United States and other foreign partners routinely offered counterterrorism training courses at JCLEC. Since its inception in 2004 as a joint Australian and Indonesian initiative, JCLEC has trained more than 18,000 police officers from 70 countries.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Overview: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is not known to have sponsored any terrorist acts since the bombing of a Korean Airlines flight in 1987. In October 2008, the United States rescinded the designation of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism in accordance with criteria set forth in U.S. law, including a certification that the DPRK had not provided any support for international terrorism during the preceding six-month period and the provision by the DPRK of assurances that it would not support acts of international terrorism in the future.

Four Japanese Red Army members who participated in a 1970 jet hijacking continued to live in the DPRK. The Japanese government continued to seek a full accounting of the fate of 12 Japanese nationals believed to have been abducted by DPRK state entities in the 1970s and 1980s. In May 2014, the DPRK agreed to re-open its investigation into the abductions, but as of the end of 2015 had not yet provided the results of this investigation to Japan.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In May, the United States re-certified North Korea as a country "not cooperating fully" with U.S. counterterrorism efforts pursuant to

Section 40A of the Arms Export and Control Act, as amended. In making this annual determination, the Department of State reviewed the DPRK's overall level of cooperation with U.S. efforts to counter terrorism, taking into account U.S. counterterrorism objectives with the DPRK and a realistic assessment of DPRK capabilities.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The DPRK is not a member of any FATF-style regional body. In July 2014, it was admitted as an observer, but not a full member, of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body. Nevertheless, the DPRK failed to demonstrate meaningful progress in strengthening its anti-money laundering/ combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) infrastructure. While encouraging the DPRK's continued engagement with FATF and APG, the FATF highlighted continuing concerns about North Korea's "failure to address the significant deficiencies in its [AML/CFT] regime and the serious threat this poses to the integrity of the international financial system." For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

MALAYSIA

Overview: Malaysia's counterterrorism efforts in 2015 continued to focus on mitigating the threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and foreign terrorist fighters, including by passing and implementing new legislation and continued law enforcement activity. Prime Minister Najib announced at the September Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkthat Malaysia was part of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Malaysian authorities arrested approximately 90 suspected ISIL supporters and other terrorists in 2015 and convicted at least 13 in court. The Malaysian government identified 72 Malaysians, including 14 women, who have joined ISIL, 51 of whom were armed fighters. By the end of the year, Malaysian authorities had identified a total of 14 Malaysians killed fighting with ISIL, and seven of whom had returned to Malaysia.

Malaysia continued to strengthen its counterterrorism cooperation with the United States. President Obama returned to Malaysia in November for the East Asia Summit and related meetings. During his visit, President Obama committed the United States to support the Malaysian government in developing a regional messaging center to counter terrorist propaganda.

Deputy Prime Minister/Home Minister Zahid visited Washington in October, when he and Secretary of State Kerry signed a terrorist watchlist-sharing arrangement, pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive-6. The agreement provides a foundation for a long-term, comprehensive, and systematic exchange of information on known and suspected terrorists, and will allow Malaysian authorities to screen individuals against U.S. watchlists. A team from the U.S. Terrorist Screening Center visited Kuala Lumpur in December to establish with Malaysian authorities technical steps for implementing the agreement. In November, Malaysia and the United States signed a similar information sharing agreement focused on serious crime, called the Preventing and Combatting Serious Crime (PCSC) Agreement. The PCSC agreement provides for automated checks and exchanges of biometric information on serious criminals.

Malaysia sometimes used national security and counterterrorism arguments to delegitimize some social groups and political activities. For example, high-level officials from the ruling coalition have publicly stated that ISIL and G25, a pro-reform Islamic NGO composed of retired senior civil servants, were the two most pressing threats to Malaysian security.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: In May, Militants allegedly from the Philippines and linked to the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) kidnapped two Malaysians from a restaurant in Sandakan, eastern Sabah, Malaysia. ASG terrorists on the southern Philippine island of Jolo reportedly released one of the victims in November following a ransom payment. Several days later, however, the other victim was beheaded, reportedly due to a dispute between the kidnappers over the ransom payment.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In April, Malaysia's Parliament passed two new counterterrorism laws and amended previous legislation, providing authorities with greater legal tools against foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorist supporters. The Special Measures Against Terrorism in Foreign Countries Bill enables authorities to suspend or revoke Malaysian travel documents for individuals suspected of planning to leave the country to engage in terrorist acts. The new laws passed with limited public debate granting broad new powers to the Prime Minister.

Amendments to the Penal Code criminalized the receipt of terrorist training, the preparation of terrorist acts, and possession of items (such as books and promotional materials) associated with terrorist groups. The amendments also ban travel to, through, or from Malaysia to engage in terrorism, criminalize the use of social media to promote terrorism, and expand the definition of "support to terrorist groups."

While most of the legislative changes passed in 2015 are consistent with a rule-of-law approach to counterterrorism, the U.S. government and other observers, including the Malaysian Bar Council, raised concerns that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and amendments to the Prevention of Crime Act (POCA) reinstate preventive detention without trial and could be used against political opponents of the government. POTA covers the commission or support of terrorist acts outside of Malaysia, whereas the POCA amendments expand preventive detention authority to broader criminal activity. Fueling these concerns, in September, Malaysian authorities detained under the Security Offenses (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA) authority a former ruling party politician who had been critical of the government. In early October, police detained his lawyer, also under SOSMA authority. Both were detained for the maximum 28 days allowed by the law, and were subsequently charged under Chapter VI, Section 124L for "attempt to commit sabotage."

In early December, the Malaysian Parliament passed the National Security Council Act, which gives the Prime Minister unchecked authority to wield martial-law-like powers in any part of the country designated by the Prime Minister as a "security area." Similar powers are defined by the Malaysian constitution, but were previously reserved to the king.

The Royal Malaysian Police Special Branch Counterterrorism Unit has the lead counterterrorism law enforcement role. Malaysian authorities continued to improve interagency cooperation and information sharing, including participation in regional meetings, Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) events, and training conducted through Malaysia's Southeast Asia Regional

Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), which is part of Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Most of Malaysia's terrorism-related arrests in 2015 were under SOSMA and penal code chapters VI (Offenses Against the State) and VIa (Offenses Relating to Terrorism).

Malaysia convicted at least 13 ISIL supporters in 2015, all of whom pled guilty in return for reduced sentences. Those convicted included a father and son sentenced to 18 years and 12 years respectively for plotting attacks in Malaysia; several individuals sentenced to two years following their arrest at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on their way to join ISIL in Syria, including a woman who planned to marry an ISIL fighter she had met online; a 55-year-old mother of a deceased ISIL fighter sentenced to two years for using Facebook to promote terrorism; and two military personnel sentenced to seven and nine months in prison for possessing an image of an ISIL flag on their cell phones.

In October, at the request of the U.S. government, Malaysian police arrested Ardit Ferizi, a 20-year-old computer hacker from Kosovo who had provided ISIL with personal information of more than 1,300 U.S. government employees. Ferizi's extradition to the United States was pending as of early December.

In April, the trial began for al-Qa'ida operative Yazid Sufaat and accomplice Muhammad Hilmi Hasim, and remained underway at year's end. Sufaat and Hasim were arrested in 2013 for recruiting Malaysians to fight in Syria and are charged with inciting or promoting the commission of terrorist acts under Malaysia's penal code, and membership of a terrorist organization. Sufaat's other accomplice, Halimah Hussein, remained at large at year's end.

The trial of 30 suspects – 27 Philippine nationals and three Malaysians – involved in the February 2013 Lahad Datu incursion, began in January 2014 and remained ongoing at the end of 2015. The suspects were on trial under SOSMA for harboring terrorists, membership of a terrorist group, recruiting terrorists, and waging war against the king.

Iranian citizen, and suspected member of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, Masoud Sedaghatzadeh, arrested in Malaysia in February 2012 after failed attempted bombings in Bangkok, remained in Malaysian custody. A Malaysian court had ordered Sedaghatzadeh's extradition to Thailand in 2012, but his appeal remained pending at year's end.

With U.S. assistance, the Royal Malaysian Police and Immigration Department took steps to provide immigration authorities with direct access to INTERPOL databases. Also with assistance from the United States, Malaysia began near-daily reporting to INTERPOL of stolen and lost travel documents. Malaysia has a no-fly list, but passengers are compared to that list by the immigration officer at the port of entry and the decision to deny entry is made at the airport.

In 2015, Malaysia made notable progress implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2178 by passing new legislation, increasing information sharing with international partners, strengthening efforts to halt the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, engaging with civil society and local communities, and promoting non-violent avenues for conflict prevention, such as the creation of MyCorps, a Malaysian version of the Peace Corps.

The Malaysian government enforced a maritime curfew along the eastern coast of Sabah, in response to the continued threat of kidnapping for ransom and other transnational threats. In September, Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister/Home Minister announced plans to establish a new Border Security Agency, which would include police, customs, and immigration officials. As of year's end, that agency had not yet been created.

Malaysia continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, with programs focused on strengthening law enforcement capacity to secure Malaysia's borders from terrorist transit.

In 2015, the U.S. Department of State launched in Malaysia a regional maritime law enforcement initiative, which includes Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The Department of State's Export Controls and Related Border Security Program conducted capacity-building activities for customs, police, immigration, the Attorney General's Chamber, coast guard, and strategic trade officials. Malaysia participated in the Container Security and Megaports Initiatives, as well as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's Container Control Program.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Malaysia became a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2015, and is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body. Malaysia's financial intelligence unit (the Unit Perisikan Kewangan, Bank Negara Malaysia) is a member of the Egmont Group. In September 2015, FATF published its Mutual Evaluation Report on Malaysia's anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) measures. The report praised Malaysia's robust policy framework, strong political commitment and well-functioning coordination structures for AML/CFT, although it underscored the need for Malaysia to improve its understanding of terrorist finance risk.

Malaysia has a well-developed AML/CFT framework, and a capable Financial Intelligence and Enforcement Unit within the Bank Negara Malaysia, the central bank of Malaysia. While terrorism financing was not considered a high risk in Malaysia's most recent National Risk Assessment (NRA), the continued influence of ISIL suggests that threat may be increasing: in particular, a small but growing number of "self-financed" terrorists have sought to raise funds through family, friends, and the internet to support their travel to fight with ISIL. Understanding of ISIL-related financing risks evolved in 2015, and Malaysia plans to update its most recent NRA to include further assessment of terrorist finance risks.

Malaysia has not prosecuted any terrorist finance cases to date, although it has commenced 40 terrorist finance investigations since 2010, with 22 ongoing at year's end. All 12 of the cases opened since 2014 related to ISIL.

Malaysia has implemented sanctions in accordance with relevant UNSCRs, including designating domestic and foreign entities under UNSCR 1373 and co-sponsoring designations and freezing assets of individuals and entities on the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. The 2014 amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorist Financing Act provide for automatic translation of UN designations into designations under Malaysian law and direct reference to the lists maintained by the UN. Malaysia routinely distributed lists of terrorist designations and freezing obligations to financial institutions.

The use of informal remittances created vulnerability for abuse by terrorist financiers. Malaysia has undertaken strong regulatory and enforcement action against unauthorized money services businesses that operate in the informal economy. Strengthened controls, enforcement and other supervisory measures have boosted the use of formal remittance channels, although risks from unauthorized money services businesses remain.

Malaysia requires Know Your Customer (KYC) data for a wide range of entities, and requires financial institutions to promptly report transactions suspected to involve proceeds of any unlawful activity via Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs). Malaysia does not oblige non-profit organizations to file STRs, but they are required to file annual financial reports to the Registrar of Societies (ROS), which may file such reports. Law enforcement works with the ROS and other charity regulators to prevent misuse and terrorism financing in the NPO sector, especially in vulnerable areas like religious or charitable NPOs. The ROS also conducts an annual conference for its members on the risks of terrorism financing.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm

Countering Violent Extremism: Senior Malaysian officials actively participated in the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism(CVE) in February and related events held throughout the year. Prime Minister Najib announced Malaysia's plans to develop a counterterrorism messaging center at the September Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York. Following that announcement, the U.S. Department of State worked closely with the government to develop a concept for the center. The Home Affairs Minister also actively engaged in CVE efforts, including through his participation at the CVE Summit held in Sydney, Australia, in June.

SEARCCT conducted several regional programs on countering violent extremism. The Global Movement of Moderates (GMM), a Malaysian-based organization founded by Prime Minister Najib, conducted several CVE programs, including a public forum on youth and terrorism. In May, with support from the U.S. Department of Justice Resident Legal Advisor, GMM organized a workshop in partnership with Google to develop the capacity of civil society, including bloggers, academics, students, journalists, and community activists to develop credible online campaigns to counter terrorist propaganda.

International and Regional Cooperation: As the 2015 chair of ASEAN, Malaysia convened multiple multilateral events focused on strengthening international cooperation on counterterrorism and CVE. In March, the Minister of Defense hosted the ASEAN Defense Ministers Ministerial in Langkawi, resulting in a joint declaration committing to greater regional cooperation to counter the ISIL threat. Also in March, SEARCCT hosted an ASEAN Regional Forum workshop on counter-radicalization. Deputy Prime Minister Zahid participated in the UNSC Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Terrorist Fighters in May. In September, the Deputy Prime Minister hosted in Kuala Lumpur a Special ASEAN Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism. At the East Asia Summit held in Kuala Lumpur in November, Malaysia co-sponsored with Australia a statement on CVE and sponsored a statement on the Global Movement of Moderates.

SEARCCT hosted 18 training events in 2015, including seminars on crisis management, terrorist finance, and transportation security. Malaysian officials participated in several Global Counterterrorism Forum events, including a workshop on border security and a plenary session on the detention and reintegration of terrorist prisoners.

PHILIPPINES

Overview: The Philippines, in cooperation with the United States and other international partners, continued to make progress against international terrorism in 2015. Terrorist groups, including U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Jemaah Islamiya (JI), and the Communist People's Party/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), as well as other militant groups such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), were unable to conduct major attacks on civilian targets in metropolitan areas due to sustained pressure from Philippine counterterrorism and law enforcement efforts, although sporadic fighting did displace locals.

Members of these groups were suspected, however, to have carried out attacks against government, public, and private facilities, primarily in the central and western areas of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, while others were linked to extortion operations in other parts of the country. In addition, terrorist and rebel groups in the southern Philippines retained the capability and intent to conduct bomb-making training, small-scale shootings, and ambushes.

The Philippine government's Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which creates a new Bangsamoro autonomous government in Mindanao, is aimed at providing a peaceful resolution to the 40-year-old conflict in Mindanao. The peace plan, negotiated between the Philippine government and Moro political leaders dominated by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, is intended to reduce tensions in the South and diminish the attraction of violent extremist groups by providing greater political and economic autonomy for Muslim-majority areas of Mindanao.

Since the March 2014 signing of the CAB, clashes with the BIFF and other Moro splinter groups have continued in central Mindanao, indicating that violent opposition to the peace process remains. At the same time, continued heavy military and police presence, including active ongoing operations against the ASG, JI, the NPA, and other violent extremist groups with ties to terrorists such as the BIFF, resulted in the displacement of local populations and disruption of civilian livelihoods.

The Government of the Philippines continued to make modest progress in implementing its 2011–2016 Internal Peace and Security Plan, which calls for the transition of internal security functions from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to the Philippine National Police (PNP). The increasing role and capability of the police in maintaining internal security in conflict-affected areas will permit the AFP to shift its focus to enhance the country's maritime security and territorial defense capabilities. This transition continued to be slow, in part due to uncertainty over the implementation of the CAB, lack of capacity in the police force, and shifting priorities ahead of a national election in May 2016. Continued violent extremist activity, as well as counterterrorism capability gaps between the AFP and PNP, meant that the AFP continued to lead counterterrorism efforts in the Philippines.

The Philippine government submitted to Congress draft legislation known as the "Bangsamoro Basic Law" (BBL) in 2014 to establish the new autonomous government entity in the Southern Philippines, as stipulated by the CAB. The BBL was expected to pass Congress in 2015, but progress was largely derailed by the fallout over a counterterrorism operation in Mindanao that resulted in the death of 44 PNP Special Action Force troops in January. In the backlash against the peace process resulting from that clash, two additional separate versions of the BBL have been authored, one by each house of Congress, that vary significantly from the originally negotiated law. To date, none of those bills have progressed in the Congress and the law has missed several key implementation deadlines. Both the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front leadership confirmed their intent to press forward with a peaceful settlement at numerous points throughout the year.

The Government of the Philippines recognizes the potential threat posed by radicalized Philippine citizens supporting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the risk of ISIL elements traveling to the Philippines to promote violent extremism in the country or seek safe haven. Members of numerous groups – including ASG, the Ansarul Khilafah Philippines (AKP), and BIFF – have publicly pledged allegiance to ISIL. In 2015, these groups displayed ISIL-affiliated images and conducted some of ISIL's most reprehensible practices – including the beheading of hostages. Reports continued to emerge that ISIL was attempting to recruit Filipinos, but there was no strong evidence of any significant number of Filipinos traveling to the Middle East to join their ranks.

The government increased efforts to monitor the possibility of ISIL-affiliated terrorists seeking safe haven in the Southern Philippines. The President's Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) heads an interagency technical working group on persons of interest in conflict areas. That group meets regularly and has taken steps to tighten passport issuance, increase Bureau of Immigration screening at major departure points, and enhance monitoring of online extremist-related activity through the intelligence services and the PNP. At year's end, the ATC was reportedly preparing an Executive Order or other administrative policy document to formalize this process.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: There were dozens of small arms and IED attacks, kidnappings for ransom, and extortion efforts by suspected members of terrorist groups in the Philippines in 2015. Representative examples of specific incidents included:

- On February 19 in Cotabato City, members of the BIFF, who entered and occupied at least seven villages in Pikit town, North Cotabato Province, burned 20 houses in a rampage linked to competition with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.
- On May 5 in Zamboanga City, six armed men wearing military uniforms seized two Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel and a local barangay captain on an island resort off Dapitan City in Zamboanga del Norte. The barangay captain was later beheaded by his captors.
- On October 2 in South Cotabato, four people were killed and 11 others were injured in a roadside bombing attack on the convoy of a local official in Isabela City, Basilan.
- On November 17 in Sulu, a Malaysian hostage held by the ASG was beheaded after ransom demands were not met. The hostage had been captured in Malaysia and transported to the Southern Philippines.

- On November 23 in Samal, ASG-affiliated gunmen kidnapped two Canadian tourists, a Norwegian employee, and a Filipina from a luxury resort on Samal Island in Davao del Norte.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The 2007 Human Security Act (HSA) remained the principal counterterrorism legislation of the Philippines. The law defines terrorism and provides methods for law enforcement to conduct investigations of terrorist suspects. Many aspects of the law have not been used due to a number of strict procedural requirements in the law. These limitations include notification to subjects of surveillance before activities can begin and damages of approximately US $12,000 for every day of detention if an individual accused of terrorism is ultimately acquitted. In 2015, the Philippines Department of Justice obtained its first ever conviction under the HSA. Most convictions are made under other criminal legislation. In September, the Isabela City Regional Trial Court in Basilan designated ASG as a terrorist organization under the HSA. This is the first designation of a terrorist group in the Philippines under the HSA.

Philippine units with a specialized counterterrorism focus, including the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the PNP Special Action Force (SAF), have improved their investigative, crisis response, and border security capacity. However, multiple agencies have jurisdiction over counterterrorism efforts, creating duplication and inefficiency in leading investigations and in response to terrorism incidents. Roles and responsibilities between law enforcement and military units that have a counterterrorism mission were often not well-delineated, and command and control arrangements were often dependent on interpersonal relationships between incident commanders. Specialized law enforcement units possessed some necessary equipment, but numerous unfulfilled needs remained, and sustainment and maintenance of complex equipment often exceeded fiscal and human resources. Law enforcement units had a mixed record of accountability and respect for human rights. The ATC provided guidance to agencies responsible for enforcing terrorism laws, but its capacity to enforce cooperation and coordination between agencies was limited.

The approximately 150,000-strong PNP maintained legal responsibility for ensuring peace and security throughout the county, which included arresting terrorists and conducting terrorism investigations. In conflict-affected areas, the PNP often relied upon the AFP to conduct counterterrorism operations, and coordination between the two services improved, but more work remained to be done. The PNP SAF is the national operational support unit for law enforcement counterterrorism efforts.

The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program in the Philippines assisted the PNP's SAF, Anti-Kidnapping Group, Anti-Cybercrime Group, Explosive Ordnance Disposal/K9 units and other law enforcement units in Mindanao by providing counterterrorism-related training and specialized equipment and explosive detector K-9 dogs. This assistance strengthened the PNP's capacity to respond to terrorism-related incidents. In 2015, the ATA Program conducted 35 courses with 897 participants from the Philippines.

The Philippines issues "e-passports", which make up more than 65 percent of all valid passports in circulation. At the main international airport in Manila, the Philippines participated in the INTERPOL Border Management Program.

The first phase of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) was completed in 2014, which included the build-out of the physical AFIS facility at NBI headquarters and the digitization of 850,000 fingerprint records. No funding was available from either the Philippine government budget or U.S. assistance funding to complete the second phase of the AFIS program in 2015.

In 2015, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) partnered with State's ATA program to deliver an Airport Security Managers course to several Philippine government agencies that focused on implementation and oversight of international aviation security standards.

The Philippine government has also successfully procured advanced screening technologies such as body imagers to mitigate the evolving threat of non- or low-metallic IEDs.

With assistance from the United States, security in the Sulu Archipelago Tri-Border area of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia was being improved through efforts to enhance the capacity of the PNP Maritime Group, Maritime Special Operations Units (MSOU). MSOU and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) operational and training capacity has been upgraded through provision of varied courses of instruction by the DOJ International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), using the Global Security Contingency Fund; this training enhanced the capacity of the MSOUs and the PCG to integrate operations in the border region.

In addition to its cooperation with the United States, the Philippines received counterterrorism assistance from Australia, the UK, Canada, and Japan. This work focuses generally on capacity building for investigation, detection and removal of explosive ordnance and demolition, forensics, case management, intelligence, and special operations training with the PNP and the AFP.

The U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG's) International Port Security (IPS) Program has been actively engaged in the Philippines since 2004 to assist with and assess the country's implementation of counterterrorism measures at international port facilities. In 2015, the USCG continued its capacity building and assessment efforts to stimulate and enhance the country's implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code by conducting four training seminars and numerous port facility assessments. The Philippine government is making incremental but steady improvement in terms of implementing counterterrorism measures.

In 2015, the United States continued to work with the Government of the Philippines to monitor and investigate groups engaged in or supporting terrorist activities in the Philippines. The Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines, under Operation Enduring Freedom, was successfully concluded in June 2015 after more than a decade. The government launched numerous operations, particularly in the Southern Philippines, to make arrests and disrupt organizations like the ASG, JI, BIFF, and NPA, with the ultimate goal of prosecuting terrorist suspects and organizations. Specific examples of counterterrorism operations included:

- On January 25 in Maguindanao, "OPLAN Exodus," a plan to serve an arrest warrant on internationally-wanted Malaysian JI bomb-maker Zulkifli bin Amir, or "Marwan" (number one on the Philippines most wanted list and also wanted by the United States)

was launched against a safehouse inside Moro Islamic Liberation Front-controlled areas in Mamasapano, Mindanao, and conducted by the PNP's Special Action Force. Marwan was killed in the course of the raid when he resisted arrest; there was a seven-hour running firefight with several hundred BIFF, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and private armed force fighters, killing 44 SAF troops, 15 Moro Islamic Liberation Front fighters, and eight civilians. On March 15 in General Santos City, senior BIFF military leader Mohamad Ali Tombako was arrested in a joint operation between PNP and AFP forces, just weeks after leading BIFF forces in a clash with troops in Maguindanao that left four AFP soldiers dead.

- On May 1 in Maguindanao, BIFF and Moro Islamic Liberation Front bomb-maker Abdul Basit Usman was killed during an AFP operation to detain him in Mindanao.
- On May 10 in Basilan, AFP troops overran a major bomb-making camp and seized a large amount of bomb-making materials during offensive operations against the ASG.
- On November 20 in Sultan Kudarat, Philippine Marines overran a camp operated by the Ansarul Khilafah Philippines (AKP), killing eight members of the group, which had associated itself with ISIL and claimed to represent the group in the Philippines. Among those killed was one of the suspects in the 2002 Bali bombings. A combined military and police team intended to serve a warrant of arrest for the group's leader, Mohamad Jaafar Sabiwang Maguid (popularly known as "Kumander Tokboy") when it was fired upon by the group. Tokboy is believed to have escaped in the fighting.
- On November 27 in Jolo, a joint task force of Philippine military and PNP troops captured ASG figure Saddam Jailani, who was suspected in the beheading of a Malaysian hostage and the death of a South Korean hostage.

In 2015, the Philippines continued coordinating with U.S. law enforcement authorities, especially regarding wanted U.S. fugitives and suspected terrorists. On November 18, three men were convicted in Regional Trial Court 15 of kidnapping and sentenced to life imprisonment in connection with the 2011 abduction of American Gerfa Yeatts Lunsmann, her son Kevin, and cousin Romnick Jakaria (other suspects remained at-large). Additionally, hearings continued in Cebu in the prosecution of four defendants accused of murdering two U.S. soldiers and one Philippine Marine in an IED attack in Kagay, Jolo, in September 2009.

On November 16, 2015, ASG financier Khair Mundos and three others were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by Zamboanga City Regional Trial Court Branch 87 for abducting nurse Preciosa Feliciano in Zamboanga City in 2008. The suspects held Feliciano captive for four months after allegedly receiving a ransom payment.

Although these successes were important, an under-resourced and understaffed law enforcement and judicial system, coupled with widespread official corruption, continued to limit domestic investigations and resulted in a small number of prosecutions and lengthy trials of terrorism cases. Philippine investigators and prosecutors lacked necessary tools to build strong cases, including clear processes for requesting judicially-authorized interception of terrorist communications, entering into plea bargains with key witnesses, and seizing assets of those suspected of benefiting from terrorism. The Philippines, with the assistance of the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), has developed a Training Manual for collaboration among the intelligence, investigation, and prosecution sectors.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The Philippines is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body, and its Anti-Money Laundering Council is a member of the Egmont Group. In recent years, the Philippines significantly improved its financial regulatory regime and remained focused on effective implementation of international standards.

The U.S. government works directly with the Joint Terrorist Financing Investigation Group (JTFIG), a joint interagency taskforce with members from the ATC; the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC); and the PNP's Directorate of Intelligence (DI), Anti-Kidnapping Group (AKG), and SAF to pursue terrorism finance cases in 2015. The JTFIG acts as an "intelligence fusion center" to complement the other intelligence groups tasked with investigating terrorism and terrorism financing. In 2015, Philippine agencies participating in the JTFIG pursued several investigations into suspected terrorism financing. In March, a bank account of an arrested ASG member was frozen by the AMLC after six months of investigation. This is the first financial account frozen under the Financial Terrorism Law.

In implementation of UNSCR 2199 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime, the AMLC has frozen the assets of six members of ISIL and al-Nusrah Front. Under Section 8 of the Terrorist Financing Prevention and Suppression Act, all transactions with the named individuals designated by AMLC are prohibited. The AMLC freezes assets of those listed at the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida, and 1988 (Taliban) sanctions regimes through AMLC Resolution TF-01.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2015, the Philippine government continued its counter-radicalization efforts through the Resilient Communities in Conflict Affected Communities program. During the year, the Philippines worked with the Global Counterterrorism Forum to apply the Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders. Government offices, including the President's Law Enforcement and Security Integration Office and the Philippine Center for Transnational Crime, led interagency collaboration on countering violent extremism (CVE) through counter-radicalization and de-radicalization initiatives.

The PNP's Directorate for Police Community Relations (DPCR), through the Salaam Police Center (SPC) and Salaam Police personnel in regional, provincial, and city police offices, regularly conducted peacebuilding and counter-radicalization efforts in respective areas of responsibilities targeting students, youth, women, Muslim elders, and religious and community leaders to foster dialogue and clear up misconceptions that could lead to violent extremism. The DPCR, through its Information Operation and Research Center (IORC), is strengthening its information operation strategies to weaken the narratives of violent extremism.

Philippine officials participated in several CVE initiatives throughout the year. In February, members of the ATC and civil society representatives attended the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremismin Washington, D.C. In April, Philippine government and civil society members attended a Regional CVE seminar hosted by Singapore. In May, the Philippine

government, in cooperation with the U.S. Pacific Command's Military Information Support Team (MIST), inaugurated the Combined Special Outreach Group, a joint AFP-PNP community engagement group to share best practices and combine strategies for public messaging on peace and order and CVE outreach. The group meets roughly every two weeks and has coordinated several efforts to increase community and educational CVE engagement in support of the peace process. On July 29, Philippine officials from the ATC attended the Rome CVE Summit Process Senior Officials Meeting.

In February, Philippine officials facilitated the 3rd Multi-Lateral CVE Conference "Youth and Terrorism: Countering the Narrative" in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, and a Seminar Workshop on CVE Narratives in Zamboanga City in October.

Training on rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders, implemented by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague, continued and included Philippine experts from different agencies and the private sector. The Philippine government also continued to support a counter-radicalization program in the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) facilities housing ASG or other terrorist suspects pending trial. The PNP DPCR SPC coordinated with the BJMP to conduct visitation of inmates relating to violent extremism. In 2015, the government also launched a policy to expand the Special Intensive Care Areas of the BJMP in the Manila regionand to introduce a modernized Inmate Counseling and Classification Unit (ICCU) to improve identification of inmates vulnerable to further radicalization while on trial – a large number of alleged ASG, BIFF, and MNLF fighters are incarcerated as their trials proceed in Manila courts.

International and Regional Cooperation: The Philippines views counterterrorism as a regional challenge and participated in numerous regional CT coordination activities. In 2015, Philippine government representatives were involved in trainings, workshops, dialogues, and working group meetings through the ASEAN-Japan Counterterrorism Dialogue, Australian-ASEANAPOL, INTERPOL, UNODC, UNICRI, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

Philippine counterterrorism, intelligence, and CVE officials participated in several international conferences throughout the year focused on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. These included the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Conference in Indonesia (March), the UNODC-sponsored Regional Conference on Effective Responses to the Phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Thailand (June), and the Regional Technical Workshop on Responding to the Threat of Returning Foreign Fighters in Manila (August), which was co-sponsored by UNICRI and the Philippines.

A representative from the ATC serves as the 2015-2016 Chair of the APEC Counter-Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) and has been supportive of U.S. efforts to sponsor self-funded counterterrorism capacity-building workshops under the auspices of APEC, particular initiatives designed to help implement the APEC Consolidated Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade Strategy. In January 2015 in Subic Bay, the Philippines hosted an APEC CTWG Secure Finance Workshop on Countering the Financing of Terrorism with New Payment Systems (NPS), which provided working-level financial crimes policy and operational representatives from APEC member economies' regulatory, investigative, and enforcement units the opportunity to develop and reinforce capacities to counter the illicit use of new payment systems, or NPS, especially in financing terrorism. In August 2015 in Cebu, they hosted an APEC CTWG Secure Travel

Workshop on Countering Foreign Terrorist Fighter Travel, which highlighted the threat that foreign terrorist fighter travel poses to the Asia-Pacific region and explained why advance passenger information systems are effective at helping mitigate that threat. The Philippines also participated in a series of INTERPOL Integrated Border Management Task Force projects sponsored by Canada.

On May 26-27, the Philippines hosted a conference on kidnapping for ransom that was attended by representatives from INTERPOL, Colombia, Australia, and the U.S. FBI. The event was funded by the Australian Embassy.

SINGAPORE

Overview: Singapore and the United States increased cooperation on counterterrorism efforts and expanded information sharing in 2015. The rise in the number of terrorist incidents across the globe highlighted the importance of timely information sharing and the need for both countries to continue to explore ways to further expand engagement. Singapore's domestic counterterrorism apparatus and ability to detect, deter, and disrupt threats remained effective, as evidenced by the successful detention of several Singaporean residents attempting to travel to Syria or Iraq to join terrorist groups. Singapore is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), to which it contributes military assets, and hosted a regional summit in April 2015 to raise awareness about the threat of foreign terrorist fighters as well as to exchange regional experiences with de-radicalization and developments related to countering violent extremism.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Singapore uses its Internal Security Act (ISA) to arrest and detain suspected terrorists. The ISA authorizes the Minister for Home Affairs (MHA), with the consent of the President, to order detention without judicial trial or review if it is determined that a person poses a threat to national security. The initial detention may be for up to two years, and the MHA may renew the detention for an unlimited number of additional periods up to two years at a time with the President's consent.

In 2015, five individuals were arrested under the ISA for terrorism-related activities, four of whom were subsequently detained under ISA. The fifth suspect was placed on a Restriction Order, which limits the ability to travel abroad without government approval, requires religious counselling, and prohibits the acquisition of violent or extremist material online. Singapore's existing legal framework, in conjunction with the ISA, provides the government the necessary tools to support the investigation and prosecution of terrorism offenses. Law enforcement agencies displayed coordination, command, and control in responding to threat information affecting Singapore's security.

In 2015, Singapore improved its border security regime through creation of a new Integrated Checkpoints Command (ICC). The ICC complements the Joint Operations Command established in 1998 and the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, which in 2003 merged the Singapore Immigration and Registration with checkpoint functions of the Customs and Excise Department. The ICC will strengthen interagency coordination, improve air, land, and sea domain awareness, and improve border security command and control to collectively counter traditional and unconventional threats.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Singapore is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body. Singapore's Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office is a member of the Egmont Group. In April and October 2015, the Monetary Authority (MAS) issued updated guidance on Anti-Money Laundering and CFT to financial institutions to further strengthen controls and risk management. These were in line with international best practices and FATF recommendations and incorporated information from a series of inspections MAS conducted from 2012 to September 2015. Singapore's robust legislative and financial regulatory framework makes terrorism financing illegal and the government, in cooperation with the financial services industry, remains vigilant against this threat. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Through entities such as the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) and the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG), Singapore serves as a regional Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) hub. The ICPVTR conducts research, training, and outreach programs aimed at understating the causes of radicalization and formulating practical rehabilitation programs. The government also encourages interreligious and interethnic dialogue through Interracial and Religious Confidence Circles, community forums that bring leaders from Singapore's religious and ethnic communities together to discuss issues of concern, and build trust. The government believes in building regional CVE capacity, and it has highlighted opportunities for constructive engagement for those concerned with the conflict in Syria and Iraq, such as promoting legitimate charities working to ease suffering in conflict zones. The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, the Islamic authority in charge of Muslim affairs in the country, maintains a Facebook presence and holds outreach and education events to counter terrorist propaganda and recruitment efforts. Singapore's RRG, a volunteer organization, has had success in counseling detainees held under the ISA. The comprehensive program includes religious and psychological counseling and involves the detainee's family and community.

International and Regional Cooperation: Singapore is an active participant in counterterrorism cooperation efforts in ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and APEC; has supported UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) condemning terrorist activities including co-sponsoring UNSCR 2178; and hosted a regional CVE conference in April 2015. Singapore is also a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and participated in the February White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism.

THAILAND

Overview: Thailand remains a productive counterterrorism partner, although the government continued to focus on domestic political challenges as its key security priority. As of late 2015, Thai security officials expressed moderate but growing concern about the threat to Thailand from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), following reports of fighters from neighboring Southeast Asian nations traveling to the Middle East. However, there is no confirmed evidence of Thai citizens joining ISIL, and no evidence of operational linkages between ethno-nationalist Malay Muslim insurgent groups in southern Thailand and ISIL or other international terrorist networks. The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs publicly condemned ISIL violence against civilians.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: On February 1, two pipe bombs exploded outside a popular shopping mall in Bangkok, and on March 7, a small grenade detonated at a courthouse in Bangkok. Both incidents resulted in no casualties. Following the incidents, Thai police detained four suspects, and claimed the attacks were politically motivated and intended to undermine the government.

On August 17, an explosion in Bangkok killed 20 and injured more than 120 at the Erawan Shrine, a downtown tourist destination popular with Thai and Chinese tourists. On August 18, a second explosion occurred near Saphan Taksin, a pier popular with tourists, but did not result in any damage or casualties. Thai authorities released surveillance camera footage showing two suspects leaving backpacks, believed to contain the explosives, at each location. Thai investigators later arrested two Chinese Uighur suspects. In early December, a Thai woman and a Turkish man were detained in Turkey in connection with the bombings and were awaiting extradition to Thailand. Thai authorities claimed the motive for the attacks was retaliation for the government crackdown on human trafficking, and have not charged any of the suspects with terrorism. It has been widely reported that the attacks were related to the July 2015 forced deportation of a group of Uighur migrants to China.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Thailand incorporated terrorism offenses into its penal code in 2003, but most terrorism prosecutions fail to prove the necessary element of specific intent and therefore result in deportation or a conviction on less serious offenses.

Competing domestic priorities, political sensitivities, and resource constraints contributed to a less aggressive approach to counterterrorism efforts on the part of the Thai government. Thailand's law enforcement units demonstrated some capacity to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents. Multiple entities – including the Royal Thai Police (RTP), Department of Special Investigations, and elements of the Thai military – have law enforcement responsibilities on counterterrorism cases. Interagency cooperation and coordination is sporadic, information sharing is limited, and the delineation of duties between law enforcement and military units with counterterrorism responsibilities was unclear. Biannual reshuffles of senior government and security officials hampered continuity in leadership.

Law enforcement officials with counterterrorism responsibilities received U.S. training through the Bangkok-based joint U.S.-Thai International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) and Department of State-funded training programs. Additionally, Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) training programs were designed to enhance RTP capacity to combat terrorism.

Land borders are relatively porous. In June 2012, the Thai government removed the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) from eight major points of entry and installed an inferior, locally developed program. In early 2015, the Thai government also removed PISCES from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport and replaced it with the same locally developed program. All passengers originating in Thailand traveling to or overflying the United States will continue to be vetted through the Secure Flight Program. Thailand has an active market in fraudulent documents. Information sharing with neighboring countries appeared limited.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Thailand belongs to the Asia-Pacific Group (APG), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body, and its Anti Money Laundering Office is a member of the Egmont Group. Thailand's Counterterrorist Financing Act, together with subordinate laws, came into effect in early 2013. In September 2015, the Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) revised the CFT Act, amending its rules and procedures for notifications of designations in accordance with obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions. Thailand does not have a significant unregulated informal banking and money transfer system regarding terrorism financing activities. In cases where the Bank of Thailand has discovered unauthorized remittances, the Bank has coordinated with the RTP to arrest the perpetrators. AMLO in 2015 did not identify and freeze terrorist assets of any individuals and organizations listed under the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime, although it did freeze $3,079 in other terrorist assets. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Thai government's Internal Security Operations Command continued to organize outreach programs to ethnic Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand to counter radicalization and violent extremism. The government also works with Muslim leaders to promote the teaching of moderate Islam. NGOs continue to reach out to communities in the southern provinces to provide services, identify the underlying causes of the area's violence, and provide outlets for peaceful political expression.

International and Regional Cooperation: Thailand participated in international counterterrorism efforts, including through APEC, ASEAN, and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The government signed a ministerial-level ASEAN statement condemning the rise of violence committed by violent extremists in Iraq and Syria, and an East Asia Summit leaders' statement on ISIL's violence and brutality.

EUROPE

Europe continued to face terrorist threats from a variety of sources throughout 2015, including from foreign terrorist organizations operating out of Iraq and Syria, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Nusrah Front (ANF), and from foreign terrorist fighters who returned home to Europe to plot and carry out attacks. Significant numbers of foreign terrorist fighters came from Western European and Balkan countries. At the same time, violent extremist groups espousing left-wing and nationalist ideologies, such as the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) and Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey, continued to operate in Europe.

Franceexperienced multiple attacks in 2015. The January 7 and 9 attacks on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and the Parisian kosher supermarket *Hyper Cacher* killed 17 civilians. Ten months later, on November 13, at least eight ISIL members, some of whom were returning foreign terrorist fighters, launched a deadly series of simultaneous attacks around Paris – at a concert, a sporting event, and at restaurants – leaving 130 dead and 350 injured. Turkey was also the site of numerous terrorist attacks, attributed variously to ISIL, the PKK, and the DHKP/C. Terrorist incidents were reported in a number of other European countries, including ISIL-

inspired attacks in Denmark and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Russian passenger jet flying over the Sinai Peninsula was brought down by a bomb likely placed by a member of an ISIL affiliate.

The attacks in Paris and elsewhere galvanized the EU to increase traveler information sharing and agree to an EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) system before the end of 2015. In December, EU interior ministers approved a compromise with the European Parliament on the use of PNR data for the prevention, detection, investigation, and prosecution of terrorist offenses and serious crimes. The directive was awaiting a final vote of approval by the European Parliament at the end of 2015. The attacks in Paris led a number of EU member states to call for the imposition of stricter border security controls or to do so unilaterally. In November, EU member states agreed to implement systematic checks at external borders immediately, including of EU citizens.

By virtue of its location, the presence of international transport hubs on its territory, and its long difficult-to-control border with Syria and Iraq, Turkey remained the main transit route for foreign terrorist fighters. Turkey continued to increase its cooperation with foreign terrorist fighter source countries to counter the threat. It developed and implemented an extensive banned-from-entry list of known or suspected terrorists; established additional "risk analysis units" to detect suspected foreign terrorist fighters at airports, seaports, bus terminals, and border cities; deployed additional military units to the border; and made physical improvements to the security infrastructure along the border. Turkey also reintroduced visa requirements for Libyans wishing to travel to Turkey.

European countries continued to formulate, implement, and hone counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE) strategies. Sweden outlined a comprehensive plan entitled "Prevent, Preempt and Protect – the Swedish Counter-Terrorism Strategy." Focusing sharply on prevention, the UK published a "Counter-Extremism Strategy." Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo also adopted national CVE strategies. Community groups and religious leaders played key parts in these efforts.

European countries contributed extensively to worldwide counterterrorism efforts in 2015. Thirty-nine European countries and the European Union itself cooperated multilaterally within the force-multiplying framework of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. European countries continued to promote counterterrorism and counter violent extremism programs and policies in multilateral and regional fora such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum (co-chaired by the Netherlands and Turkey), UN, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE. At the same time, European nations, both bilaterally and through the EU, helped build capacity to counter terrorism and violent extremism throughout the globe.

A European Counter Terrorist Centre at Europol, and mechanisms to expand information sharing on the travel of foreign terrorist fighters, were established in 2015 to take effect on January 1, 2016. In December, the European Commission (EC) proposed deepening efforts to exchange information, intelligence, and cooperation to combat terrorism by revising outdated Council frameworks. In 2015, European countries faced a significant influx of refugees from Syria. The screening and resettlement of these refugees stretched the law enforcement and security resources of many European nations. In December, the EC proposed creation of an EU Border and Coast Guard (Frontex, with an expanded mandate) that will monitor migratory flows and assist member states with border management. These checks will be conducted against the

Schengen Information System, the Interpol Stolen and Lost Travel Documents Database, and relevant national systems to verify identity and screen for threats. Beyond its borders, the EU will provide US $55,535,000 to support troops from African countries who have signed up to fight Boko Haram. By November 2015, 14 EU Member States had connected their counterterrorism authorities to the Secure Information Exchange Network Application hosted by Europol, a key enabling platform for information exchange with the United States. Also in November, the EU Council called for greater use by Member States of INTERPOL and Europol databases of known foreign terrorist fighters as well as lost or stolen travel documents. Since December 2014 there has been a strong increase of the use of the Europol Information System (EIS).

ALBANIA

Overview: Albania was a strong supporter of counterterrorism efforts in 2015 and continued its participation in the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), making significant donations of weapons and ammunition for Peshmerga forces in northern Iraq.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Albania criminalizes terrorist acts; financing of terrorism; collection, transfer and concealment of funds that finance terrorism; conducting transactions with persons on the UN sanctions lists; recruiting and training people to commit terrorist acts; incitement of terrorist acts; and establishing, leading and participating in terrorist organizations.

In 2014, Parliament added three statutes to Albania's Criminal Code aimed primarily at strengthening the government's ability to address the problem of Albanian nationals who travel to fight in the Syrian conflict. The changes made it illegal to participate in; organize the participation of; or call for participation in military action in a foreign country.

While Albanian law enforcement actively detects and deters illicit activities related to drugs and smuggling, it also increased efforts to counter potential terrorist threats. With concern about terrorism increasing in connection with foreign terrorist fighters, the Albanian State Police expanded its Anti-Terrorism Unit from seven to 76 and, in collaboration with Albania's international partners, is developing plans and programs for the equipping, training, and further development of this unit. Significant efforts will be necessary before the ATU develops capacity to counter terrorism effectively.

Albania lacks the capacity to collect biometric data other than that contained on biometric identity cards and passports presented at border crossing points. DOJ's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), funded by the Department of State, provided information technology training to the Albanian government to help it incorporate online fingerprint identification functions, and fingerprint scanning equipment for all 26 border crossing points. This initiative will improve Albania's ability to collect entry and exit information of international travelers. The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program supported Albanian participation in a series of border security-related courses aimed at addressing foreign terrorist fighter travel.

The Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training Program (OPDAT), funded by the Department of State, also provided mentorship,

assistance, and training to prosecutors, law enforcement officials, and judges from Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia,that work on foreign terrorist fighter and terrorism-related cases through its Balkan Regional Counterterrorism program located in Tirana.

Corruption, combined with a poorly functioning judicial system, continued to hinder Albania's law enforcement efforts at all levels.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Albania is a member of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body.The General Directorate for the Prevention on Money Laundering, Albanian's financial intelligence unit, is a member of the Egmont Group.

In February, the FATF removed Albania from its list of High Risk and Non-Cooperative Jurisdictions. Since June 2012, Albania has been working with the FATF and MONEYVAL to address the identified weaknesses in its anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime. In 2013, Albania adopted a new law against financing terrorism to comply with the FATF and MONEYVAL recommendations and focused on implementation in 2015.

Albania has established a preventive AML/CFT system that includes extended due diligence and the obligation to file suspicious transaction reports and currency transaction reports. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Albania provided financial support to the Albanian Islamic Community, the official administrative body of the Albanian Sunni Muslim community, and actively engaged it to develop strategies and programs to address radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment. The government also drafted and officially adopted a national strategy to combat violent extremism (CVE), and has been a committed participant in the White House Initiative to Combat Violent Extremism, which included hosting a regional CVE conference in May in Tirana. Prime Minister Rama spoke at the September Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York; during his speech, Rama announced plans for a Regional Center Against Violent Extremism.

International and Regional Cooperation: Albania is a member of the UN, OSCE, NATO, Council of Europe, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Albanian criminal justice actors participated regularly in various regional associations, conferences, and other counterterrorism information-sharing exchanges. For example, Albania sent representatives to a U.S.-funded program on the role of the criminal justice system in the implementation of preventive and repressive strategies against foreign terrorist fighters, which was executed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's Terrorism Prevention Branch.

AUSTRIA

Overview: Austria was vigilant in its counterterrorism efforts, and U.S.-Austrian law enforcement cooperation was generally strong. Austria's Office for State Protection and

Counterterrorism (BVT), the key counterterrorism agency within the Ministry of the Interior, reported that while no specific climate for fostering terrorist attacks existed within Austria, radicalization within violent Islamist extremist groups increased in 2015. The country's traditional, broad perception that Austria is safe from terrorist attacks was challenged by the number of foreign terrorist fighters from Austria headed to Syria and Iraq. The BVT charged or monitored those returning from Syria, as well as other potentially violent radicalized individuals. Continued concerns over data privacy protection, amplified by public debate about suspected U.S. NSA activities in Austria, slowed the implementation of counterterrorism agreements, in some cases.

Austria is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as well as the Counter-ISIL Working Groups on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Stabilization. Throughout the year, the Ministries of Interior, Justice, and Foreign Affairs increased enforcement and engagement to counter incitement of terrorist acts motivated by extremism and combat the problem of foreign terrorist fighters, with law enforcement agencies focusing on intelligence gathering and investigations, and integration officials (within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) focusing on public outreach and engagement to prevent radicalization to violence.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Austria has a broad legal framework to combat terrorism. Relevant statutes criminalize training in terrorist camps abroad. The Austrian Parliament passed additional counterterrorism legislation in December 2014 (effective January 1, 2015) to enhance existing counterterrorism laws. The counterterrorism legislation amended an existing law on the use of symbols and prohibits the use and distribution of symbols attributable to ISIL, al-Qa'ida, and any organization linked to these groups. Limited exemptions from these restrictions apply to media coverage, films, theater, and exhibits, provided that they do not serve to propagate the ideology of a terrorist organization.

As part of the same legislative package, an amendment to the border control law allowed border authorities to confirm that minors have received parental permission to leave Austria when there is a suspicion that the minors are traveling to participate in fighting activities abroad. Border authorities are empowered to deny departure to a minor and withhold his or her passport until an investigation is complete. An amendment to the Austrian citizenship law allowed authorities to withdraw citizenship from an Austrian who voluntarily and actively participates in fighting in an armed conflict if the individual holds a second citizenship.

In November, Austria's governing coalition parties agreed on a draft State Protection Law to provide enhanced legal tools against terrorist and extremist threats, espionage, cyber-attacks, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to provide a firm legal basis for counterterrorism, counter-espionage, and related law enforcement actions by the BVT.

Austrian law enforcement and BVT officials routinely cooperated in investigative areas with U.S. law enforcement, from the informal sharing of preliminary investigative information to joint, multilateral investigative projects and enforcement operations. Border security forces make effective use of security measures, including biographic and biometric screening capabilities at airport ports of entry; Austria does not maintain ports of entry on its land borders as Austria is surrounded by Schengen zone member states; however, Austria has established facilities at several border crossings to manage and assist refugees. Border security forces also

share information internally and with other EU countries. Border security officials at ports of entry have discretion when determining those documents and passengers subject to screening on arrival.

Austria has taken a whole-of-government approach to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, and 2199, as well as the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)'s Hague-Marrakech Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighters phenomenon. The BVT estimated the number of Austrians fighting in Syria and Iraq at approximately 260, predominantly of Chechen, Turkish, and Balkan origin. Forty are suspected to have been killed in Syria, while an estimated 70 have returned to Austria. Law enforcement officials have arrested violent extremists and suspected terrorists and prosecuted and sentenced ISIL sympathizers and would-be foreign terrorist fighters. Formal criminal investigations have been launched against 192 suspects, resulting in 50 criminal charges and 27 convictions.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Austria is an active member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and has developed comprehensive anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) legislation, including the enactment of a new Sanctions Act; undertaken reforms of the financial intelligence unit operational procedures and supervisory framework; and developed and published secondary legislation (regulations), thematic and sectorial guidelines, and explanatory notes. Austria's financial intelligence unit (the Bundeskriminalamt) is a member of the Egmont Group.

Financing of terrorism is criminalised in Article 278d of the Austrian Penal Code in line with Article 2 of the Terrorism Financing Convention and other international standards. Austria has successfully prosecuted terrorism financing cases, including sentencing a Chechen terrorism suspect to a four-year prison term in October on charges of terrorism financing and participation in a terrorist organization. The defendant was charged with collecting US $438,200 for the Caucasus Emirate.

Austria implements the collection of Know Your Customer-data for wire transfers through EU Regulation 1781/2006/EC. This EU Regulation does not include requirements regarding information on the beneficiary of a wire transfer, and there is no respective national law in place.

Austria and the United States implemented the 2014 bilateral agreement on the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA). Under the agreement, Austrian banks require U.S. citizens resident in Austria to waive bank secrecy and allow the exchange of account information with the United States.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Austria continued efforts to counter violent extremism, largely in response to the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. In addition, the Austrian government undertook or continued several other initiatives.

In cooperation with the Islamic Faith Community, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued an information campaign in mosques, Islamic organizations, and community centers that included

education outreach to the majority population to differentiate between Islam and violent extremism. In an effort to improve integration in the newly arrived refugee population, the Integration Office within the Foreign Ministry has developed an educational program that focuses on German language acquisition and education on Austrian 'values' such as gender equality and democratic principles. The Austrian government maintains a counseling center and a de-radicalization hotline, aimed at friends and family members of potential violent extremists.

The Austrian government passed a new Law on Islam, updating the previous 1912 Law on Islam. This law updated the rights and responsibilities of Islamic communities and further formalized Islam's place within Austria. It contains provisions related to religious education, pastoral care in hospitals and prisons, recognizes Islamic holidays, and formalizes some Islamic traditions. The law also limits financing of mosques and imams from foreign sources, in an effort to constrain foreign influence.

International and Regional Cooperation: Austria is a member of various regional platforms, including the OSCE, the Salzburg Forum, and the Central European Initiative. Austria regularly leads law enforcement training programs with Salzburg Forum countries and the Balkan states. In March, Austria hosted a regional conference on foreign terrorist fighters, entitled "Tackling Jihadism Together: Shaping, Preventing, Reacting." The conference was attended by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, and included discussions on enhanced border security training and increased cooperation among Europol, the EU border protection agency Frontex, and the western Balkan states.

AZERBAIJAN

Overview: Azerbaijan maintained its strong counterterrorism cooperation with the United States and actively opposed terrorist organizations seeking to move people, money, and materiel through the Caucasus. The country remained focused on counterterrorism efforts that included prosecuting numerous individuals under statutes related to terrorism; confiscating sizeable quantities of illegal arms and munitions; and arresting foreign terrorist fighters returning to Azerbaijan from conflicts abroad.

Azerbaijan indicated its strong willingness to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by sharing information, working to disrupt the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Iraq and Syria, and countering illicit funding ofterrorist groups there. Senior leaders, including the heads of the Caucasus Muslim Board and the State Committee for Work with Religious Associations, took steps to counter ISIL and al-Qa'ida ideology publicly. In mid-December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Azerbaijan was considering joining the Saudi Arabia-led Islamic Coalition Against Terror. Azerbaijan participated in the September President's Summit on Violent Extremism, which the White House organized on the margins of the 2015 UN General Assembly.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Azerbaijan continued to use counterterrorism legislation, first adopted in 1999, that governs the investigation and prosecution of individuals who have committed or plan to commit terrorist acts. The Ministry of National Security (MNS) leads counterterrorism efforts, working closely with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor General's Office.

Among its various duties, MNS is charged with the task of identifying and preventing the criminal activities of terrorist groups, and combatting international terrorism and transnational crimes. MNS underwent major personnel and organizational changes in 2015. In mid-December, the President of Azerbaijan signed a decree splitting MNS into two organizations – the State Security Service and Foreign Intelligence Service. At the end of 2015, it was unclear how the counterterrorism roles of the new services would be defined and how their efforts would be integrated.

As the country's primary law enforcement agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has key responsibilities for fighting terrorism. Specific counterterrorism actions are taken through the Ministry's Organized Crime Unit. The Prosecutor General's Office maintains responsibility for prosecuting individuals for terrorism, conspiracy to commit terrorism, conspiracy to aid terrorism, and other terrorism-related crimes.

The Azerbaijani government has effectively demonstrated the ability to detect and deter terrorist activities, as well as prosecute foreign terrorist fighters returning to Azerbaijan. Authorities effectively use terrorist and criminal watchlists and biographic/biometric information to screen travelers at ports of entry. Information sharing within the host government and with other countries was strong. Collection of Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Records on commercial flights occurred on some flights.

On December 4, the parliament adopted a Law on Fighting Religious Extremism. The 15-provision law clarifies the legal bases for identifying and prosecuting cases of religious extremism and fanaticism that lead to terrorism, and links criminal, administrative, and civil responsibilities for violations.At the same time, a new amendment to the Criminal Code was introduced, which triggered harsher punishments for violating procedures for Islamic religious ceremonies, particularly by citizens who received religious education abroad, with up to one year imprisonment or fines from US $600 up to US $3,000. In cases of "religious propaganda" by foreigners and stateless persons, the punishment was newly set at one to two years in prison.

On December 5, the president signed into law new amendments to the Law on Religious Freedom. The new amendments expanded restrictions on the use of religious symbols and slogans, which may only be used inside places of worship.

A new amendment introduced on December 5, 2015, to the Law on Citizenship, first adopted in 1998, specifies new grounds of losing citizenships, including: participating in terrorist actions, participating in religious extremist actions or military trainings abroad under the guise of receiving religious education, proselytizing religious doctrines on grounds of animosity, and participating in religious conflicts in a foreign country under the guise of religious rituals.

Throughout the year, there were reports of terrorist acts being prevented in Azerbaijan. However, it is unclear whether some of these preventative actions were taken against bona fide terrorist threats or were designed to curb the activities ofheretofore non-violent independent religious activists. In November, for example, the Prosecutor General's Office issued a statement that Taleh Bagirov (Bagirzade), a former political prisoner and religious activist, was planning, with his followers, to overthrow the government. The government alleged he had stored ammunition and explosives in the village of Nardaran, about 24 km north of the capital. The Ministry of Interior and the Prosecutor General's Office conducted special operations in the

area during which authorities arrested more than a dozen people and claimed to find significant caches of weapons and ammunition. During the operation, five people suspected of violent religious extremism were killed, along with two police officers. Criminal cases were opened against the detained suspects, which were ongoing at the end of 2015. Some democracy and human rights advocates believe the charges were fabricated.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Azerbaijan is a member of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its Financial Monitoring Service is a member of the Egmont Group. Azerbaijan has increased its professionalism in anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) efforts since 2009, when it adopted AML/CFT legislation. This legislation created a financial intelligence unit, the Financial Monitoring Service (FMS), under Azerbaijan's Central Bank, and imposed requirements on financial institutions to conduct customer due diligence and report suspicious transactions to the FMS. Monetary Institutions operating outside the formal financial sector are often not required to report transactions, which isa vulnerability in the system.

In 2015, in a decree signed by the President regarding terrorism financing, the Cabinet of Ministers was charged with making suggestions for changes to the Civil Procedure Code. Changes may include expanding existing laws for use in the fight against terrorism and the financing of terrorism. The Cabinet was also charged with developing additional regulations to freeze the assets of both physical and legal entities.

To bring Azerbaijan's legislation into conformity with international standards, including those of the UN, the EU, and the FATF, Azerbaijan continued to implement MONEYVAL recommendations to address AML/CFT issues. The U.S. government has been one of the FMS' leading partners since its formation, and currently works through Treasury and the FDIC to provide technical assistance and training to the Azerbaijani prosecutors to improve enforcement capabilities. USAID has also supported these efforts.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations, together with the Azerbaijan-based Caucasus Muslims Office, took steps to monitor religious sermons in some mosques in order to counter any calls to violence

International and Regional Cooperation: Azerbaijan remained an active member of the OSCE, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other regional organizations. Azerbaijan also continued to work with NATO on counterterrorism initiatives. In December, Azerbaijan indicated it was considering joining the new Saudi Arabia-led Islamic Coalition Against Terror.

BELGIUM

Overview: Belgium's counterterrorism apparatus was overseen by the Ministries of Interior and Justice. Belgian officials continued to investigate, arrest, and prosecute terrorism suspects and worked closely with U.S. authorities on counterterrorism matters. The Belgian government

formed a task force in 2015 focused on countering radicalization and developed a national strategy to address the issue. Major terrorist attacks in Brussels in March 2016 have further galvanized the Belgian government's efforts to address counterterrorism shortfalls.

The coalition government, which assumed power in 2014, announced a number of new measures aimed at disrupting the significant number of Belgian foreign terrorist fighters who have traveled to Iraq and Syria. These include strengthening and enforcing legislation that would prohibit traveling abroad to participate in armed groups, and stripping naturalized dual nationals of their Belgian citizenship if they are convicted of violating these or other terrorism laws. Belgian officials announced they intend to more strictly enforce regulations revoking or prohibiting the issuance of passports to suspected foreign terrorist fighters to prohibit travel. Countering violent extremism (CVE) remained a high priority for the Belgian government, at both the national and sub-national levels. Following the January 2015 police raids in Verviers and the participation of several Belgian citizens in the November 13 attacks in Paris, the government established two plans to help combat violent extremism: a 12-point action plan in January and an 18-point action plan in November.

Belgium is an active Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) partner, contributing six F-16 aircraft and 120 support personnel to the Counter ISIL campaign in Iraq. Belgium also contributed approximately 30 military trainers near Baghdad Airport. In 2015, Belgium allocated US $56 million in humanitarian support for Iraq and Syria.

As one of the leading countries of origin for foreign terrorist fighters in Europe, Belgium has focused efforts on identifying, disrupting, and decreasing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. According to the Minister of Interior, 272 individuals have left to fight with ISIL, 80 of those are presumed dead, and 134 have returned to Belgium.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In January 2015, the Belgian federal government announced a 12-item action plan against terrorism. On June 29, the government released a report about the full implementation of the first tranche of the plan which included the creation of a new National Security Council chaired by the Prime Minister, the domestic deployment of the army when the threat level is raised, and the development of better de-radicalization programs in prisons. An additional five points were addressed by legislation passed by the federal parliament in July to strengthen the existing legal framework against foreign fighters. The legislation expanded the list of offenses that can be considered terrorism, made traveling abroad for terrorist purposes a crime, and expanded the ability of security services to use wiretaps to collect information. The new laws also allow the government to temporarily withdraw the identity cards or seize the passports of potential foreign terrorist fighters seeking to travel to Syria or Iraq and to revoke the citizenship of naturalized Belgian citizens convicted of terrorist offenses. The government is in the process of finalizing the remaining four points, which include mechanisms to identify providers of terrorism financing; improving information exchange between security, police and judicial authorities; revision of the Foreign Fighters Circular (concerns information management and monitoring measures for foreign terrorist fighters resident in Belgium); and revision of Belgium's counter-radicalization strategy.

The government has been working to implement the necessary legislative changes to complete these measures. After the November 13 Paris attacks, the federal government announced an

additional set of 18 preventive and counterterrorism measures. Promising additional funds to counterterrorism efforts, and creating a new ad-hoc parliamentary committee, the Belgian government renewed its commitment to European counter-radicalization efforts. This new counterterrorism strategy rests on four pillars: addressing hate speech, minimizing the threat of potentially dangerous individuals, augmenting security services, and encouraging international action. Measures that did not require legislative changes (the reinforcement of police controls at the borders, the deployment of additional troops to reinforce security) were implemented in 2015. The government continued its ongoing efforts to eliminate hate speech, targeting websites that incite hate, expelling hate preachers, and closing unsanctioned radical mosques.

The primary actors in Belgian law enforcement are the Belgian Federal Police and its multiple counterterrorism units, the Civilian and Military Intelligence Services, Office of the Federal Prosecutor, and the Crisis Unit. The inter-ministerial Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis plays a coordinating role, particularly with regard to the foreign terrorist fighter issue. As noted previously, the National Security Council now plays a significant role in the intelligence and security structure.

In 2015, Belgium worked closely with other Schengen zone states and Turkey to improve efforts to share information and interdict prospective foreign fighters traveling to Syria, including increasing border checks aimed at disrupting and decreasing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. All new Belgian passports now contain biometric data. Belgian officials remain concerned that Brussels Airport is used by French, Dutch, and German foreign terrorist fighters to conceal their travel. Belgium has advocated for more systematic screening by partners at Schengen borders.

Following the Paris attacks, the Minister of Interior strengthened the controls at the French border. He also announced the installation of additional Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras throughout Belgium. In August, commenting on the failed attack on a Thalys train from Amsterdam to Paris, Prime Minister Michel claimed that, *"we will have to, more and more, seek a new balance between freedom of movement and rights to privacy, but at the same time it will be necessary to accept some constraints."*

Belgian law enforcement and justice authorities have arrested and prosecuted numerous individuals suspected of recruiting fighters to go to Syria and Iraq. On November 19, media reported that federal prosecutors launched 275 terrorist cases in 2015; there were 84 such cases in 2011.

On November 9, prosecutors opened a new terrorism case in the Brussels Court against 15 suspects accused of inciting youth to go fight in Syria. The defendants in the case include Jean-Louis Denis, aka "the submissive," Mohamed Khemir, Mickael Devredt, and Khalid Zerkani.

On February 11, the Antwerp Court handed down a ruling in the largest counterterrorism court case in Belgian history; the case involved 46 suspects, including 45 members of the now-disbanded extremist Salafist organization Sharia4Belgium. The Court ruled that Sharia4Belgium was indeed a terrorist organization that played an active role in the recruitment of would-be terrorists to fight in Syria and Iraq. Former leader Fouad Belkacem, also known as Abu Imran, was sentenced to 12 years in prison, while other leaders in the organization received 15-year sentences. Of the 46 suspects, only eight were present in the court; the remaining were

reportedly missing, in Syria, or dead, and were convicted *in absentia*, including Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who was the ringleader of the November 13 Paris attacks. The 45 Sharia4Belgium members were all found guilty of membership in a terrorist organization and of playing an active role in its terrorist activities; they received sentences ranging from three to 15 years.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Belgium is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Belgium's financial intelligence unit, the Cellule de Traitement des Informations Financieres (CTIF), is tasked with tracking and investigating reports of financial crimes, including money laundering and terrorism financing, and has broad authorities under Belgian legislation to conduct inquiries and refer criminal cases to federal prosecutors. The unit is a member of the Egmont Group. According to the latest 2015 CTIF annual report (which covers 2014), of the 1,131 financial crimes cases that CTIF referred to prosecutors, 37 (3.27 percent) were connected to possible terrorist and/or proliferation financing, a slight increase from the previous year (2.14 percent). For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2015, both the Ministry of the Interior and the Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (OCAM) continued their implementation of new CVE strategies to address the foreign terrorist fighter problem. The number of foreign terrorist fighters leaving Belgium decreased in 2015, but the government remained concerned about and engaged on this issue.

In addition to its ongoing CVE programs, the federal government identified 10 pilot cities facing particular radicalization threats, and funded specific countering violent extremism initiatives. Four of those cities are located in the Brussels Capital Region (Anderlecht, the City of Brussels, Molenbeek, and Schaerbeek), four in Flanders (Antwerp, Maaseik, Mechelen, Vilvoorde), and two in Wallonia (Liege, Verviers). The government originally allocated US $435,000 (later increased to US $ 650,000), to fund these counter-radicalization programs. In November, the government added a one-time US $1,089,055 grant to share between these 10 cities to strengthen their CVE efforts. Also in November, the federal government granted US $462,850 to be spread amongst five cities to fund local CVE efforts; the five cities are Charleroi,Genk, Kortrijk, Menen, and Saint-Gilles (Brussels region). In 2014, the Belgian government also supported a city pair project between Vilvoorde and Columbus, Ohio that is designed to facilitate positive community engagement between the government, the police force, and the Muslim community.

Among the components of the government's strategy on preventing radicalization is an effort to counter extremist messaging on the internet. The Ministry of Interior is working to increase cooperation with the internet industry in Belgium, working with the big five providers to suppress violent extremist content. The government reiterated its dedication to combating online hate messages in its November counterterrorism measures.

The government's counter-radicalization strategy includes an interagency effort to support local government actors who work with returnees from Syria to monitor their reintegration into society and provide them with guidance and support. In light of Belgian foreign terrorist fighter involvement in ISIL's November 13 attack on Paris, the Belgian government has proposed imprisoning Belgian foreign terrorist fighters upon their return to Belgium, prior to implementing rehabilitation efforts.

International and Regional Cooperation: Belgium participates in EU, NATO, OSCE, and Council of Europe counterterrorism efforts, and is a member of the advisory board of the UN Counterterrorism Center. As an EU member state, Belgium has contributed trainers and capacity building expertise to EU counterterrorism assistance programs in Sahel countries, including the Collège Sahélien de Sécurité; and the Belgian Federal Police have provided training to counterparts in the Maghreb. Belgium has participated in GCTF workshops.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Overview: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) remained a cooperative counterterrorism partner and continued to make progress in increasing its counterterrorism capacity in 2015. BiH law enforcement agencies generally keep close track of foreign terrorist fighter suspects in BiH and carried out several operations against them. BiH's ministerial-level Joint Terrorism Task Force, tasked with improving coordination between BiH's many security and police agencies, continued to falter, and there were calls to restore a former operations-level counterterrorism task force that ceased operations three years ago due to funding constraints. Islamist extremist ideology and regional nationalist extremist groups both remained potential sources of violent extremism in BiH.

A significant number of Bosnians have traveled to Syria and Iraq to support ISIL and other terrorist groups. Legal and societal efforts to prevent violent extremism were credited with having reduced the outflow of foreign terrorist fighters compared to previous years. BiH officials and media sources estimatethat since 2013, approximately 300 BiH citizens have left for Iraq and Syria to become foreign terrorist fighters. Fifty of these peoplehave returned to the country. BiH sent a representative to the September Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkon the margins of the 2015 UN General Assembly, during which the Chairman of the BiH Presidency stressed BiH support for full implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Two terrorism-related incidents occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2015. In April, a 24-year-old Bosnian man from the Republika Srpska (RS) attacked a police station in Zvornik, killing one and injuring two police officers. The assailant was killed in a subsequent firefight with the police, who recovered two assault rifles, a pistol, and ammunition. In November, a reportedly radicalized 34-year-old male with a history of drug abuse and petty crime shot and killed two uniformed members of the BiH Armed Forces in a betting parlor in Rajlovac, a suburb of Sarajevo. The attacker then fired his assault rifle at another uniformed solider in a passing bus while fleeing the scene, injuring several more people. He was cornered by police at home soon after, where he committed suicide by detonating a hand grenade. In both instances, the lone offenders were suspected of having been radicalized in the months prior by individuals with known connections to violent Islamist extremists. Police claimed to have found ISIL propaganda in the home of the deceased Rajlovac assailant, including a crudely fashioned ISIL flag.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In 2015, BiH produced the Balkan region's first comprehensive Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism (2015-2020). The strategy augments its "foreign terrorist fighter" law passed in July 2014 and discourages BiH citizens from participating in foreign paramilitary groups by imposing both imprisonment and

monetary fines. It also places special emphasis on addressing challenges posed by "new dynamics of terrorism and terrorism-related phenomena," including foreign terrorist fighters, violent extremism and hate speech, and use of the internet for terrorist purposes.

The majority of BiH's coordination and cooperation problems are caused by overlapping law enforcement jurisdictions. The problems are also the result of personal, political, and institutional rivalries that exist among most police agencies and the BiH Prosecutor's Office and BiH Court. Many of these rivalries are deeply ingrained and difficult to overcome.

In February, BiH authorities completed the last of three counterterrorism operations initiated in November 2014, which targeted BiH citizens who traveled to fight in Syria and Iraq, and those who supported or aided them in their efforts. As a result of these operations, 34 BiH citizens have been arrested, of which 18 were prosecuted. On November 5, BiH courts convicted and sentenced Bilal Bosnic to seven years in prison for his role in recruiting and funding foreign terrorist fighters. In addition to Bosnic, four other BiH citizens were tried and convicted in 2015 for their roles in either recruiting or facilitating foreign terrorist fighters.

To track traveler entries into BiH, the BiH Border Police (BP) uses a computerized database and software system to support immigration and passenger information collection. The system links all 55 border crossings and all four airport locations (Banja Luka,Mostar, Sarajevo, and Tuzla) via the State Police Information Network (SPIN), a network developed and donated by the Department of State via the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). Both the BP and the Foreigners Affairs Service (FAS) field offices are connected to this system that was first implemented in 2005 and completed in 2012. Toaddress connectivity problems, the Department of State via ICITAP is funding a maintenance program to ensure all field offices are fully operational. SPIN provides the BP and FAS with immediate access to other supporting databases (including INTERPOL) to run appropriate checks and cross-checks. All law enforcement agencies in BiH have the capability to add data into this system.

Separately, ICITAP is working with the FAS to establish a biometrics system that will permit more effective monitoring of individuals entering and leaving BiH. The BiH biometrics program is fully compatible with EU systems.

Embassy Sarajevo's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program is also actively engaged in conducting training courses and equipment donations for BiH Customs and Border Police to address border security. EXBS donated 55 computers and a computer server to BiH Border Police to support ICITAP's donation of software for the border security database mentioned above. Additionally, EXBS recently donated "Secure Video Link" technology to the BiH, Serbian, and Croatian Customs and Border Police. In the event of a terrorist incident, or other emergency, this electronic networking platform facilitates immediate communication among each agency's operations centers. BIH participated in multiple regional and bilateral programs aimed at building investigative and prosecutorial capacity to successfully address terrorism-related cases. The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program supported BiH participation in a series of border security-related courses aimed at countering foreign terrorist fightertravel.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: BiH belongs to the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Itsfinancial intelligence unit is a member of the Egmont Group. In April, MONEYVAL referred Bosnia to the FATF International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) process citing lack of progress rectifying core anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) deficiencies, including the criminalization of terrorist financing, thereby placing BiH on its "grey list." ICRG review has accelerated BiH efforts to amend its criminal code according to international AML/CFT standards. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The main religious communities in BiH (Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, and Orthodox) continued to work together through the Interreligious Council to promote tolerance and confront acts of bigotry or violent extremism directed at any of the communities. Among public figures, the leader of the Islamic Community in BiH, Reis Kavazovic, continued to speak out against "misinterpretations of Islam" that lead to violent extremism. On December 4, more than 37 political, religious, and cultural representatives of the Bosniak people attended a meeting with Kavazovic in Sarajevo to condemn violent radicalism and terrorism worldwide. The attendees issued a joint statement calling on Bosniak Muslims to follow "a middle way in Islam" and to confront radical Islamism and terrorism.

International and Regional Cooperation: BiH's criminal code and related legal framework are generally harmonized with UN and EU counterterrorism standards. The BiH government participated in the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism in September on the margins of the UNGA, and sent representatives to the Regional Summit on Countering Violent Extremism organized by the Department of State in Albania in May.

BiH law enforcement agencies regularly interacted with their U.S. and European counterparts on counterterrorism investigations. INTERPOL has a Sarajevo branch office that has good cooperation with all law enforcement agencies throughout the country, all of which have direct access to INTERPOL's databases. Regional cooperation amongst professional law enforcement with Croatia and Serbia improved in 2015. BiH participated in a range of counterterrorism and CVE programs sponsored by UN entities and regional organizations, including the OSCE.

BULGARIA

Overview: The Government of Bulgaria continued to deport people it considered national security risks, and increased extradition of suspected foreign terrorist fighters from Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government has worked to enhance its terrorism prevention and enforcement tools by criminalizing foreign terrorist fighters, developing a new counterterrorism strategy, enhancing operations of its National Counterterrorism Center, and announcing plans to draft a comprehensive law on measures against terrorism.

The United States and Bulgaria launched a new Bilateral Counterterrorism Working Group to bolster bilateral cooperation. The group members represented different agencies in the Bulgarian government and include the Deputy Minister of Interior, who co-chairs the group, as well as the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Counterterrorism Coordinator and representatives of the information services.

Bulgaria is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and has repeatedly responded to requests for assistance, including in March, when the Ministry of Defense provided weapons and munitions to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region's Peshmerga.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Bulgaria prosecutes terrorism under several general provisions of the Penal Code, which has been amended multiple times since it was first enacted in 1968. In 2015, the National Assembly adopted amendments to the Penal Code that provide for the prosecution of individuals, including foreign terrorist fighters, who support, plan, and facilitate the commission of terrorist acts in Bulgaria and abroad.

The Ministry of the Interior (MOI) has operational units responsible for deterring, detecting, and responding to terrorist incidents, including the Specialized Unit for Combating Terrorism, Security Police, and Special Police Forces. The State Agency for National Security (DANS) has intelligence-gathering units responsible for counterterrorism. DANS also houses the National Counterterrorism Center, an interagency coordination body responsible for building a common operating picture of terrorist threats. Specialized law enforcement units are generally well-equipped and supported with relevant training, but the focus has been primarily in Sofia, and they lack resources in other regional centers. As of July, the specialized court for organized crime and its prosecutors' office received jurisdiction to prosecute and try all terrorist cases in the country. The court personnel do not have expertise in handling these types of cases, however.

After the November terrorist attacks in Paris, Bulgaria tightened its border control rules and screened all travelers at the border crossings. Within the EU, Bulgaria shares Advanced Passenger Information appearing on the biographical data page of passports. Based on bilateral police cooperation agreements, Bulgaria also shares this type of information with non-EU countries for law enforcement purposes on an as-needed basis. Bulgaria was in the process of establishing a Passenger Information Unit (PIU) that will collect and share the data an airline receives from a traveler to book and manage travel. At year's end, legislation was pending in the National Assembly that would require air carriers to provide data to the PIU. The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program supported Bulgarian participation in a series of border security-related courses aimed at addressing foreign terrorist fighter travel.

Law enforcement cooperation between U.S. agencies and their Bulgarian counterparts has been historically strong. However, consecutive structural changes and reorganization of key police units, and the resulting reassignment of personnel and imposition of new rules, slowed joint casework and harmed law enforcement morale.

U.S. government agencies continued to work closely with Bulgarian counterparts through a variety of counterterrorism programs aimed at enhancing Bulgaria's capacity and capabilities. The Department of State partnered with Bulgaria to implement key programs in the areas of border security, aviation security, and interagency cooperation. In October and December, Bulgarian legal and investigative experts participated in workshops on countering Hizballah's terrorist and criminal activities.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Bulgaria belongs to the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism, a Financial Task Force-style regional body. Bulgaria's Financial Intelligence Directorate (FID) of DANS has primary responsibility for anti-money laundering measures for all reporting entities and is a member of the Egmont Group. The Bulgarian National Bank also has a Special Supervision Directorate to investigate banks for compliance with money laundering and terrorism financing requirements.

The government did not freeze, seize, or forfeit any terrorism-related assets in 2015. However, it did identify some funds as potentially terrorism-related and further investigation is underway. Bulgaria criminalizes terrorism financing in accordance with international standards. Since there is no publicly available information on terrorist-related assets frozen or seized, it is hard to assess the effectiveness of Bulgaria's process. Thirty-one reporting entities, including banks, real estate brokers, and financial and exchange houses, are required to file regularly with FID currency transaction reports for all transactions valued at more than US $17,000. There are penalties for non-compliance (administrative sanctions), and enforcement is generally good. Bulgaria requires the collection of Know Your Customer data for wire transfers. All NGOs are obliged to report suspicious transactions.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: On December 30, a new government strategy and action plan on countering radicalization to violence and terrorism were approved by the Council of Ministers. The strategy aims to strengthen existing government counterterrorism efforts by involving all possible agencies and by optimizing interagency coordination. The strategy spells out mechanisms for improved cooperation with civil society, business organizations, local communities, and religious leaders.

The Grand Mufti of Bulgaria issued a statement with the National Council of Religious Communities in Bulgaria condemning the Paris attacks in January and November. The Grand Mufti has been a voice of tolerance and moderation, and has stressed that government efforts must complement community CVE efforts.

According to Bulgaria's draft action plan on the strategy on countering radicalization and terrorism, the government will have a national program by 2020 for members of violent extremist groups to disengage, de-radicalize, and be rehabilitated.

Internationaland Regional Cooperation: Bulgaria is a member of and active contributor to counterterrorism initiatives at the UN, EU, NATO, Council of Europe, OSCE, and Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

CYPRUS

Overview: The Republic of Cyprus collaborated closely with the United States, the EU, and other countries – bilaterally and multilaterally – in international counterterrorism efforts in 2015.

Cyprus' counterterrorism partnership with the United States included participation in the Department of State's Regional Strategic Initiative programs and Department of Justice's Regional Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training program, which strengthened the government's capacity to counter terrorism.

Since 1974, Cyprus has been divided *de facto* into the Republic of Cyprus government-controlled area, composed of the southern two-thirds of the island, and a northern third, administered by the Turkish Cypriots. In 1983, the Turkish Cypriots declared the northern part to be the independent "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)." The United States does not recognize the "TRNC," nor does any country other than Turkey. The Republic of Cyprus government does not exercise effective control over the area administered by the Turkish Cypriots. The UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus patrols the buffer zone separating the two sides, which is largely open to civilian traffic and remains a significant route for the illicit transit of people, narcotics, and other illicit goods.

The division of the island between the Republic of Cyprus government-controlled area and the northern area administered by the Turkish Cypriots has impeded counterterrorism cooperation between the two communities and between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey, which do not have diplomatic relations. Turkish Cypriots lack the legal and institutional framework necessary to counter the financing of terrorism effectively. Despite these limitations, Turkish Cypriots cooperated in pursuing specific counterterrorism objectives.

In 2015, the United States and the Republic of Cyprus finalized arrangements to exchange biographic and biometric information of suspected terrorists with the goal of improving traveler screening and deterring terrorist travel.

Cyprus is a partner in the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Republic of Cyprus enacted a National Law on Combating Terrorism in 2010 that incorporates EU Council Framework Decisions. Cypriot authorities continued to develop capabilities under the supervision of the National Counterterrorism Coordinator and a specialized counterterrorist squad in the Cypriot National Police's (CNP) Emergency Response Unit.

In May, the CNP arrested Hussein Bassam Abdallah, a dual Lebanese-Canadian national, after Cypriot authorities found 8.2 tons of liquid ammonium nitrate in the basement of his residence in Larnaca. Abdallah admitted to Cypriot authorities he was a member of Hizballah. The Republic of Cyprus charged Abdallah with five offenses, including participation in a terrorist organization and providing support to a terrorist organization. After pleading guilty to all charges, he was sentenced to six years in prison on June 29. The Abdallah case marked the first time the 2010 counterterrorism law was used to prosecute a terrorism case. A prior Hizballah-related arrest in 2012 was tried under standard criminal laws

In response to multiple terrorist attacks in Europe, Cyprus enhanced its security cooperation and law enforcement measures. These activities included increased patrols around critical infrastructure and soft targets, strengthened passport control at airports and seaports, and

increased security measures and surveillance at border crossing points and along the "Green Line" and Cypriot coast.

Cyprus continued to participate in regional and international workshops on Hizballah, aimed at improving the use of law enforcement tools to counter terrorist threats.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The Republic of Cyprus is a member of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Cyprus' financial intelligence unit, the Unit for Combating Money Laundering (MOKAS), is a member of the Egmont Group.

In 2015, Cypriot authorities were currently conducting a national risk assessment on money laundering and terrorism financing, covering the entire anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism(AML/CFT) system, including charities. This document will build on a set of AML/CFT reforms, focussing on financial sector transparency that Cyprus implemented in 2013-2015 in accordance with its IMF assistance program. In calendar year 2015, Cyprus did not identify or freeze any assets pursuant to relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs), including1373 (2001) or the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and al-Qa'ida sanctions.

Cyprus has implemented the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime and informally tracked individuals and entities listed under U.S. Executive Orders, including E.O. 13224. The Combating of Terrorism Law of 2010 provides a comprehensive legal framework on terrorism including adequate provisions regarding terrorism financing. In particular, Section 8 of the 2010 law criminalizes support and financing to any terrorist group, associated parties, and entities designated by EU and UN authorities. Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs circulates updates of UN and EU lists to competent authorities, including MOKAS, Central Bank of Cyprus, Chief of Police, various ministries, Central Intelligence Service, Cyprus Ports Authority, Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission, the Cyprus Bar Association, and the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Cyprus. However, the December 2015 FATF Terrorist Finance Fact Finding Initiative identified Cyprus for not having legal powers in place to apply targeted financial sanctions pursuant to UNSCR 1373 to EU internals.

The Central Bank of Cyprus is the supervisory authority for the banking sector including cooperative societies, electronic money institutions and payment institutions. Cyprus does not have a significant unregulated informal banking and money transfer system.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Cyprus attended the September Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkand continued its participation in the European Commission's Radicalization Awareness Network. The government exchanged best practices with partners on addressing terrorists' internet recruitment efforts. Police and prison officers also received training on countering radicalization to violence by the CNP's Counterterrorism Office.

International and Regional Cooperation: Members of the CNP's Counterterrorism Office participate in the Working Group on Terrorism (CWP) at the Council of the EU. Cyprus regularly participates on the Police Working Group on Terrorism, the "Dumas" Working Group, and the European Expert Network on Terrorism, as well as meetings convened under Europol and INTERPOL. Cyprus has contributed to the Council of Europe's efforts to establish and adopt the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Combating Terrorism, which addresses foreign terrorist fighters within the framework of UNSCR 2178 (2014). Cyprus also participated in regional and international conferences on foreign terrorist fighters and countering Hizballah.

DENMARK

Overview: The Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands) devotes significant assets to counterterrorism programs and initiatives to counter violent extremism domestically and abroad. Denmark cooperates closely with the United States, the United Nations (UN), and the EU on specific counterterrorism initiatives, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF).

On February 14-15, terrorist attacks on a free speech forum and synagogue in Copenhagen demonstrated that Denmark remains a prominent target for terrorists. The 2005 publication (and reprinting in 2010) of political cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, and the country's continued involvement in the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), make Denmark a target for violent Islamist extremists.

According to the Danish Police Intelligence Service (PET), at least 125 Danish citizens and residents have voluntarily left Denmark to fight in Syria and Iraq. A significant number have likely fought on behalf of ISIL and other violent extremist groups. Danish security services monitor individuals who have left and track those who return to Denmark. PET remains concerned that Danish fighters returning to Denmark with terrorist training will seek to radicalize others.

Danish security agencies worked together to counter ISIL's attempts to recruit foreign terrorist fighters and prevent terrorist attacks in Denmark. Denmark has contributed strike and support aircraft, support personnel, and military trainers to the Counter-ISIL Coalition. Also, Denmark authorized the deployment of further combat support assets and 30 uniformed personnel during 2015.

2015 Terrorist Attacks: On February 14 and 15, 2015, Omar Abdel Hamid opened fire at a public event called "Art, Blasphemy and Freedom of Expression," which featured debate over images of the Prophet Mohammed. One person was killed and three police officers were wounded. Later, Hamid shot and killed a security guard outside Copenhagen's Main Synagogue during a bat mitzvah celebration and wounded two police officers at the same site. Hamid was killed a few hours later in a shoot-out with police in the Nørrebro community.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Denmark continued to use its 2006 terrorism legislation that allows enhanced information sharing between Denmark's two intelligence services, PET and the Danish Defense Intelligence Service (DDIS). The legislation

also permits official surveillance and wiretapping of terrorist suspects with a valid warrant. Danish security and law enforcement organizations engage in information sharing through the Center for Terror Analysis (CTA), the Danish government's intelligence fusion center, which merges reporting from PET, DDIS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Danish Emergency Management Agency.

The Danish National Police and the Police Intelligence Service are responsible for the country'scounterterrorism mission. These two divisions of the MOJ coordinate their response with the Ministry of Defense's (MOD) Defense Intelligence Service (DDIS) and the Danish Commission on Counterterrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters.

Denmark's national police force is organized into 12 districts. During 2015, the government increased its focus on improving police capabilities, particularly their ability to protect Danish citizens. The February 14-15 terrorist attacks in Copenhagen led to the introduction of a new policing bill that increased the funding for the Danish national police force by US $286 million. The bill also reallocated staffing throughout Denmark and increased class sizes at the Danish national police academy.

Denmark instituted heightened border security protocols via document checks for travel to countries outside the Schengen area. Denmark revokes passports, but not citizenship, of individuals found attempting to travel to Syria and Iraq. Individuals who participate in terrorist activities may be stripped of Danish citizenship if the loss of nationality does not render the individual stateless. Denmark possesses biographic and biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry and readily shares information within its own government and with other countries, as appropriate. Security forces patrol and control Denmark's land and maritime borders. Denmark is a member of the Schengen Agreement. However, as a consequence of the ongoing refugee and humanitarian crisis in Europe, in late 2015, officials began discussions on imposing temporary border controls with Germany. There were no passport controls at land borders or airport terminals servicing Schengen area flights in 2015.

Counterterrorism-related law enforcement actions included:

- Omar Abdel Hamid opened fire at public events on February 14-15, and was subsequently killed a few hours later in a shoot-out with police in the Nørrebro community.
- In November, Danish police and the Danish Emergency Management Agency hosted a counterterrorism simulation; 36 government ministries were tested in a real-time crisis management simulation. The exercise focused on the police response to an armed terrorist attack in the capital. The live exercise was conducted to improve police performance and readiness in case of further terrorist attacks.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Denmark is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Its Money Laundering Secretariat is a member of the Egmont Group, and cooperates closely with other Nordic financial intelligence units. Danish authorities can freeze assets within hours or days with a valid court order, however, the confiscation process requires a full trial which may take months to years depending on the appeals process.

The Danish government continued an initiative focused on combating money laundering and terrorism financing in East Africa and Yemen. Denmark continued its efforts to buildpartnerships that teach anti-money laundering and counterterrorism finance techniques to the governments of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Yemen.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In January 2015, the Danish Parliament agreed to implement the national CVE action plan, a $10 million program that includes increased funding for prevention efforts, a de-radicalization exit program, mentoring for at-risk youth, and increased monitoring of internet-based messages and propaganda by groups that advocate terrorism or violent extremism. The Danish CVE action plan focuses on early prevention, with a network of trained mentors and youth-to-youth dialogues, as well as preventing online radicalization by educating youth to identify terrorist propaganda on the internet. Denmark has allocated law enforcement resources to monitor the internet for propaganda messaging by groups that espouse terrorism or violent extremism.

The action plan created a national rapid response team to prevent Danish youth from traveling abroad to join armed conflicts. It also funds a new facility that will house a de-radicalization center. The plan expands local officials' authority to use social services for helping de-radicalized young adults between the age of18 and 25, a change that is expected to improve cooperation between social workers, law enforcement, schools, and national counterterrorism agencies.Finally,the plan funds training for municipal-level employees on how to spot and counter radicalization.

Following the February 14 and 15 terrorist attacks, the Danish government initiated efforts to prevent radicalization and extremism in the country's prisons (Omar Abdel Hamid, the attacker in the February attacks in Copenhagen, is believed to have become radicalized while serving one of his prison sentences prior to the attack). The reforms allocated additional funds for training of staff on radicalization, and the development of a mentoring program that focused on inmates convicted of terrorism or deemed to be vulnerable to radicalization.

In November, the Danish city of Aarhus hosted the 2015 European Forum for Urban Security. The location was chosen for the city's exemplary efforts in countering violent extremism and radicalization. The "Aarhus model" focuses on preventing radicalization by working with at-risk citizens to improve their possibilities for inclusion in society helping them to develop better life skills and thus counter the marginalization often experienced by immigrants in Denmark. The conference was broadly attended by security and development experts from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Also in November, Aarhus hosted an international conference entitled "Building Resilience to Radicalization and Violent Extremism," which attracted more than 300 people from 36 countries. The conference was co-branded as a Strong Cities Network event.

The Danish government launched a new counter-radicalization initiative in 2015, led by the NGO ActionAid Denmark. The initiative trains Jordanian imams to spot and counter

radicalization within their communities. The imams are taught strategies to make their community members more resilient against radicalization andto raise awareness of the dangers of radicalization. The Danish government allocated US $54 million in support of this program.

International and Regional Cooperation: The Danish government is committed to working within the UN framework, through the EU, and with other international and regional organizations. Denmark actively participates in the UN, GCTF, EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, NATO, INTERPOL, Europol, the Bern Club, and the EU Counterterrorism Group.

FRANCE

Overview: France confronted serious terrorism threats in 2015, including the mounting challenge of foreign terrorist fighters. France worked closely with the United States on counterterrorism efforts. French government agencies collaborated with their U.S. counterparts to exchange and evaluate terrorist-related information and strove to foster closer regional and international security cooperation. France's security apparatus and legislation provide broadauthorities to security services to prevent terrorist attacks. France's military leads or participates in counterterrorism operations worldwide, such as Operation Barkhane (headquartered in Chad), with special emphasis on the Francophone countries in the Sahel and their neighbors, most notably Mali.

France experienced multiple attacks in 2015, the most serious being the coordinated November 13 attacks in and around Paris that killed 130 victims and injured approximately 350, according to official accounts. Earlier in the year, the January 7 to 9 attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical magazine and the Hyper Cacher (Jewish kosher grocery) killed 17 victims.

The Government of France remained on high alert during 2015 for attacks against its interests in France and worldwide, and has taken steps to counter the potential threat posed by its nationals traveling abroad to engage in terrorist activity. The return of French nationals who joined groups fighting in Syria and Iraq is a major and increasing threat. On December 15, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve estimated that 1,800 French citizens or French residents were linked to fighting among violent extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. Of them, Cazeneuve estimated 600 were in Iraq and Syria, 144 had died, 250 returned to France, more than 500 were preparing to depart, and the remainder were in transit.

France is a leading member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); participates fully in multilateral counterterrorism fora; and has taken decisive domestic action to restrict terrorism financing and to limit the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. France has also conducted Counter ISIL air strikes in Iraq and in Syria, and has provided training and capacity-building assistance to security forces in Iraq. France deployed its lone aircraft carrier to the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf to conduct Counter ISIL operations air strikes.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: France experienced multiple attacks in 2015:

- On January 7-9, three French attackers killed a total of 17 people in two attacks in and around Paris. On January 7, brothers Saïd and Cherif Kouachi killed 12 people at the offices of the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical newspaper. On January 8, Amedy Coulibaly killed

a traffic policewoman in the Parisian suburb of Montrouge. On January 9, Coulibaly took hostages at Hyper Cacher, a kosher supermarket on the eastern edge of Paris, killing four shoppers before being killed by French police. After a nationwide manhunt, French police killed the Kouachi brothers in a standoff in a factory in Dammartin-en-Goële, north of Paris, on January 9.

- On April 19, Algerian student Sid Ahmed Glam, known to French security services for radical views, attempted to attack a church in Villejuif, a Paris suburb. He failed and shot and wounded himself in the process. Widespread reports indicate Glam is suspected of having killed another person around this time.
- On June 26, Frenchman Yassin Salhi beheaded his supervisor in what French prosecutors said was an ISIL-inspired attack at an industrial site in Saint-Quentin-Fallavier, near Lyon. Salhi committed suicide in his prison cell December 22, according to a French deputy prosecutor.
- On August 21, heavily armed Moroccan national Ayoub el-Khazzani prepared to open fire on the carriage of a Thalys train from Amsterdam to Paris. Passengers on board the train foiled his attack. A dual French-American citizen was seriously injured.
- On November 13, French and Belgian nationals launched a series of attacks that killed 130 victims in and around Paris. Terrorists working in three coordinated teams attacked the Bataclan concert hall, the Stade de France, and restaurant terraces in four locations in the 10th and 11th arrondissements of Paris. Seven of the attackers died in clashes with police or by detonating suicide vests during the attacks. On November 18, police stormed a safe house in Saint-Denis, killing three, including the alleged attack planner Abdelhamid Abaaoud, a Belgian citizen. Salah Abdeslam, a French citizen and brother of November 13 suicide bomber Brahim Abdeslam, remained at large at the end of 2015; he was apprehended in March 2016.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: France has a system of non-jury courts for terrorism trials and a broad definition of what is considered a terrorist offense – the so-called "association of wrongdoers" offense – which allows it to cast a wide net and imprison a broad range of suspects. Under French law, foreigners can be deported if they are believed to pose a serious threat to public order. After the November 13 attacks, the French Parliament voted to extend a national state of emergency (including, among other measures, reducing judicial and procedural restraints on arrests and other police actions for counterterrorism purposes).

A law enacted on July 24, 2015, codified and expanded government surveillance measures aimed at terrorism and other criminal offenses. A 2014 law took steps to counter the threat of foreign terrorist fighters with three key objectives: to prevent people from leaving the territory when there are reasons to believe that they intend to engage in illicit terrorist activities abroad; to counter online propaganda by blocking websites advocating terrorism (the law calls that blocking be carried out under judicial supervision to avoid infringement on the freedom of speech); and to criminalize individual preparation of acts of terrorism.

France's main counterterrorism apparatus is its Direction Générale de la Sécurité Intérieure (DGSI) tasked with counter-espionage, counterterrorism, and the surveillance of potential threats on French territory, along with economic protection issues including organized crime and corporate espionage.

France has two national security forces: the General Directorate of National Police (DGPN) and the Directorate General of the National Gendarmerie (DGGN), both subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior. (The DGGN is part of the Defense Ministry but the Interior Ministry manages its policing functions.) The DGPN is responsible for civil law enforcement and criminal investigations in cities and large towns and is staffed with approximately 150,000 personnel. The DGSI combines law enforcement capabilities with domestic intelligence gathering.

In general, France has advanced law enforcement capacity to combat terrorism and sufficient information sharing at the domestic level. In the aftermath of the November 13 attacks, Interior Minister Cazeneuve renewed French commitments to push for establishment of French and European Passenger Name Record databases for travelers, to facilitate better EU-wide informationsharing and Schengen-wide border security, and to combat arms trafficking in the Balkans.

On December 1, Prime Minister Manuel Valls said the government had foiled or disrupted "five or six" other terrorist attacks during the year: for example, in early June French police disrupted a four-person cell of French individuals with links to Syria plotting to attack military installations in southern France.

On December 15, Interior Minister Cazeneuve said police had carried out 2,700 counterterrorism raids across the country under emergency powers following the November 13 attacks. A total of 334 people were arrested, of whom 287 were placed in custody for questioning. The raids led to the seizure of 431 weapons, including 41 heavy weapons.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: France is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). France also participates as a Cooperating and Supporting Nation (COSUN) to the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, and an Observer to the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, and the Middle East and North Africa Financial Task Force, all of which are FATF-style regional bodies. France's financial intelligence unit is a member of the Egmont Group and member of the Anti-Money Laundering Liaison Committee of the Franc Zone.

Following the January 2015 attacks in Paris, the French government announced eight new measures to combat terrorism financing, some of which have since been implemented (a limit on cash payments went into effect on September 1) and others go into effect in early 2016. Some of the measures transpose into French law the Fourth European Directive on Anti-Money Laundering (e.g., tighter regulations on prepaid cards). The objectives of the measures are to improve domestic information sharing, limit the size and availability of anonymous transactions, improve the tracking of suspicious transactions, enhance due diligence checks on certain transactions, and bolster the capacity to freeze assets (e.g., by extending covered assets to include vehicles).

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The French Council of Ministers promulgated a four-point plan to counter violent extremism and a national action plan on "de-radicalization" in 2014. A national-level appointed official, a prefect, is charged with managing national efforts to counter violent extremism. France considers its integration programs for all French citizens and residents a major tool in countering radicalization and violent extremism. Many of these programs target disenfranchised communities and new immigrants.

The Ministry of Education works to instill "universal values" in all French pupils, regardless of ethnic origin or country of birth. Ministry regulations mandate that all French public schools teach civic education, and that all students attend school until age 16. On January 22, the Education Ministry announced a new effort to improve civic education and integrative efforts in the wake of the January 7-9 terrorist attacks. The government also offers adult vocational training for older immigrants and minorities who have never attended French schools. The Interior Ministry plays a significant role in countering radicalization to violence by increased police presence in disenfranchised areas, neighborhoods, and regions with high criminality and juvenile delinquency rates. The Prime Minister's office managed an anti-violent extremism counter-messaging campaign. In September, the French and Moroccan governments announced that as many as 50 French imams per year would study the "values of openness and tolerance' at the King Mohammed VI Institute in Rabat.

The Ministry of Justice implements rehabilitation and reintegration programs for former criminals. Prison radicalization was a major concern and subject of independent and state-sponsored research and reporting in 2015, with many calls to increase the number of Muslim chaplains employed by the French penitentiary system, currently around 195, according to civic leaders.

According to the Interior Ministry, a toll-free hotline implemented in 2014 for families of radicalized citizens has received more than 3,000 calls since its inception.

International and Regional Cooperation: France is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and a founding member of the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, which is a GCTF-inspired institution devoted to rule of law-based training. Sworn in in 2013, France's Jean Paul Laborde remained the Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. France played a strong role on the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida Sanctions Committee.

In an effort to increase its engagement on CVE issues, France provided funding to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, a public-private partnership to provide community-based organizations with grants to implement CVE projects at the local level. In regional organizations, France participated in the drafting of the European Council's Counterterrorism Strategy action plan, and helped create and implement NATO's new Strategic Concept and the Lisbon Summit Declaration, both of which include major counterterrorism measures for member states. Through the OSCE, France engaged in new measures to counter transnational threats, including terrorism. France participated in the G-7's Roma-Lyon Group, and pursued practical projects in counterterrorism and other areas.

The Government of France undertook joint counterterrorism operations with countries including the Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK. France also played an active role in both bilateral and EU efforts to support counterterrorism capacity building in other countries.

GEORGIA

Overview: In 2015, Georgia, a member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), continued its strong engagement with the United States across a range of counterterrorism-related issues and remained a solid U.S. security partner. Following the passage of strengthened counterterrorism legislation in June, the Georgian authorities carried out multiple arrests of individuals on terrorism-related charges, including an alleged ISIL facilitator. In addition, Georgia took steps to improve border security and counter the financing of terrorism. Georgia participated in the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism, hosted by President Obama in New York in September.

The Georgian government estimates 50 to 100 Georgian nationals from the Muslim-majority regions of Adjara and the Pankisi Gorge are fighting in Syria and Iraq for either al-Qa'ida affiliates or ISIL. Violent extremists in Georgia increased their use of social media in 2015. In a November 2015 video, Georgians fighting in Syria called on Georgian Muslims to attack "infidels" in their homeland, a shift from previous appeals to either join the fight in Syria and Iraq or attack Russia.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Georgia continued to strengthen its counterterrorism legislation in 2015, and has a substantial legal framework for prosecuting terrorism-related offenses. In line with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178, the Georgian government in June changed its Criminal Code and other relevant legislation to criminalize foreign terrorist fighters and the incitement of terrorist acts. These amendments built on the 2014 changes to the Criminal Code that criminalized participation in international terrorism, recruitment for membership in a terrorist organization, and failing to hinder a terrorist incident.

Counterterrorism units within Georgia's State Security Service (SSG) have the lead in handling terrorism-related incidents, and are generally wellequipped and well trained. Overall, the Georgian government is largely capable of detecting, deterring, and responding to terrorism incidents, despite challenges to cooperation, communication, and informationsharing posed by the split between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the SSG in August.

Georgia has improved its overall border security, in part due to its goal of attaining visa-free travel to the EU. However, Tbilisi's lack of control over its Russian-occupied territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia limits the country's ability to secure the administrative boundary lines with its breakaway regions. Georgia has taken steps to strengthen document security, and Georgian law enforcement uses cameras, terrorist watchlists, and Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Records to help detect potential terrorist movement at ports of entry. However, more comprehensive screening and the implementation of standard operating procedures would enhance this capability. With significant U.S. support, the Georgian Coast Guard is better equipped to patrol the country's maritime borders, with the exception of the Russian-occupied Abkhazia's coastline. Georgia shares cross-border terrorism-related

information with its southern neighbors – Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey – through police attachés and working-level interaction at border crossings.

In June, Georgian authorities arrested suspected ISIL facilitator Ayub Borchashvili of the Pankisi Gorge, along with three individuals who were en route to Syria via Turkey. Another Pankisi native, Davit Borchashvili, was arrested in November for fighting with ISIL after returning from Syria. In late November, the SSG arrested four individuals in the Adjara and Guria regions of western Georgia on suspicion of links with ISIL. Weapons, explosive devices, and ISIL flags were found in their homes, according to press reports.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Georgia is a member of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Georgia's amendments to terrorism financing legislation to address shortcomings highlighted in MONEYVAL's 2012 evaluation came into force in 2015, and the Georgian government was in the process of implementing an action plan for combating money laundering and terrorism financing to further improve regulations and build capacity. In response to recommendations from MONEYVAL and the FATF, the government established the Interagency Commission on Implementation of UNSC Resolutions to coordinate the government's immediate compliance with UNSCR 1373 and obligations under the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2015, the Georgian government primarily directedits efforts at youth in the Pankisi Gorge. The Ministry of Education worked with local schools to improve Georgian language instruction, civic education, and science classes; and the Ministry of Sport has improved gym facilities and set up after-school programs. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is reviewing international best practices to determine those that Georgia could adopt for implementation.

International and Regional Cooperation: In addition to its close cooperation with the United States, Georgia is engaged on counterterrorism issues at the international, regional, and bilateral levels. The country also participates in regional organizations such as the Council of Europe Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and its amending protocol, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and the GUAM (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) Organization for Democracy and Economic Development.

GERMANY

Overview: The threat from violent extremism increased in 2015 in connection with the threat posed by domestic radical groups as well as foreign terrorist fighters. Germany investigated, arrested, and prosecuted a sharply increased number of terrorist suspects and disrupted terrorist-related groups within its borders, many of whom were connected to al-Qa'ida (AQ), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), other violent Islamist extremists, Kurdish nationalists, and neo-Nazi terrorist organizations. Security officials estimated more than 760 residents of Germany have departed the country to participate in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, the majority of which joined violent Islamist extremist groups in the fighting there. One hundred are

estimated to have died there. A third of the group, roughly 250, has returned to Germany. German officials actively investigated these returnees for any terrorist threat resulting from their experience abroad and possible desire to continue to support violent extremist causes. Bilateral counterterrorism cooperation with the United States remained excellent.

Germany is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and has provided arms, material support, and training to Kurdish security forces; reconnaissance aircraft, satellite data, and refueling aircraft to support Coalition air operations; and a frigate to defend a French aircraft carrier from which Coalition air operations are launched. Germany implemented UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2178 and 2199, and obligations under the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime, through legislative amendments to specifically criminalize terrorism finance and foreign terrorist fighter travel, sharpening previous antiterrorism legislation. Germany is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and supported the GCTF good practices on foreign terrorist fighters. Domestically, the German government has increased enforcement efforts to prevent, interdict, and counter foreign terrorist fighter travel and has voiced support for strengthening EU and Schengen measures to do so. German security officials actively made use of existing provisions allowing them to seize passports of those deemed to pose a security risk and implemented similar legislation for national identification cards. In November, the Bundestag (parliament) approved a 2015 budget that included increased spending on law enforcement and domestic intelligence efforts in counterterrorism, including new counterterrorism police response units and increased investigative, prosecutorial, and analytical resources.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The German government continued to apply its comprehensive counterterrorism legislation, which criminalizes membership in or support for domestic and foreign terrorist organizations. The Criminal Code also makes a range of terrorism-related preparatory actions illegal, such as participating in terrorist training or acquiring weapons or explosives with the intent to commit attacks that endanger the German state. In June, legislation entered into force amending the Criminal Code in two areas to implement UNSCR 2178: (1) Departing (or attempting to do so) from Germany with the intention to commit grave acts of violence abroad or to seek training for such acts is now a criminal offense; and (2) The Criminal Code now contains a new separate section specifically criminalizing terrorism financing.

In October, a man was arrested on suspicion of planning to travel to the Syrian-Turkish border to attend a terrorist training camp. This was the first arrest of its kind under the new revisions to the Criminal Code. An additional new law to allow authorities to revoke the national identification (ID) cards of suspected terrorists entered into force on June 30. The amendments to the national ID card law allow cards to be denied or revoked, and substitute ID documents are issued for a maximum of threeyears that does not permit foreign travel. In December, a new law entered into force requiring telecommunications providers to retain data for the purpose of investigating terrorism and other serious crimes.

Germany generally does not collect entry/exit data and is working towards systematic border checks of arriving and departing EU citizens. Non-EU citizens are systematically checked. At the end of 2015, all arriving/departing passengers' passports will be checked manually against the INTERPOL Lost and Stolen Data Base. Biometric data is not screened at entry, although Germany participates in the EU Smart Border entry/exit and biometric data collection pilot.

Data on suspected terrorists is shared between federal and state law enforcement agencies. The German passport and other identity documents incorporate strong security features. Collection and retention of Advance Passenger Information for traveler screening is limited and Passenger Name Record (PNR) analysis is not used. Following the approval of a new EU-wide PNR Directive, Germany began development of a PNR system. Concerns over data privacy played a role in limiting German willingness to expand travel analysis systems.

There were numerous arrests, prosecutions, and trials throughout 2015; the Federal Ministry of Justice estimated at year's end that there were 300 terrorist suspects under active investigation or prosecution. The most prominent cases included:

- In March, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (MOI) announced that it had banned the organization "Tawhid Germany" and the associated "Team Tawhid Media" as extremist anti-constitutional organizations. Police and security services in the states of Bavaria, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Schleswig-Holstein carried out a number of raids and investigative operations on the night of March 25-26 to implement the order.
- Also in March, the Stuttgart Higher Regional Court sentenced Ismail Issa to four years, six months imprisonment for membership in a foreign terrorist organization "Jaish al-Muhajarin wal-Ansar" (JAMWA). Co-defendants Ezzedine Issa (Ismail's brother) and Mohammad Sobhan A. were sentenced to three years and two years, nine months imprisonment, respectively, for supporting a terrorist group. The court found Ismail Issa guilty of traveling to Syria and participating in combat action in 2013.
- In June, the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court sentenced German-Polish dual national Karolina Rafalska to three years and nine months in prison and German Ahmed-Sadiq Munye to one year and nine months parole for providing monetary and material support to ISIL. Rafalska raised a total of US $5,580 to help her husband Fared Saal, a prominent member of ISIL in Syria and a close associate of German-born ISIL fighter Dennis Cuspert. She also sent him video equipment which was used to produce propaganda videos. Munye was sentenced for transferring US $2,400 to Saal.
- In July, the Berlin Superior Court sentenced Fatih I. (28) to three years and six months imprisonment on two counts of supporting a foreign terrorist organization as well as fraud. The court found he was guilty of having defrauded a bank of US $27,350, of which he transferred US $7,650 to Junud Al Sham in Syria and supplied the group with a four-wheel drive vehicle in 2013. In March 2014, he transferred US $41.695 to ISIK, an ISIL-predecessor organization.
- In September, the Berlin Superior Court sentenced German citizen Fatih K. to six years imprisonment for membership in the terrorist group "Junud al-Sham." The court found him guilty of traveling to Syria for training and preparing propaganda videos. The court found no evidence that he had participated in combat. He had previously been incarcerated for 22 months for membership in the German Taliban Mujahedin.
- In October, the trial against eight violent Islamist extremists accused of stealing US $20,758 in a wave of robberies to finance terrorist groups in Syria began in Cologne. The men were arrested in November 2014 after having been active from 2011 to 2014. The men were believed to have received training with ISIL.
- In October, the Frankfurt Prosecutor's Office indicted an unnamed 35-year-old Turkish-German citizen for planning a bomb attack on charges of preparing an act of violence, forging documents, and violating weapons and explosives laws. He was arrested in April together with his wife, who has since been released, on suspicion they were plotting to

carry out an attack at a large scale public event. The couple had bought three liters of hydrogen-peroxide at a hardware store under false identities on March 30. The man also kept a ready-assembled pipe bomb and other weapons and ammunitions in his basement.

- In December, two returned ISIL fighters Ayoub B. (27) and Ebrahim H. B. (26) were sentenced by the Higher Regional Court of Celle, Lower Saxony, to four years and three months and three years in prison, respectively for membership in a terrorist organization. According to the court, Ayoub and Ebrahim were members of ISIL in Syria between June and August 2014. Ayoub and Ebrahim were able to convince the court that they broke with ISIL, thus receiving a lower sentence. In July 2015, Ebrahim participated in an investigative TV documentary, warning people against joining ISIL.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Germany is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and is an observer to the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism financing, the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, and the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, all of which are FATF-style regional bodies. Germany's financial intelligence unit (FIU) is a member of the Egmont Group. In June, based on improvements reflected in the most recent FATF Mutual Evaluation Follow-Up Report, the FATF removed Germany from the Follow-Up process. German agencies filed 25,054 (compared to 19,095 in 2013) suspicious transaction reports in 2014 (the latest figures available). This was the largest annual increase in suspicious transaction reports since 2002, when Germany's FIU was created.Agencies designated 323 entities for suspected terrorism financing, a significant decrease as a share of reports. Germany remained a strong advocate of the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime.

The June amendments to the German Criminal Code implementing UNSCR 2178 also explicitly outlaw terrorism finance in all forms, including the financing of terrorist travel, per the FATF Recommendations.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Germany has numerous programs to counter violent extremism at the state and federal levels. The Federal Ministries of Interior and Family Affairs, as well as their state-level counterparts, have formed a working group to ensure coordination and more effective support for efforts to analyze and counter the appeal of violent extremism, which meets regularly to compile and disseminate information and best practices. In November, the Federal Family Ministry increased funding for its "Live Democracy" project, which sponsors a wide range of CVE-related projects at state and local governments as well as via NGOs. Funding from 2015-2018 will total US $54.6 million, of which US $21.8 millionis earmarked for CVE projects.

The Federal Ministry of the Interior continued its counter-radicalization assistance center for concerned parents and friends of violent extremists, operated by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, or BAMF). The center was established in January 2012 and has expanded to include a nationwide telephone hotline with clients referred to a region-specific advising partner. In June, the fifth BAMF-funded local anti-radicalization counseling center opened in Bonn, North Rhine-Westphalia. The center, offering counseling for

parents and friends of young people who are feared to be radicalizing, is operated by the organization Hayat, which has been a BAMF implementing partner since the program's launch in 2012.

The Federal States of Hesse, Bavaria, and Berlin operated state-level counseling and de-radicalization programs implemented by the NGO "Violence Prevention Network," focused on counseling to families of radicalizing or radicalized individuals and to the individuals themselves. Violence Prevention Network also implemented CVE programs in prisons in these states.

In August, Federal Family Minister Manuela Schwesig and Dilek Kolat, Berlin Senator for Integration, Labor and Women opened a new counseling center "BAHIRA", a cooperative project of the NGO "Violence Prevention Network," the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, and the DITIB-Şehitlik Turkish-Islam Community in Berlin-Neukölln. The center is located at the Şehitlik mosque and aims to carry out events in the mosque to sensitize community members on the issue of violent Islamist extremism, and training employees and community members on how to deal with radicalized persons.

In July, a new de-radicalization program for religious extremism began in Hamburg. The program plans to confront religiously motivated extremism and Salafism in Hamburg, and is aimed at teenagers and young adults who are already religiously radicalized or who may be undergoing radicalization. The Hamburg project is part of a broader, multi-authority initiative to fight the spread of religious extremism in Germany. The Hamburg Ministry for Social Affairs will provide up to US $ 328,000 per year through the end of May 2017.

International and Regional Cooperation: Germany is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), supported GCTF capacity-building projects, and continued to participate in various multilateral counterterrorism initiatives. German cooperation with regional and international organizations on counterterrorism includes the UN and UN Security Council, EU, OECD, OSCE, NATO, Council of Europe, G-7, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and INTERPOL. Germany is a founding member of the GCTF-inspired International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law. Germany advocated strongly within the EU for improved counterterrorism and border security efforts. During its G-7 Presidency in 2015, Germany supported coordinated counterterrorism efforts through the Roma-Lyon Group and at the Foreign Ministerial and Leaders' Summit, with a particular focus on the foreign terrorist fighter problem.

GREECE

Overview: In 2015, Greece experienced intermittent small-scale attacks such as targeted package bombs or IED detonations by domestic anarchist groups, although slightly fewer than in 2014. Generally, these attacks did not appear aimed to inflict bodily harm but rather sought to make a political statement. Greek government cooperation with the United States on counterterrorism remained strong. Senior Greek government leaders have emphasized that counterterrorism is one of their top priorities. The MFA quickly condemned foreign acts of terrorism, has strongly condemned the actions of ISIL as abhorrent, and has called on all states to actively and effectively confront this threat. Greece is a member of the Global Coalition to

Counter ISIL and is implementing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178, 2199, and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Greece's two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki, experienced occasional, relatively small-scale anarchist attacks that used inexpensive and unsophisticated incendiary devices against the properties of political figures, party offices, private bank ATMs, ministries and tax offices, and privately-owned vehicles.

On October 26, Hellenic Police charged five members of the right-wing group "Epsilon – Greek Fighters' Faction" with planting IEDs outside the Bank of Greece in Kalamata and at the statue of Byzantine Emperor Constantine Palaiologos in Mystras on October 23. The suspects reportedly told police that they believe in Zeus and are against Christianity.

On November 24, a three-kilogram gelatin dynamite IED exploded outside the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises' (SEV) downtown Athens headquarters, situated approximately three blocks from the Greek Parliament in the heart of the popular tourist area of Syntagma Square, and across the street from the Cypriot embassy, which sustained significant damage. Media reported that SEV has been targeted multiple times since 1976, as some in the anarchist community view it as a symbol of globalization. Advance warning was given and there were no injuries.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Article 187A of the Greek Penal Code codifies the terrorism statute. In addition, Article 28 (1) of the Greek Constitution subjects Greek citizens to applicable international laws, to include those related to terrorism. Article 28 (2) and (3) subjects Greek citizens to applicable EU Laws, including the EU law against terrorism. The Police Directorate for Countering Special Violent Crimes (DAEEV) is responsible for counterterrorism in Greece. DAEEV attracts highly motivated and educated young police officers. This unit has demonstrated a high capacity to collect information, but it lacks capacity to use the volume of data it collects and to share with other services within the Greek police and Coast Guard.

Greece's national ID card is extremely vulnerable to alteration and photo substitution, and it has not incorporated any new security features such as digitized photo and biometrics. To mitigate this vulnerability, police authorities instituted a system for conducting electronic checks of civil registry databases to confirm documents submitted as part of the application for ID issuance, and checks of national ID databases for passport issuance. The government has further committed to address this vulnerability through the eventual introduction of a biometric national ID.

Christodoulos Xiros, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist and hit-man for the radical leftist group Revolutionary Organization 17 November, was recaptured in January 2015 after he disappeared in January 2014 while on furlough from prison. Hellenic Police uncovered evidence at the time of his arrest that he was plotting an attack on Korydallos Prison to release imprisoned members of terrorist group Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei. Xiros was put on trial on November 16 along with 27 other individuals, many of whom are alleged or known members of Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei.

Nikolaos Maziotis, a lead member of the terrorist organization Revolutionary Struggle, was put on trial October 16, 2015 for terrorist acts committed before his recapture in July 2014. In May,

Hellenic Police arrested Spyros Christodoulou and Grigoris Tsironis, known associates of Maziotis. Georgios Petrakakos, another known associate of Maziotis, was arrested in late September and charged with membership in a terrorist organization. At the time of Petrakakos' arrest, police discovered weapons and evidence of kidnapping plots.

While the Hellenic Police DAEEV directorate arrested 16 suspected members of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C), including senior leader Hussein Tekin, in two raids in summer 2013 and February 2014, 13 of the suspects were tried in January 2015. Charges were dropped against two of the suspects while 11 were given prison sentences ranging from three to seven years. Six of the 11 sentences were commuted to monetary fines.

The porous nature of Greece's borders remained of serious concern. To help address vulnerabilities, in June, the Hellenic Coast Guard, with U.S. support, sponsored a regional conference on Transnational Maritime Security Threats to enhance capabilities and coordination between maritime security organizations across the Mediterranean through an exchange of best practices.More than 70 participants from 15 countries around the Mediterranean and the Balkans attended.This was followed by a senior-level seminar in September that the U.S. Embassy in Athens helped coordinate at the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operations Training Center in Crete. The three-day executive seminar included more than 60 maritime law enforcement, defense, and other security service officials, as well as representatives and experts from more than 17 countries and organizations.

Also in September, more than 60 law enforcement officials from DHS and the Hellenic Customs Authority (HCA) participated in a program to enhance HCA's border interdictions and anti-smuggling investigations. Training included instruction on developing successful investigations against transnational criminal organizations that play key roles in narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and human smuggling, all potentially supporting terrorism. In November, the Department of State supported a DHS-ledMaritime and Land Border Security Training for operational units from the Hellenic Police and Coast Guard designed to improve interdiction and investigative measures to enhance counterterrorism operations.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Greece is a member of the Financial Action Task Force, and its financial intelligence unit, the Hellenic Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Commission (HAMLC), is a member of the Egmont Group. The Foreign Ministry's Sanctions Monitoring Unit is tasked with ensuring that Greece meets its commitments to enforce international sanctions, including terrorism-related sanctions. The HAMLC, which is essentially an autonomous institution, although nominally under the oversight of the Ministry of Finance, inspected 5,198 suspicious transactions through November 11, 2015, but did not report evidence of terrorism financing in Greece.

Terrorist assets remain frozen until the completion of judicial proceedings when a court decision is rendered. Non-profit organizations are not obliged to file suspicious transaction reports. However, all banks – through which these organizations conduct transactions – are legally obliged to report suspicious transactions of any kind, regardless of the type of entity (for- or not-for-profit), and the government may directly monitor such entities if necessary.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Greek Foreign Minister Kotzias has steadily and publicly voiced support for countering ISIL and condemned its actions. Greece is sensitive to the dangers of radicalization and engages regional partners on the matter. In October, Kotzias hosted a widely-attended International Conference in Athens on "Religious and Cultural Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East."

International and Regional Cooperation: Greece engaged constructively on counterterrorism initiatives in international fora and regularly participated in regional information exchange and seminars through such bodies as the UN, the EU, the OSCE, the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center for Combating Trans-Border Crime, and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Greece participated in international and regional trainings geared to bolster criminal justice efforts to prevent and respond to terrorism. For example, Greece hosted a week-long training conducted by OSCE that was centered on several of the criminal justice good practices contained in the GCTF's Rabat Memorandum Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism in the Criminal Justice Sector.

IRELAND

Overview: The United States and Ireland worked reasonably well in bilateral and regional counterterrorism, law enforcement, and information sharing efforts. An Garda Síochána (the local and national police service of Ireland, referred to as Garda in this report) has comprehensive law enforcement, immigration, investigative, intelligence, and counterterrorism responsibilities.

In 2015, there were incidents carried out in Ireland by dissident republican groups (sometimes referred to as criminal terrorist groups by the Irish Department of Justice). Some violent actions committed in neighboring Northern Ireland by members of dissident groups were traced back to support provided by persons living in Ireland. Attacks were often directed at Northern Ireland's law enforcement personnel and security structures to disrupt ongoing post-peace process community rehabilitation efforts. Irish authorities worked to address these legacy issues stemming from "The Troubles," and were actively involved in dealing with transnational terrorism issues. The targets for other attacks by dissident republican groups in Ireland have been other republican factions, and the incidents often involved organized criminal activity.

Major Garda successes in disrupting the activities of such groups and infighting between dissident factions appeared to have lessened the threat of terrorism. In 2015, the Irish government committed with the UK government and the Northern Ireland Executive to reinforce efforts to tackle organized crime associated with the legacy of para-militarism. A Joint Agency Task Force was established in December to identify strategic priorities for combating cross-border organized crime and to oversee operational law enforcement coordination, after a trilateral cross-border Ministerial meeting between the Irish Minister for Justice and Equality, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and counterparts in the UK government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Ireland is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Enacted June 1, 2015, the Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offenses) (Amendment) Act 2015 created three new offenses relating to preparatory terrorist activities: public provocation to commit a terrorist offense, recruitment for terrorism, and training for terrorism. The bill transposed into Irish law an EU Council Framework Decision on counterterrorism. The Act specifically recognizes that terrorist-linked activities may be committed by electronic means. The new offenses would carry sentences of up to 10 years imprisonment upon conviction.

Law enforcement units have effectively demonstrated their capacity to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents. The Garda Special Branch provides specialized law enforcement capability and has primary responsibility for counterterrorism response, with the military performing specific functions when requested by the civil authorities. The Irish Defense Ministry launched the 2015 "White Paper on Defence" in August outlining Ireland's defense policy framework for the next decade, aimed at addressing increased security challenges. It featured a streamlined response to terrorism with the Government Taskforce on Emergency Planning reviewing terrorism threat assessments received from Garda. In October, the Minister for Justice announced plans to establish a second Special Criminal Court (SCC) with seven judges to try terrorist and criminal gang offenses.

In 2004, the Irish government established a second non-jury Special Criminal Court (SCC); nearly 11 years later, in October 2015, the government appointed seven serving judges to its bench. Through those appointments, the second SCC officially came into existence. [Irish law provides for a non-jury SCC when the director of public prosecutions certifies a case to be beyond the capabilities of an ordinary court. The Irish Council on Civil Liberties, Amnesty International, and the UN Human Rights Committee have expressed concern that, inter alia, SCCs use a lowered evidence admissibility standard.]

While no significant terrorist attacks occurred in 2015, the bomb squad mobilized 141 times due to possible IED incidents, 40 of which involved viable IEDs that Irish Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians rendered safe. The list below details terrorism-related law enforcement actions reported in the public domain.

- In March, police found firearms, ammunition, and IEDs while investigating dissident republican activity in Ireland. Police made the discovery during a planned search in County Louth. In a similar operation in the Raskeagh and Kilcurry area, close to the border with Northern Ireland, police found firearms and firearm components that were stored underground.
- In May, Army EOD technicians rendered safe four IEDs during a major investigation into dissident republican activity. Police conducted a total of 20 searches throughout Counties Dublin, Louth, and Wexford, arresting six men and seizing pipe bombs, explosives, a firearm, and ammunition. In County Louth, EOD technicians conducted a controlled detonation. In County Wexford, EOD technicians rendered safe component parts of bomb-making equipment. Separately, in County Leitrim, EOD technicians rendered safe two viable IEDs. Beyond that, police found a suspicious device while conducting a vehicle search.

- In June, Garda in County Longford arrested four men they suspected of dissident republican activity after suspicious activity and the discovery of a suspect explosive device. The Army Bomb Disposal Team attended the scene and rendered the device safe.

Ireland worked closely with the UK on border security, including sharing biographic and biometric information. The Irish Naturalization and Immigration Services recently commenced a six-month trial of automated border control gates for some flights at Dublin Airport. These electronic gates allow certain categories of arriving passengers holding a passport with an electronic chip, which contains the holder's facial image, to clear immigration controls through electronic self-service means. The trial results will be evaluated before determining whether the method provides a more secure and efficient means to clear immigration controls. The Government of Ireland was active in highlighting the need for the sharing of Passenger Name Records on flights in the EU.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Ireland is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and its financial intelligence unit, the Bureau of Fraud Investigation, is a member of the Egmont Group. In 2014, the Criminal Justice Act 2013 (CJA) went into effect, amending the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorism financing) Act 2010 by providing for the cessation of mobile communications services where necessary for the aversion of terrorist threats. Additionally, the CJA consolidated all of Ireland's existing anti-money laundering and terrorism financing laws. Ireland has yet to transpose the fourth EU Money Laundering Directive into Irish law.

Law enforcement authorities monitor non-profit organizations for purposes of monitoring breaches of criminal law, but Ireland has yet to fully implement the Charities Act of 2009, which regulates the activities of charities and non-profit organizations in Ireland.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Ireland's efforts to counter violent extremism focused on integrating minority groups into Irish society. These measures included providing social benefits, language training, health care, and the proactive advocacy work of an Ombudsman's office in the affairs of immigrants. The Garda Racial Intercultural and Diversity Office coordinates, monitors, and advises on all aspects of policing in the area of ethnic and cultural diversity with a view towards building trust with communities. Through this office, police officers are provided with special training to assist at-risk populations.

The Irish government pursued its CVE strategy primarily through the Ethnic Liaison Officer program of the Garda. These officers liaise with representatives of the various minority communities in an area, and establish communication links with each of these communities. They support integration by involving members of ethnic minority communities in Garda and community social events.

International and Regional Cooperation: Ireland works closely with the UK in securing the Common Travel Area (CTA). The introduction of the British-Irish visa required the sharing of biometric and other information. The net result was a more integrated system for checking

travelers. Ireland actively participates in a range of meetings and actions at the EU to address counterterrorism. In addition to counterterrorism capacity building overseas, Ireland also cooperated on counterterrorism efforts with Northern Ireland.

ITALY

Overview: Italy aggressively investigated terrorist suspects, dismantled suspected terrorist-related cells within its borders, and maintained a high level of professional cooperation with U.S. and international partners in all areas, including Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) efforts. Terrorist and criminal activity by domestic anarchists and other violent extremists remained a threat.

On February 20, Italy adopted new counterterrorism legislation, implementing its obligations under UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 to identify, decrease, and disrupt the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. The law criminalized participation in a conflict in a foreign territory in support of a terrorist organization, and allows the government to seize suspects' passports. The law also gave the government the authority to instruct internet service providers to block access to websites identified by authorities as being used for terrorist recruitment activities, increased government authority to collect personal data related to the perpetration of terrorist crimes, and extended the scope of power of the National Anti-Mafia Prosecutor – renamed the National Anti-Mafia and Corruption Prosecutor – to also pursue anti-terrorism prosecutions.

Italy has remained a leading partner in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, contributing to coalition military support, humanitarian assistance to the crises in Iraq and Syria, continuous official statements and engagement with foreign leaders – including Middle East partners – in support of the coalition, and enhanced efforts to identify, decrease, and disrupt the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Italy leads the Iraqi police training mission within the Counter ISIL Coalition and co-leads, with UAE, the Coalition Finance Working Group. Italy is the leading non-U.S. Counter ISIL troop contributor of trainers and advisors on the ground inside Iraq, and leads the international effort to train Iraqi police.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Italian government continued to make use of reinforced counterterrorism legislation enacted in 2005 that facilitates detention of suspects, mandates arrest for crimes involving terrorism, and expedites procedures for expelling persons suspected of terrorist activities. On February 20, new legislation came into force that amended the Criminal Code with respect to fighting terrorism. On April 17, Parliament subsequently upheld the law, officially known as, *Decree Law No. 7 of February 18, 2015, "Urgent Measures for the Fight against Terrorism, Including International Terrorism."*

The new law's purposes are described in its preamble, which notes the urgency, in light of recent incidents abroad, to improve the existing legislative and regulatory instruments available to the Italian police and armed forces for anticipating, preventing, and combating acts of terrorism. It states that a key aspect of the new legislation is strengthening police surveillance powers and the handling of personal data.

Persons recruited by others to commit acts of terrorism are subject to an increased prison term of a minimum of three and a maximum of six years upon conviction. The legislation punishes those who organize, finance, or promote travel for the purpose of performing acts of terrorism. It

also imposes punishment on lone offenders – persons found guilty of training themselves in terrorist methods on their own and carrying out terrorist acts. Penalties are increased when the acts are performed through digital or telecommunications instruments. The law punishes those who, without legal authority, introduce or provide within the national territory substances or mixtures that serve as precursors of explosives. The failure to provide notice to the authorities about the theft or disappearance of such substances or mixtures is also punishable. The bill also authorized the government to make members of the Italian armed forces qualify as agents of public security to enable them to exercise preventative police functions in connection with acts of terrorism.

The law makes it a crime to take part in a conflict in a foreign territory in support of a terrorist organization, implementing in part UNSCR 2178. During criminal proceedings, prosecuting authorities are now granted the power to temporarily withdraw suspects' passports. Such action must be communicated immediately to the General Attorney of the Republic, who must obtain validation of the measure by the president of the provincial court in the jurisdiction where the accused resides. The law also authorizes the President of the Council of Ministers, through the General Director of the Department for Security Information, to permit the directors of Italian security agencies to interview detainees for the sole purpose of acquiring information to prevent terrorist crimes of an international character.

The Ministry of the Interior is empowered under the law to maintain a list of websites that are used for terrorist recruiting activities; authorities may instruct internet service providers to immediately block access to such websites identified by the authorities. The new legislation amends the current Code for the Protection of Personal Data by extending the scope of police powers to gather personal data that is directly related to preventing the perpetration of terrorist crimes.

Italy's long history of combating both organized crime and radicalized ideological movements has given it a strong legacy in fighting internal threats to security, and authorities are leveraging those capabilities to combat terrorist recruitment, radicalization, and networking. The Police, ROS *Carabinieri* (gendarmerie), *Guardia di Finanza,* other specialized law enforcement agencies, and the intelligence services coordinate their counterterrorism efforts and meet on a regular and systematic basis. The Ministry of Interior has the authority to swiftly expel non-citizens for "seriously disturbing public order, endangering national security, or religious discrimination," even if insufficient evidence exists to prosecute the individual. The Government of Italy used this authority more than 60 times in 2015.

The Italian Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) continued to implement a Memorandum of Cooperation with the United States, allowing the Transportation Security Administration to conduct aviation security assessments at Italian commercial airports.

EU data privacy concerns prevented the United States and Italy from sharing biometric data, though Italy strongly supports the passage of an EU Passenger Name Records Directive that includes sharing data for internal EU flights.

Significant law enforcement actions included:

- On March 18, Carabinieri arrested a Pakistani, Ahmed Riaz, accused of having ties with terrorist networks in Brescia. The Minister of Interior ordered Riaz to be expelled, which followed the Interior Ministry's previous expulsion order against Riaz in February due to a Carabinieri request.
- On March 27, Abdel Mounime Halda, a 33-year-old Moroccan citizen, resident in Italy, who was an Imam in Capannori, a small town near Lucca, was expelled for using radical and contemptuous speech against the West in his sermons at a local prayer center. Although the Imam's home was searched, and nothing deemed relevant to any ongoing investigation was found, the Interior Ministry maintained that the Imam constituted a threat to the security of the state.
- On April 4, Khalid Smina, a Moroccan citizen resident in Imola, in the province of Bologna, was expelled from Italy on charges of having allegedly joined the network of Jarraya Khalil, a Tunisian national arrested in 2008 in Bologna for affiliation with Islamic terrorist networks.
- On April 21, Yahar Ahmed, a 27-year-old Pakistani resident in Prato, was expelled from Italy. He worked as a porter for a shipping company in Calenzano, in the Florence area. The expulsion order referred to suspicious activities and having acquaintances linked to Islamic terrorism.
- On April 22, police detained Noussair Louati, a Tunisian national living in Ravenna, who had been under investigation. Louati planned to move to Syria after a first failed attempt to reach the Middle East to join ISIL. Louati also posted messages in favor of jihad on his Facebook profile and claimed that he had been thrown out of a Milan mosque by the local Imam because he asked him for help in obtaining a flight ticket to reach Syria and join ISIL.
- On April 30, the Court of Cassation upheld the conviction of Alfredo Cospito and Nicola Gai for the 2012 domestic terrorist attack against Roberto Adinolfi, chief executive officer of the nuclear engineering company, Ansaldo, who had been knee-capped. The sentences were reduced, respectively, to nine years, five months, and 10 days and eight years, six months, and 20 days in prison. The Informal Anarchist Federation (IAF) claimed responsibility for the incident.
- On October 4, Italian authorities caught Ben Nasr Mehdi, a Tunisian who was first arrested in Italy in 2007 and sentenced to seven years in prison for plotting terrorist attacks with an Islamic State-linked group, trying to re-enter the country in Sicily (Lampedusa) on a migrant vessel. He was expelled from Italy 10 days later. He was identified by a biometric match after he filed for refugee status using a false identity.
- On October 8, the Court of Cassation confirmed the conviction of an Egyptian, Abu Omar, in absentia to six years in prison for international terrorism. Abu Omar was Imam of a Milan mosque in 2000 when he established a terrorist organization with the aim to conduct terrorist attacks in Italy and abroad.
- On October 27, a Bari Court of Appeal sentenced Hosni Hachemi Ben Hassem, former imam of Andria, along with Faez Elkhaldey, Ifauoi Nour, Khairredine Romdhane, Ben Chedli, and Chamari Hamdi to prison terms of between five years, two months and two years, eight months for having founded a subversive association supporting Islamic international terrorism.
- On November 16, Milan prosecutors requested the indictment of 11 persons charged with international terrorism and the organization of travel to join fighters abroad. Among them there was an Italian woman, Maria Giulia Sergio, who moved to Syria; her Albanian husband, Aldo Said Kobuzi; her parents, Sergio and Assunta Buonfiglio; her sister,

Marianna Sergio; her mother in law, Donika Coku; and two uncles of her husband. Investigators believe that she received training to conduct suicide attacks.

- On November 23, the Ministry of Interior expelled four Moroccans, long-term residents of Bologna suspected of promoting jihadism. They had been found sharing messages and files regarding the training of foreign terrorist fighters, radical ideology, and use of weapons.
- On November 24, authorities announced the expulsion of a Tunisian man living in Brianza. The man was wiretapped expressing hatred against the West and possibly intended to carry out a terrorist attack.
- On December 1, police disrupted a cell of terrorists from Kosovo in Brescia, arresting three of them in Lombardy (a fourth was arrested in Kosovo). The group had posted photos of themselves with weapons and videos containing terrorist propaganda and threats against the Pope.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Italy is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism, a FATF-style regional body (FSRB). Italy also holds observer status within the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, an FSRB. Italy's financial intelligence unit is a member of the Egmont Group. Italy also implemented the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime in 2015.

Decree Law No. 7 of February 18, 2015, discussed above, provides for a sentence of five to eight years for those found guilty of organizing, financing,or advocating travel abroad for the purposes of carrying out terrorist acts. It also seeks to ensure greater communication on such cases between financial institutions, law enforcement, and the judicial system. The Italian judiciary and financial police (*Guardia di Finanza*) continued to identify and freeze the assets of sanctioned individuals and organizations and to prosecute terrorism financing cases. In addition, Italy carried out several counterterrorism operations and prevented international money transfers to terrorist groups. Italy co-leads, with the United States and Saudi Arabia, the Counter-ISIL Coalition Finance Working Group. Judicial and law enforcement efforts to combat terrorism financing include monitoring financial transactions (including financial services companies specializing in wire transfers), bank transfers, pre-paid electronic cards, payments on fraudulent invoices, and cash-in-transit. In the first three quarters of 2015, a total of 74 suspicious transaction reports (STRs) were filed due to concerns that the funds would be used to finance terrorism (compared to 93 STRs for all of 2014). In 2015, Italy was among the first countries to undergo a mutual evaluation of the level of effectiveness of its AML/CFT system and its level of compliance with the FATF Recommendations. This evaluation was conducted by the IMF and had not been published bythe end of 2015.

Italy does not require that non-profit organizations send suspicious transaction reports. However, reporting entities arerequired to consider the specific money laundering and terrorism financing risks when entering in a relationship or carrying out transactions that involve non-profit organizations.

The Italian financial intelligence unit at the Bank of Italy publishes the UN, EU, and OFAC designations lists and any subsequent amendments on its website.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Italy has a long history of countering organized crime and radical ideological movements. Italy's toolkit includes an anti-radicalization program in its prison system. The Ministry of Justice reported the establishment of informal places of worship in 52 prisons where approximately 190 imams were active. Monitoring of detainees at risk of radicalization was enhanced after the November 13 Paris attacks. Twenty cultural mediators and 60 volunteers conducted de-radicalization initiatives within prisons.

To the extent domestic recruitment of violent Islamist extremists occurred, it appeared largely concentrated in the more industrialized North and Tuscany, though there were unconfirmed media reports of some alleged foreign terrorist fighters emerging from Rome and Naples. The government has sought to address this vulnerability with its recent announcement that every euro of increased defense spending to protect Italy from terrorism would be matched by a euro of "cultural" spending, primarily focused on improving education and social conditions in underdeveloped areas and peripheral neighborhoods.

The government has been a committed participant in the White House Initiative to Combat Violent Extremism, which included hosting a CVE senior officials' meeting in Rome in July.

International and Regional Cooperation: Italy is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and actively participates in the GCTF's work. It is also a founding member of the Institute for International Justice and the Rule of Law and is a member of its governing board. Italy supported counterterrorism efforts through the G-7 Roma-Lyon Group, the OSCE, NATO, the UN, the Council of Europe, and the EU. As noted, Italy supports the swift passage of the EU Passenger Name Record Directive. Italy also promoted EUROPOL as a venue for EU-level coordination of law enforcement and intelligence cooperation across national borders. Italy is particularly active in international efforts to prevent and to *c*ondemn the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria by ISIL, whether such destruction is incidental or deliberate, including targeted destruction of religious sites and objects.

KOSOVO

Overview: The threat of violent Islamist extremism has been slowly growing in Kosovo since its 1999 conflict, assisted in part by funding from foreign organizations that preach extremist ideologies. Approximately 250 to 300 foreign terrorist fighters from Kosovo have traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or al-Nusrah Front, of which approximately 50 have been killed. Violent extremist groups actively used social media to spread propaganda and recruit followers. No terrorist incidents took place inside Kosovo in 2015, although police have arrested suspects for planning such attacks. In September, the Government of Kosovo approved a comprehensive strategy and action plan for countering violent extremism (CVE). The CVE strategy and action plan provide a five-year roadmap for stemming the growing threat of violent extremism through a whole-of-government approach, emphasizing the critical role of local stakeholders and civil society. While relevant governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders have expressed the willingness and commitment to implement their respective action items, lack of capacity and sufficient budget

remained challenges. CVE funding made available through Kosovo's recent designation as a pilot country for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) could significantly bolster the government's capacity to implement its CVE action plan, but the process will require close U.S. engagement to ensure the government meets the strict deadlines and standards required to maximize its allotment of available GCERF funds. The Kosovo Police (KP) Counterterrorism Directorate is enhancing its investigative capacities by increasing personnel and developing a cyber-counterterrorism unit.

The Kosovo government continued counterterrorism cooperation with the United States. The United States has mentored and assisted law enforcement and judicial institutions on active counterterrorism cases. Through the Export Control and Related Border Security program (EXBS), International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training program (OPDAT), and Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), the United States has provided training opportunities on various aspects of counterterrorism and CVE.

Because the security and political situation in northern Kosovo continued to limit the government's ability to exercise its authority in that region, the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) and EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) worked with the KP to maintain a safe and secure environment and strengthen the rule of law, including at the borders. Kosovo's ability to exercise its authority in the north has improved since the signing of the 2013 Brussels Agreement to normalize relations with Serbia, but the two countries have yet to fully implement the agreement. Although Kosovo and neighboring Serbia do not usually cooperate on counterterrorism issues, the governments have had an Integrated Border Management (IBM) plan since 2013 and have participated in joint U.S.-sponsored training.

Kosovo is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and has taken steps to support the various lines of effort within the limits of its capabilities. It has primarily focused on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as tracking and restricting financing for terrorist groups. Kosovo is not a member of the UN; however, the Government of Kosovo has pledged to implement UNSCRs 2170 and 2178 unilaterally.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The KP arrested five Kosovo-Albanians on July 11 for attempting to poison Pristina's primary water source, Lake Badovc. Police arrested three of the men after officers patrolling the reservoir spotted them behaving suspiciously at the banks of the lake. The KP subsequently arrested two additional suspects. Two of the suspects had fought for ISIL in Syria. All five were charged with terrorism offenses.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Kosovo's legislative framework is sufficient to prosecute individuals suspected of committing or supporting terrorist activities, but prosecutors lack experience in trying such cases. Kosovo officials recognize the need to improve interagency cooperation.

Kosovo has a comprehensive legal framework that covers all criminal aspects related to terrorism. The Criminal Code of Kosovo preserves the UN model on counterterrorism criminal legislation and criminalizes all forms of terrorism, including commission, assistance, facilitation, recruitment, training, and incitement to commit terrorism. It also criminalizes concealment or failure to report terrorists or terrorist groups, organization and participation in terrorist groups,

and preparation of terrorist offenses against the constitutional order and the security of the state of Kosovo. It defines a terrorist group as a structured group of more than two persons, established over a period of time and acting in concert to commit terrorism. In addition, the Criminal Procedure Code provides authorities with all the necessary powers to investigate and prosecute such cases, including sanctioning the use of covert measures such as wiretapping, undercover agents, disclosure of financial data, and interception of computer communications. It further gives authorities flexibility to investigate criminal activity during the planning stage to prevent crimes and terrorist acts. The Procedural Code also allows Kosovo courts to admit evidence from other countries, thus allowing prosecution of international terrorism in Kosovo. This framework provides the relevant authorities with the tools necessary to fight any form of terrorism. Kosovo law also criminalizes joining a foreign army, police, or paramilitary formation in armed conflicts outside the territory of Kosovo and related propaganda. A conviction on these charges carries a penalty of up to 15 years imprisonment.

The Kosovo Assembly adopted the Law on the Prohibition on Joining Foreign Conflicts March 12, and it became effective April 18. No arrests had been made under the statute at year's end.

Authorities were inexperienced in dealing with terrorism cases, and communications and information sharing across agencies remained a challenge. The KP Counterterrorism Directorate, which is responsible for counterterrorism investigations, has resource constraints that inhibit its ability to track suspects. The law provides the Special Prosecution Office (SPRK), which is composed of local and international staff, with exclusive jurisdiction over terrorism cases. Prosecutors have made considerable improvements in the past year in dealing with terrorism-related cases.

The Department of State supported programs with the Department of Justice to mentor Kosovo law enforcement and prosecutors. Kosovo is a member of the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC), a South Eastern European organization that focuses on security-related issues, including terrorism. Representatives from Kosovo attended training activities and conferences on counterterrorism-related topics sponsored by the EU and the United States.

Kosovo has issued biometric travel and identity documents since 2013. All major border crossing points, including Pristina International Airport, are equipped with computerized fraudulent/altered document identification equipment, for which a database is updated regularly with information from other countries. The Kosovo Border Police's (KBP) regularly-updated STOP/WATCH list of persons suspected of connections to terrorism or criminal activities had more than 1,700 hits in 2015. However, the electronic Border Management System does not interface with INTERPOL and does not always function properly. Kosovo is not a member of the UN, INTERPOL or EUROPOL; the UN Mission in Kosovo and EULEX serve as Kosovo's intermediaries with these organizations, slowing down cooperation and preventing Kosovo from having access to their watchlists. Kosovo has applied for INTERPOL membership, but faces opposition from Serbia and other non-recognizing states. The KBP and Directorate against Terrorism use biometric equipment to enroll suspicious foreigners entering or applying for benefits in Kosovo, as well as locals who may be affiliated with terrorism. The Law on Border Control obliges airlines to submit Advance Passenger Information Airline Passenger Name Recorddata to Kosovo; the KBP has been using this information.

The KBP applies specific profiling techniques to identify persons attempting to travel to Syria and Iraq to join ISIL. In 2015, the KBP, in cooperation with regional countries and Turkey, identified and blocked at least 10 such persons from leaving Kosovo and turned them over to the KP Counterterrorism Directorate. With U.S. assistance, KBP is revising its curricula used to train border officers to focus more on early identification of persons affiliated with terrorism. The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program supported Kosovo participation in a series of border security-related courses aimed at addressing foreign terrorist fighter travel.

Trials are ongoing for several of the 59 suspects arrested in August 2014 during the government of Kosovo's largest counterterrorism operation to date. Three indictments against 33 individuals have been filed. Many of the defendants pled guilty to the charges. Kosovo prosecutors indicted six other individuals in 2015 who were arrested by EULEX in June 2014 in connection with a separate case. Investigations are ongoing against a dozen other individuals, including several imams. During 2015, Kosovo authorities opened 20 new cases against 45 suspects. Police arrested 14 of these suspects. On July 11, 2015, the KP arrested five individuals near Pristina on terrorism-related charges. On December 1, Italian Police arrested and extradited two Kosovo Albanians and the KP arrested a third individual in Kosovo suspected of being members of a terrorist cell that had threatened the Pope and the former U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo.

In October 2015, Kosovo's Minister of Internal Affairs issued an executive order revoking the licenses of 16 NGOs on suspicion of recruiting for ISIL and disseminating extremist propaganda.

Kosovo demonstrated political will to address threats related to terrorism, and the state possesses the legal framework to do so. However, national institutions – including investigative and prosecutorial elements –have limited capacity, resources, and experience to handle terrorism cases effectively.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Kosovo is not a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The Kosovo financial intelligence unit (FIU) worked towards becoming a member of the Egmont Group. Kosovo has a Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorism financing, which allows it to comply with international anti-money laundering and counterterrorism finance standards. This law also established enforcement mechanisms for the examination of reporting entities and narrowly defines terrorism financing. However, it lacks an appropriate registration and monitoring system to track NGOs that receive funding from suspicious entities. Other legislation, amendments, and directives are pending on counterterrorism financing, and its indicators. Kosovo has not yet successfully prosecuted a terrorism financing case or identified and frozen assets of sanctioned individuals and organizations. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: One of the four strategic objectives in the government's CVE strategy is the prevention of violent extremism and radicalism, which the government began implementing in November. This includes raising awareness of radicalization among community stakeholders and building their capacity to fight it, increasing support for young people, counter-messaging, incorporating CVE into existing community initiatives, undertaking regional CVE activities, and establishing a strategic communications plan. Kosovo's CVE

strategy also includes the preparation and promotion of counter-narratives to weaken the legitimacy of violent extremist messages.

Kosovo's CVE strategy includes a section on de-radicalization and the reintegration of radicalized persons. The goals include helping radicalized individuals abandon violent extremist ideology, assessing risks posed by individuals returning from foreign conflicts (to include alternatives to detention when appropriate and psychological support), raising awareness within the correctional system on the risks posed by imprisoned terrorists, and building capacities for their rehabilitation. The government began work on this objective in November.

International and Regional Cooperation: The OSCE and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime provided training to Kosovo law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges on terrorism-related topics. Kosovo's membership in many regional and international organizations, including the UN, has been blocked by countries that do not recognize its independence. Lack of membership and non-recognition impedes cooperation on many issues, including counterterrorism. Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina's non-recognition of Kosovo hinders participation in many regional counterterrorism initiatives.

Several Kosovo officials attended the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February, and the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York in September, and a regional CVE summit in Tirana, Albania, in May. Kosovo was selected as a beneficiary country for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), which will fund community-level initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of radicalization to violence.

MACEDONIA

Overview: Macedonia recognizes the threat of global terrorism and is a solid U.S. counterterrorism ally. In 2015, Macedonia's major counterterrorism efforts included a counterterrorism operation that resulted in the indictment of 37 and the arrest of 13 individuals under the recently-passed law on foreign terrorist fighters. Dozens of Macedonian citizens have traveled to the Middle East as foreign terrorist fighters, although there are indications that the recent arrests have had a deterrent effect.

Macedonia has shown a strong commitment to the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Macedonia is a member of the foreign terrorist fighter working group within the Coalition, and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski attended the White House's Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism in September in New York.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: On April 21 an armed group of approximately 40 people seized weapons, ammunition, and radio communication supplies from a border police station in Goshince near the border with Kosovo. On May 9-10, the Macedonian police authorities carried out a police action in Kumanovo, ostensibly to recover the stolen equipment. This action resulted in the deaths of eight Macedonian police officers and 10 members of the armed group. Although the motives of the armed group remain unclear, the Public Prosecutor's Office classified the incident as an act of terrorism and charged three suspects with leading a terrorist organization and 26 with participating in a terrorist organization.

In addition, there were several minor incidents that could be classified as terrorist acts:

- On February 18, unknown perpetrators placed an IED at a government building housing the main court on February 18. The device failed to detonate properly and caused minimal property damage.
- Small explosions caused minor property damage next to the Macedonian government headquarters building in Skopje (April), near ethnic Albanian political party DUI's headquarters in Tetovo (May), in a parking garage in Kumanovo (July), at the Skopje City Police Station (July), and in a residential neighborhood of Skopje (October). The police have not identified suspects for any of these incidents, which remained under investigation at the end of 2015. In a letter released to the media signed by "Commander Kushtrimi," the National Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the April explosion that occurred outside of the Macedonian government headquarters building in Skopje.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Macedonia's criminal code, criminal procedure code, and law on prevention of money laundering and terrorism finance contain comprehensive counterterrorism provisions. Domestic and international acts of terrorism are proscribed, and in September 2014, the country's counterterrorism law was modified to include a provision criminalizing participation as a foreign terrorist fighter. During an August 6 operation, dubbed "Operation Cell," the Ministry of Interior (MOI) carried out simultaneous search warrants at 26 sites in five municipalities and arrested nine individuals, charging them under the revised counterterrorism laws. Authorities arrested additional individuals in later months, bringing the total number arrested under the operation to 13.

Macedonia participated in capacity-building programs to strengthen criminal justice institutions and promote the rule of law, which included 12 training sessions on strategic planning, leadership, and management skills for the MOI Public Security Bureau. The United States donated 20 computers to the police to be used in support of the Criminal Intelligence Analysis Sector; trained 163 students about the principles of Intelligence-Led Policing; delivered two crime analysis training classes; sponsored multiple events promoting more effective relationships between the Balkans national law enforcement agencies; provided 14 customs- and border control-related training events for 140 government officials as well as equipment valued at more than US $148,000, including surveillance, inspection, and detection equipment. The Department of State supported Macedonian participation in a variety of bilateral and regional trainings for law enforcement officials, investigators, prosecutors, and judges to increase capacity to address foreign terrorist fighter-related cases and threats.

Macedonia's security sector is equipped and disposed to deal effectively with terrorism within its borders. The police action in Kumanovo revealed command and control, tactical, casualty care, and messaging as areas for improvement. Primary responsibility for detecting and investigating terrorism falls to the Department for Security and Counterintelligence (UBK) within the MOI. Interdiction and arrest capabilities lie primarily with the Special Units, namely the Rapid Deployment Unit and the Special Task Unit, also within the MOI. The "Alpha" units of the Skopje Police Department (also MOI) respond to kinetic activity within Skopje (approximately half of Macedonia's citizens live in Skopje); however, this unit is also deployed outside of Skopje.

Macedonia is taking steps to improve its counterterrorism-related law enforcement capacity. It recently nominated a counterterrorism coordinator who is responsible for developing a counterterrorism action plan. Additionally, the government is establishing an interagency coordinative body that will address counterterrorism issues.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Macedonia is a member of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. MONEYVAL completed its fourth evaluation of Macedonia and issued recommendations for improving its terrorism financing laws. In line with MONEYVAL's recommendations, the government submitted to Parliament draft amendments to the Criminal Code's terrorism and terrorism financing laws, which underwent a second reading in Parliament on December 10, and were pending final adoption at year's end. In 2015, the Macedonian financial intelligence unit received 15 suspicious transaction reports for terrorism financing, which were adequately processed and were under investigation. In 2015, there were no criminal charges for terrorism financing.

Banks and money-transfer agents were well regulated and supervised and there were no indications that they were used for terrorism-financing activities. Banks do not allow opening of anonymous bank accounts, and bearer shares are not permitted. All financial institutions in the country have programs in place that comply with anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regulations. Exchange offices and money transfer agents who operate outside of the banking sector as well as other reporting entities such as notaries, lawyers, and casinos need further improvements in their AML/CFT programs, practices, and training.

An overly-complicated confiscation regime that remains conviction-based hindered effective freezing and confiscation of terrorist assets. Macedonia has an agency for the management of seized and forfeited assets, but the agency has limited capacity and requires additional training.

With the latest changes to the AML/CFT law from September 2014, non-profit organizations were taken out of the list of obliged reporting entities. Previously, when they were on the list, none of them had filed reports on suspicious transactions.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Macedonia has appointed a national coordinator to focus on CVE. Existing ethnic and religious tensions between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians complicated effective CVE programming. There were no significant efforts by the government to create strategic communication or counter narratives, and there were no programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate terrorists into mainstream society. Macedonia participated in regional and international discussions on these issues, and the government has a good understanding of the issue. Both the United States and OSCE coordinated efforts in 2015 to start CVE programs in Macedonia. The Islamic Community of Macedonia has spoken out against radicalization and violent extremism.

Regional and Internal Cooperation: Macedonia is an enthusiastic partner both regionally and internationally on counterterrorism, although Greece's unwillingness to recognize Macedonia's name sometimes limits Macedonia's ability to fully participate in multilateral fora. Macedonia is a NATO- and EU-candidate country; disagreements over the constitutional name of the country have prohibited its entry. On December 30, 2014, Kosovo's and Macedonia's state prosecutors signed a memorandum of understanding in Pristina to coordinate activities against transnational organized crime and terrorism. In January, Macedonia and Kosovo formally opened a Common Center for Police Cooperation, located at the Blace/Hani I Elezit border crossing point, which serves as an information-sharing center and will manage the flow of information and intelligence between the respective police agencies. In April, the Public Prosecutors of Macedonia and Bulgaria signed a cooperation agreement that will allow them to work together better to counter organized crime, corruption, human trafficking, and illegal trade of weapons and narcotics.

Macedonia is a member of the OSCE and hosted an OSCE-implemented workshop for criminal justice that focused on several of the good practices showcased in the GCTF's Rabat Memorandum Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practices in the Criminal Justice Sector.

THE NETHERLANDS

Overview: The Netherlands continued to respond effectively to the global terrorist threat in the areas of border and transportation security, counterterrorism financing, countering violent extremism, and bilateral and multilateral counterterrorism cooperation. In its March 2013 quarterly terrorism threat assessment, the Office of the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) raised the national threat level from "limited" to "substantial" (the second highest rank), where it remained through 2015. The main factor for elevating the threat level was the uptick in the number of Dutch nationals travelling to conflict areas, especially Syria, as foreign terrorist fighters. In 2014, the Dutch government released a *Comprehensive Action Program to Combat Jihadism* that included both existing and proposed measures to halt the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Syria and elsewhere. The plan focused on risk reduction, travel intervention, disruption of recruiters, countering radicalization, addressing the use of social media, and information exchange and cooperation. The government announced on February 27, 2015, an additional investment of nearly US $144 million annually for the fight against terrorism.

The Netherlands is implementing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 to prevent aspiring foreign terrorist fighters from leaving the country. Measures include dismantling recruiting networks, preventing extremist imams from speaking at mosques, requesting internet hosting companies to remove online extremist content, and revoking passports. As of November 2015, 150 passports of potential foreign terrorist fighters have been revoked. The government has pursued criminal cases against prospective and returned foreign terrorist fighters and against foreign terrorist fighter recruiters. The government's strategy to counter Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) propaganda has a domestic focus: supporting opposing voices in the affected communities and suggesting to internet providers that they compare content of sites to their terms of use (Notice and Take Action).

The Netherlands is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, and has a liaison embedded in CENTCOM, which coordinates the mission. The Netherlands has conducted air

strikes and contributed military personnel and trainers in Iraq. The Netherlands and Turkey co-chair the Coalition's Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Netherlands continued to use counterterrorism legislation and legislation that supplements the criminal code to address terrorism. On November 27, the government submitted four pieces of draft counterterrorism legislation to Parliament: 1) A law revoking citizenship, without a court ruling, of dual national foreign terrorist fighters who have joined a designated terrorist organization; 2) A set of administrative penalties, including a travel ban and a contact ban, that the government can impose on persons suspected of terrorist activities; 3) A law resulting in automatic expiration of a person's passport and identity card when a travel ban is issued; and 4) A law governing cybersecurity, including online counterterrorism.

Draft legislation regarding the revocation of Dutch citizenship for dual citizens after a conviction for preparing to commit a terrorist act was awaiting further deliberation in the First Chamber (Senate) at year's end.

Government agencies countering terrorism include the national police; the prosecutor's office; local governments (the mayor being responsible for public order); the National Coordinator Counterterrorism and Security (which coordinates all counterterrorism policy); the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD); and the Ministries of Security & Justice, Interior and Kingdom Relations, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs and Employment; and Defense. Since 2013, the national police organization has been undergoing a nationwide restructuring, which is expected to improve police's operational capacity and effectiveness. This operation has suffered significant setbacks, however, and in August 2015, the government extended the program deadline to 2018 and doubled the appropriated funding. High priority is placed on community policing and the first-line role of local police officers. Within the national police organization, the Central Criminal Investigations Service is the specialized counterterrorism unit. The National Prosecutor's Office also has dedicated counterterrorism prosecutors.

The Netherlands has continued to strengthen its border security. Dutch ports of entry have biographic and biometric screening capabilities, and the government maintains a national terrorist watchlist of persons and organizations that are under economic sanctions. The government coordinates and freely shares information related to foreign terrorist fighters with INTERPOL and EUROPOL. The Netherlands collects Advance Passenger Information (API) data for flights coming from selected points of embarkation outside the EU.

The Netherlands remained strongly committed to effective cooperation with the United States on border security. The Port of Rotterdam was the first European port to participate in the Container Security Initiative (CSI); in 2014 the two governments held discussions to have CSI go from a WMD-focused initiative to incorporate all threats.

Significant law enforcement actions related to counterterrorism included:

- On February 9, a district court acquitted two men of preparing to commit terrorist acts, conspiring to commit terrorist acts, and preparing to commit violent acts (such as murder and arson). The two men were arrested while traveling to Turkey and Syria in 2014. The prosecutor argued they planned to join the conflict in Syria, but the suspects claimed they

wanted to vacation in Turkey and provide humanitarian assistance in Syria. Both men had a brother fighting in Syria. The prosecutor has filed an appeal.

- On March 20, authorities in Tilburg arrested a 30-year-old man for trying to recruit young asylum seekers to join ISIL. The prosecutor doesn't believe he successfully enticed any new fighters. The suspect was also charged with money laundering and was arrested in 2014 at Schiphol airport carrying US $65,165 in cash and army clothing traveling to Yemen. His case was pending trial at the end of 2015.
- On April 30, a Court of Appeals sentenced five members of the Dutch chapter of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), also known as the Tamil Tigers. The five persons (aged between 43 and 60) were convicted of participation in a terrorist organization, having a leadership position in the Dutch chapter of LTTE, and raising funds for LTTE (often through coercion). The suspects were acquitted of recruitment, extortion, and incitement. The prosecutor appealed the incitement ruling. The prison sentences range from nineteen months to six years and three months, slightly higher than the 2011 district court ruling.
- On June 8, a district court convicted a returned foreign terrorist fighter of preparing to commit crimes with terrorist intent and possession of weapons. He was arrested as he was on his way to commit a robbery, the proceeds of which were intended for foreign terrorist fighters in Syria. The sentence was four years in prison.
- On July 27, a district court sentenced a woman to six months in prison for financially supporting the Islamic Jihad Union (totaling US $2,172). The court acquitted her of the charges of participation in a terrorist organization and membership in a terrorist organization. Her conviction remained under appeal through the end of 2015.
- On September 8, a district court acquitted a man for preparing to commit an ISIL-inspired attack against Amsterdam police officers and/or the U.S. Embassy. The court ruled that the man, a Moroccan national who was in the country illegally, would not have followed through on his threats. The prosecutor filed for an appeal.
- On November 30, authorities in The Hague arrested an 18-year-old man from Syria for involvement with a terrorist organization. The man had arrived in the Netherlands in October as a migrant.
- On December 10, a district court convicted nine persons for various levels of participation in a criminal organization with terrorist intent and/or incitement to violence. Some suspects were also convicted of other charges. The sentences ranged from seven days to six years in prison. One suspect had returned from Syria, while two were still in the conflict zone and tried in absentia. A tenth suspect reportedly died in Syria; his case was pending trial at year's end.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The Netherlands has been a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) since 1990, and is one of the Cooperating and Supporting Nations of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, a FATF-style regional body. A legislative proposal to simplify the termination of social security payments, social subsidies, and government student loans for suspected foreign terrorist fighters was undergoing consultations at year's end. Under the proposed law, payments can be stopped as soon as a person is discovered to have joined a terrorist organization. The European Commission sets many rules for countering terrorism finance in directives that EU member states then implement via national legislation. At the end of 2015,The Netherlands was working to implement the Fourth Money Laundering Directive, presented on May 20. The Netherlands cooperated with the United States in designating terrorist

organizations and individuals as well as interdicting and freezing assets. The Netherlands participated in the counterterrorism financing working group of the Counter-ISIL Coalition.

Dutch authorities monitor financial transactions and freeze the assets of persons on terrorist watchlists. Assets are frozen immediately when an individual or entity receives a UN designation. The Netherlands also uses EU listings and its own national designations in determining whether to freeze assets. The list of individuals or entities is made public, but information on the amount of assets frozen or seized is not. As of December 2015, the assets of 37 individuals and three organizations were frozen. Of the 37 individuals, 19 were added in 2015. In July, a district court convicted a woman for financially supporting a terrorist organization.

Non-profit organizations may choose to apply to a private entity for a "seal of approval" certification for their financial transactions. Law enforcement can access this entity's data based on court order. The FATF concluded that the requirements that have to be met in order to obtain this "seal of approval" are stringent. These requirements include knowing donors and beneficiaries and having safeguards to make sure directors and employees do not have a conflict of interests.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: CVE is integrated into the Dutch government's approach to terrorism. The government's strategy on CVE is the August 2014 *Comprehensive Action Program to Combat Jihadism*, which contains eight existing and proposed measures specifically focused on detecting radicalization and preventing new people from becoming foreign terrorist fighters. These include increased cooperation with Muslim communities, strengthening existing networks of local and national key figures, providing support to concerned citizens, supporting education institutions, setting up expert centers on social tensions and radicalization, directing actions at high-risk areas, mobilizing societal opposition and enhancing resilience against radicalization and tensions, and stimulating social debate about the values of democracy such as rule of law. The *Comprehensive Action Program* also addresses combating pro-violent extremist content on social media and the internet.

Local governments are responsible for countering radicalization with support, such as tools and training, provided by the NCTV. Many major cities are investing heavily in training local professionals. On September 8, the national government announced its intent to invest more than US $4,345,200 in nine local governments that face a disproportionately large population of potential violent extremists. Furthermore, in 2015, the government created a Social Stability Experts Unit, which assists local governments and communities in CVE, a Family Support Point for Radicalization, which assists parents and family members of radicalizing individuals, and an Exit Facility, which offers a "way out" for radicals who want to re-integrate.

The Netherlands creates tailored programs for violent extremist individuals and focuses on identification, de-radicalization, and prosecution. Returned foreign terrorist fighters undergo a threat assessment by the government; some returnees are prosecuted. The Netherlands also attempts to rehabilitate and reintegrate some returned foreign terrorist fighters into mainstream

society. The government works with partners which include, but are not limited to: police, the public prosecutor's office, youth care, and child protection services. Various local governments work with NGOs to develop and implement CVE policy. Interventions on radicalizing individuals remain case-specific and vary in intensity and design.

International and Regional Cooperation: The Netherlands continued to seek bilateral, regional, multilateral, and international opportunities for exchanging information and experience on security, counterterrorism, and foreign terrorist fighter issues. In 2015, the Netherlands succeeded the United States as co-chair of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and took over as host of the GCTF Administrative Unit. With Morocco, the Netherlands chairs the GCTF Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters. The Netherlands is on the governing board of the three GCTF-inspired institutions; the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism "Hedayah" in Abu Dhabi, the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law in Malta, and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund in Switzerland.

The Dutch participated in an informal EU core group of 11 member states that focused on foreign terrorist fighters. Within this group, the Netherlands chaired a working group that aims to develop and harmonize methods to ban extremist imams from entering the EU. The Dutch have taken a lead role in the EU to establish protocols to combat terrorism finance and provide funds to the IMF for assistance to countries that lack the resources to implement these measures expeditiously. The Dutch cooperated with EU and OSCE counterterrorism efforts and contributed to the counterterrorism work of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. The government supported projects carried out by the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. The Netherlands participates in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

The Netherlands continued to finance a wide variety of counterterrorism capacity building projects such as the organization Free Press Unlimited and the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation's program on rule of law and criminal justice capacity and cooperation in North Africa. The Dutch government continued to work with the International Centre for Counterterrorism– an independent think tank on counterterrorism issues, established in The Hague in 2010 with Dutch government encouragement.

NORWAY

Overview: Norway's internal security service continued to assess that Islamist terrorism remained the primary threat to the security of Norway. A small but outspoken group of violent Islamist extremists in and around Oslo recruited new members and remained active in online fora although they did not conduct any attacks. In 2015, authorities convicted four Norwegians for supporting or aiding the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). According to media reports, the Police Security Service (PST) publicly stated that more than 80 Norwegian citizens or residents had traveled to Syria to fight in the conflict there. Norway and the United States maintained good collaboration on counterterrorism.

Norway is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and is contributing to five lines of effort: supporting military operations, capacity building, and training; stopping the flow of foreign terrorist fighters; cutting off ISIL's access to financing and funding; addressing associated humanitarian relief and crises; and exposing ISIL's true nature (ideological de-legitimization). In 2015, Norway had approximately 50 trainers in a capacity-building mission

for Iraqi security forces in Erbil. Norway provided approximately US $150 million to address the humanitarian crises in Iraq and Syria.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Terrorism is a criminal offense in Norway. In 2013, Norway changed its laws to make it easier to prosecute cases of material support for terrorism. In addition to increasing maximum prison sentences to 30 years for serious terrorism offenses, the 2013 laws make it illegal to conduct or plan to conduct a terrorist attack; receive terrorism-related training; or provide material support to a terrorist organization with money, materials, recruitment, fighting, and related crimes. At the end of 2015, Norway was preparing to give prosecutors another weapon to crack down on foreign terrorist fighters with a bill that will criminalize fighting on behalf of a non-state actor. That legislation is expected to be approved by Parliament in the spring of 2016.

The PST is responsible for domestic security, including counterterrorism activities. A joint analytical cell composed of personnel from the PST and the Norwegian Intelligence Service (NIS) became fully operational in 2014. Each agency has devoted significant resources to identify, track, and act against Norwegian citizens.Both the PST and the NIS have devoted significant resources to identifying, tracking, and taking action against Norwegian citizens who wish to travel to and from Syria and Iraq to engage in fighting. The PST and NIS maintain an evolving list of those who have traveled to Syria and Iraq, those who have returned, and those who have expressed an interest in traveling to the two countries.

Ratification of the Pruem Convention, a data-sharing agreement with the EU, was stalled during 2015. Norway continued to explore an agreement on sharing Passenger Name Record(PNR) data with the EU, and was simultaneously developing a national PNR system. In November, Norwegian police piloted an automated biometric identification system (ABIS). Immigration to Norway is facilitated and regulated by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), which processes all applications for asylum, visas, family immigration, work and study permits, citizenship, permanent residence, and travel documents.

Norwegian authorities faced certain legal and technical barriers to stemming the foreign terrorist fighter flow. By law, Norway cannot revoke or permanently hold a citizen's passport for expressing support for a terrorist group (or expressing an interest to travel to Syria or Iraq), nor return an asylum-seeker who expresses support for a terrorist group to an area with ongoing conflict, such as Syria or Iraq. In December, the government introduced a bill to Parliament that would criminalize fighting on behalf of non-state groups and traveling to participate in such fighting.

Since enacting the 2013 counterterrorism laws, the Norwegian authorities have convicted four Norwegian individuals, which would not have been possible prior to the adoption of the new laws. Nine additional individuals have been charged under the same laws.

There was significant law enforcement cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of international terrorism. Law enforcement officials worked closely with U.S. counterparts.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Norway is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The Government of Norway adopted and incorporated the FATF standards and recommendations, including the special recommendations on terrorism financing, into

Norwegian law. Norway is increasing its efforts to counter terrorism financing. In response to UNSCR 2178, the government established an interagency group to combat money laundering and terrorism finance, which includes representatives from the Ministries of Justice, Finance, and Foreign Affairs. Non-Profit Organizations are subject to strict accounting and regulatory requirements, and the Norwegian National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime is charged with monitoring and the periodic testing of these requirements. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In June 2015, Norway hosted the European Conference on Countering Violent Extremism and an accompanying Youth Summit on CVE. Prime Minister Solberg attended the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkin September, and delivered remarks in the same session as the President. Norway continued to implement its National Action Plan against Radicalization and Violent Extremism (CVE), published in June 2014, which is a whole-of-government approach to CVE. Priorities include strengthening research on CVE, improving national and local cooperation on counter-radicalization efforts, helping to promote reintegration of former violent extremists, and preventing online recruitment and radicalization. The Prime Minister encouraged municipal authorities to implement CVE efforts at the local level. Several municipalities in the Oslo fjord area, which PST assesses are the most vulnerable to radicalization, have increased their CVE efforts, including passing CVE action plans and increasing budgets for CVE and counter-radicalization activities. Demonstrating its leadership on CVE, the city of Oslo helped launch the Strong Cities Network (SCN), by hosting a Strong Cities event on the margins of the UN General Assembly meetings in September. Oslo is an SCN steering committee member, while the city of Kristiansand is also an SCN committee member.

International and Regional Cooperation: Norway is active in multilateral fora in efforts to combat terrorism, including NATO, the OSCE, and the EU's Radicalization Awareness Network. Though not a member, Norway has been an active participant in the Global Counterterrorism Forum. Norway has implemented several new projects in the areas of counterterrorism and CVE. Together with Turkey, Norway is supporting the development of a CVE Action Plan for the Horn of Africa. It has provided support to Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and US $150,000 to the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism, located in Algiers, for the project to strengthen controls over the cross-border movement of terrorists in spaces between official border posts. Norway continued its support to the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF). Norway also provided US $80,300 to a joint project led by the UN's Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and the Global Center on Cooperative Security to promote regional counterterrorism cooperation in South Asia.

Norway continued to implement its agreement with the University of Pretoria's Institute for Strategic Studies to build counterterrorism capacity in the police and judiciary systems of African countries, totaling US $1.1 million from 2013 – 2015. Norway supported a youth civil activism network (YouthCAN), administered by the UK-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

RUSSIA

Overview: The Russian Federation continued to make counterterrorism efforts a priority during 2015. These efforts intensified after an explosive device downed a Russian passenger jet flying over the Sinai Peninsula on October 31.

The Russian government has expressed a willingness to work with the United States and multilaterally on counterterrorism issues, although some bilateral counterterrorism joint activities were suspended in the wake of Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea in 2014. The Russian government continued to cooperate with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) investigation of subjects associated with the Boston Marathon bombing.

Continued high profile attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2015 prompted increased concern among Russian officials that ISIL could affect Russian security interests by destabilizing the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Russia's military involvement in Syria caused increased concern among Russian authorities about retaliatory terrorist attacks in Russia. Members of both ISIL and al-Nusrah Front made numerous threats of retaliation, including publishing a video in November threatening that soon "blood will spill like an ocean" in Russia, and beheading a Russian citizen from Chechnya in December. Authorities believed the main terrorist threats were related to the activities of armed groups in the North Caucasus and were concerned about ISIL's ability to influence domestic insurgent groups; Imarat Kavkaz, the largest terrorist group in Russia, pledged allegiance to ISIL in 2015. Separatists and violent Islamist extremists calling for a pan-Islamic Caliphate in the North Caucasus continued attacks against Russian authorities, but the government did not label any as a "terrorist attack." Russian authorities avoided labeling attacks as "terrorist attacks" in order to maintain the narrative that they are defeating terrorism, and that Russia, especially the North Caucasus, is stable.

On December 29, 2014, Russia's Supreme Court issued a ruling recognizing ISIL as a terrorist organization, and banned its domestic activity. With the ruling, participation in ISIL activities became a criminal offense under Russian legislation. In 2015, authorities convicted at least 80 and prosecuted more than 100 Russian citizens of participation in foreign terrorist activity, namely fighting with ISIL in Syria.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: On October 31, a Russian charter plane exploded in mid-air over Egypt due to an explosive on board. All 224 people on board died; 219 were Russian nationals. Russian authorities determined the incident was an act of terrorism,likely carried out by ISIL's Sinai branch.

On December 29, gunmen shot 11 tourists, killing one, while they visitedthe Citadel of Naryn-Kala in Derbent, Dagestan. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Caucasus Provinceclaimed responsibility.

The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) reported no "terrorist attacks" within the Russian Federation in 2015. However, in the North Caucasus, authorities detained more than 770 suspected terrorists and accomplices, killed 156, and prevented 30 out of 84 "terrorism crimes," according to FSB Head Alexander Bortnikov. Most terrorist groups in the North Caucasus are allied with ISIL. On December 29, gunmen proclaiming affiliation with ISIL shot at civilians in a historical fortress in Derbent, Dagestan, killing one and injuring eleven. Russian authorities have not labeled the crime an act of "terrorism."

According to the Russian General Prosecutor's statistics portal, registered crimes of "terrorist character" throughout Russia increased over the previous year from 1,127 to 1,531 incidents. The General Prosecutor defines crimes of a "terrorist character" as crimes against public security, including acts of terrorism, planning a terrorist attack, making a public call for a terrorist act, taking hostages, and organizing or participating in an illegal armed formation. The Russian government does not maintain an open, detailed, and centralized depository of crimes, nor do its agencies share a single legal definition of what constitutes terrorism or a terrorist-related act.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Russia has a comprehensive counterterrorism legal framework that includes the provisions of the Criminal Code and various federal laws to include, "On Countering Terrorism," "On Money Laundering and Terrorism financing," "On Countering Extremist Activity," "On Security on Transport," and "On Security in the Fuel and Energy Complex."

The Russian government adopted two decrees in 2015 that allowed security forces to create a more secure environment in crowded urban areas, including sports and transportation facilities.

The Russian government continued to use its "anti-extremism" legislation to prosecute peaceful individuals and organizations, including the political opposition, independent media, and certain religious minorities. Despite having counterterrorism as its ostensible primary purpose, the law criminalizes a broad spectrum of activities, including incitement to "religious discord" and "assistance to extremism," and does not precisely define what is meant by "extremism." The law includes no stipulation that threats of violence or acts of violence must accompany incitement to religious discord, for example.

The threat of prosecution under Russia's "anti-extremism" legislation has an intimidating effect that results in restriction of freedom of speech and religious freedom under the guise of countering terrorism.

The FSB remains the primary agency responsible for counterterrorism activities within Russia. To a lesser extent, the Ministry of Interior (MVD) also has a role in counterterrorism matters. The FSB International Cooperation Directorate, through a joint relationship with the National Antiterrorism Committee (NAC), has developed the "International Counterterrorism Database" (Russian acronym: MBD), which holds both an unclassified and a restricted section. The FSB exclusively maintains and controls this database, but has invited international intelligence and law enforcement agencies to contribute information on events, subjects, organizations, and methods. The FSB promotes this as the only international database that adheres to UNSCR 2178.

Immediately following the October terrorist attack that downed the Russian passenger jet flying over the Sinai Peninsula, the FSB instructed airport staff and airline agencies to screen their employees in order to prevent a similar act of terrorism.

Border guards are responsible for air, land, and sea arrivals, although with more than 12,000 miles of land border and more than 23,000 miles of coast, the extent to which they are able to patrol all land and maritime crossings is unclear. Border crossings, particularly on the frontiers

between Russia and some former Soviet republics, may not be registered. Border guards have the capability of collecting biometrics at ports of entry. While they do not do so regularly, on December 10, 2014, a Presidential Executive Order went into effect requiring biometrics collection for visas issued at Russian embassies in Burma, Denmark, Namibia, and the UK, in addition to requiring passenger fingerprint scanning at Moscow's Vnukovo airport (one of three international airports in Moscow). This initial collection was reportedly a pilot program for an envisioned worldwide rollout, but collection was not done regularly in 2015, nor was the list of countries expanded by the end of 2015.

Standard operating procedures exist for information sharing within the Russian government, but it is unclear how often these procedures are followed. A traveler to Russia must receive a visa from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (via an embassy or consulate abroad), be permitted entry by the FSB (through the Border Guard Service), and then be registered with the Federal Migration Service (until 2012 a part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but now an autonomous organization). Russia has visa-free travel regimes with numerous countries, which limited the amount of screening given to travelers before arriving in Russia.

Terrorism-related prosecutions concerning incidents occurring before 2015 continued, in addition to charges being brought against more than 100 persons for allegedly fighting with ISIL in Syria in 2015. Law enforcement actions/prosecutions in 2015 included:

- On July 13, the Volgograd oblast court rejected the appeal of four Dagestanis convicted of aiding and abetting the 2013 terrorist bombings of a trolley bus and railway station in Volgograd.
- On July 14, the North Caucasus District Military Court convicted six individuals of conducting a terrorist act at a police station in Stavropol Krai in 2013, killing three people. Murad Ataev and Shamil Abulazizov were sentenced to life. The other sentences were: Ramazan Halizov, 23 years; Vladimir Halizov, 18 years; Magomed Ibragimov, 19 years; and Shamil Gazimagomedov, 17 years. The terrorists used a cellphone timer to detonate an explosive-laden car parked at the Pyatigorsk police station. Three bystanders were killed.
- On November 6, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Dagestan sentenced Magomed Gadjiev to 12 years in prison for participation in the "Balahinsk" terrorist organization.
- On August 6, the Nizhny Novgorod District Military Court convicted Ilya Romanov of an attempted terrorist attack in Nizhny Novgorod in 2013.

Russian media reported that federal and local security organs continued counterterrorism operations in the North Caucasus. These operations occurred throughout the region, but predominately were in Dagestan, Chechnya, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Operations included roadblocks and larger-scale military-style operations, especially in rural areas. On December 15, FSB-Director Bortinkov announced authorities had killed 20 of the 26 known leaders of ISIL-affiliated groups in Russia.

- On April 15, law enforcement officials killed two alleged terrorists in Kabardino-Balkaria. One of the terrorists was later identified as Zalim Shebzukhov, the leader of the local underground and a member of Imarat Kavkaz. He reportedly was recruiting and transporting young men to Syria and preparing a terrorist attack for May.

- On October 24, the FSB killed three members of a local terrorist group: Ruslan Ibragimov, Ahmed Abdurahmanov, and Shamil Shamilov. One FSB officer was killed during the operation. The terrorists belonged to a local group known for attempting to kill law enforcement officials and extort businessmen.
- On October 10, authorities in Kabardino-Balkaria killed Robert Zankishev. Authorities believed Zankishev was the head of a local ISIL cell.
- In late November in Kabardino-Balkaria, authorities killed the leader and two members of a local ISIL cell.
- On November 29, authorities killed three Russian citizens in Dagestan, all recently returned from fighting for ISIL in Syria: Mahmud Mahmudov, the leader of "Tabasaran;" Robert Melikov, leader of "Suleiman Stalski;" and Hasan Mamedyarov.
- In early December, the FSB detained the treasurer of an ISIL cell in Dagestan, Islam Hajiyev, in a Moscow mall.

At the end of 2015, the Russian government estimated 2,900 Russian citizens were fighting with ISIL in Syria and Iraq. During the year, authorities convicted at least 80 individuals for fighting with ISIL or the "opposition" against the Syrian government, according to open sources. Authorities held 41 more in detention while investigating alleged terrorist links. In August, Tural Ragimov became the first Russian sentenced for fighting with ISIL in Syria. Ragimov was sentenced to four years under Article 208 of the Russian Criminal Code for involvement in an illegal armed unit in the territory of a foreign state.

Despite the tensions in the overall bilateral relationship with the United States, the FSB has engaged in a limited amount of cooperation on counterterrorism matters. Russia continued to disseminate threat information and responded to requests for information on counterterrorism matters, although its responses were often not substantive or timely. Both the FSB and Investigative Committee requested information from the FBI pertaining to the downing of the Russian charter plane in Egypt. The FSB requested the FBI's assistance regarding security preparations for the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

While there were no known legal constraints to effective Russian law enforcement and border security related to counterterrorism, attempts at judicial reforms have had little success due to a lack of political will and institutionalized corruption within law enforcement entities. Ethnic or clan ties in certain regions can make policing and prosecutions difficult. Important cases are often moved to Moscow or other regions to ensure a judge is not influenced by a clan.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Russia is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and belongs to two FATF-style regional bodies: the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism, and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG), in which it is a leading member and primary funding source. Through the EAG, Russia provides technical assistance and other resources towards improving legislative and regulatory frameworks and operational capabilities.

The highest levels of government support anti-terrorist funding initiatives, and in November 2015, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an executive order to establish an interagency commission on preventing the financing of terrorism. Russia's financial intelligence body, the Federal Financial Monitoring Service (Rosfinmonitoring), was moving forward on a draft bill to

ratify the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure, and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (aka the "Warsaw Convention"). Rosfinmonitoring is a member of the Egmont Group whose head reports directly to the President of Russia.

The most current data on investigations and convictions of terrorism financing is from 2014. In that year, the Russian government conducted more than 6,000 counterterrorism/extremist financial investigations, resulting in the filing of 62 criminal charges, and 15 convictions. The authorities froze approximately 3,500 accounts belonging to 1,527 people for a value of around US $475,000. In the period of 2008 to 2013, there were 80 total investigations and 21 convictions. In the same period, the government suspended 32 transactions totaling US $106,172.

In order to reduce persistently high capital outflows and fictitious transactions, Russia has increased oversight of the financial sector, putting pressure on smaller financial institutions that are most likely to engage in money laundering and terrorism financing. The primary regulator is the Central Bank of Russia, which has revoked a large number banking licenses over the past few years, often citing the presence of dubious transactions.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Russian Government adopted a countering violent extremism strategy in November 2014, but there were no significant developments in 2015. Russian efforts to counter violent extremism focus on enforcement mechanisms and program administration through governmental agencies, or organizations controlled by the government. The Russian government is reluctant to work with independent NGOs, including Russian-based NGOs, in this area.

International and Regional Cooperation: Russia continued to work in regional and multilateral groups to address terrorism. Russia is a member of and participated in UN and Global Counterterrorism Forum activities. Russia is a member of the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the ASEAN Regional Forum.

SERBIA

Overview: The Government of Serbia continued its efforts to counter international terrorism in 2015. The Government of Serbia hosted a regional counterterrorism conference focused on foreign terrorist fighters and sent representatives to countering violent extremism (CVE) conferences hosted in Albania, Italy, and Slovenia. Serbia's law enforcement and security agencies, the Ministry of Interior (MUP)'s Directorate of Police, and the Security Information Agency (BIA), continued bilateral counterterrorism cooperation with the United States. During the year, the migrant crisis overwhelmed Government of Serbia resources, with many of the more than 500,000 migrants and refugees who passed through Serbia having done so with minimal vetting and processing. As a result of the significant uptick in refugee/migrant arrivals during the latter half of the year, the Government of Serbia sought assistance from the United States and other strategic partners for more advanced screening methods. Despite Serbian

political leaders' public support for counterterrorism measures and some initial steps during the year to better coordinate the government's counterterrorism activities, the Government of Serbia lacked a national Counterterrorism Strategy at year's end and had no infrastructure or strategy for state-sponsored CVE programs.

The Government of Serbia continued its public condemnation of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) activities and voiced support for ongoing efforts to disrupt and counter the group. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Interior, among others, publicly stressed the importance of cooperation in the global effort to counter ISIL. Already a member of the Counter ISIL Coalition, the Government of Serbia joined the Coalition's Foreign Terrorist Fighter Working Group. A lack of resources and limited capacity prevented the Government of Serbia from pursuing membership in other Coalition working groups. The difficult economic situation in Serbia continued to limit the likelihood of substantial financial or material contributions to the Coalition.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Government of Serbia made some strides on the counterterrorism front in 2015 following the development of counterterrorism programs and passage of foreign fighter legislation in 2014.

The Government of Serbia lacked a strategic, interagency approach to handling terrorism-related matters. Efforts to create a national Counterterrorism Strategy began in July, but there is no timeline for completing it. A lack of clarity regarding primacy between law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities, as well as jockeying between agencies competing for primacy in the field of counterterrorism, has hampered interagency cooperation. The Serbian security sector, including MUP's Special Anti-Terrorism Unit and the Counter-Terrorist Unit, participated in training courses offered by DOJ's Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training Program; and the International Criminal Investigative Training Program.

Transnational terrorism concerns within Serbia were similar to those facing other Western Balkan states which are located on a historical transit route between the Middle East and Western Europe. Serbian authorities were alert to efforts by international terrorists to establish a presence in, or transit, the country. The Government of Serbia continued to cooperate with neighboring countries to improve border security and information sharing. The migrant crisis exposed numerous vulnerabilities in Serbia's border security, which was matched by vulnerabilities in aspects of the border security of neighboring countries. In response to the migrant crisis, the Government of Serbia contacted multiple international partners to seek advice and assistance related to the implementation of screening tools to better identify and prevent potential terrorist travel to Western Europe via Serbia. Embassy Belgrade's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program continued to conduct training courses for and donate equipment to Serbian Customs and Border Police to help address border security matters. For example, EXBS donated a Secure Video Link network to the Customs and Border Police of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia to provide immediate and secure video communications among the countries' operations centers in the event of a terrorist incident. However, long sections of Serbia's borders remained porous, particularly those borders shared with Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program supported Serbian participation in a series of border security-related courses aimed at addressing the travel of foreign terrorist fighters.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Serbia is a member of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism, and has observer status in the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (EAG), both Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional bodies. Serbia's financial intelligence unit, the Administration for the Prevention of Money Laundering, has been a member of the Egmont Group since 2003.

On December 31, 2014, the Serbian government adopted the National Strategy for the Fight against Money Laundering and Terrorism Funding, which covers strategic planning, coordination, and cooperation of all concerned government agencies and departments. The National Strategy covers the period until 2018 and envisages the constitution of expert teams to coordinate government actions involved with anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism.

As the end of 2015, the adoption of amendments to Serbia's 2014 Law on Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing was on hold pending the EU's adoption of new money laundering directives. The planned amendments would harmonize the Serbian law with expected EU rules and with the set of 40 recommendations adopted in 2012 by the FATF on Money Laundering.

In March 2015, the Serbian Parliament passed the Law on Freezing of Assets with the Aim of Preventing Terrorism. In March, the Anti-Money Laundering Directorate (AMLD) published an amended list of indicators for recognizing suspicious transactions related to terrorism financing. As a result, relevant state institutions are required to include them in the list of indicators they develop pursuant to the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing. In September, the AMLD issued a new set of indicators for recognizing money laundering and terrorism financing for banks, brokers, insurance companies, and real estate agents. These indicators entered into force on October 1.

Consistent with the new Law on Freezing Assets with the Aim of Preventing Terrorism, in July, the Government of Serbia issued a list of designated persons and entities. Serbian authorities have an ability to seize and confiscate terrorist assets pursuant to asset forfeiture mechanisms. The asset freezing mechanism was created with the adoption of the Law on Freezing Assets in March.

Serbian authorities routinely distribute the UN sanctions lists to financial institution through the AMLD. As of July, Serbia has a list of designated terrorists or terrorist entities, which includes persons designated by the UN.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Serbia neither has a comprehensive national strategy nor programs in place for countering violent extremism (CVE). In 2015, the Government of Serbia appointed State Secretary (Deputy Foreign Minister-equivalent) Roksanda Nincic as the point of contact for CVE-related matters. Additionally, the Government of Serbia sent representatives to regional CVE conferences in Albania, Italy, and Slovenia.

International and Regional Cooperation: Serbian cooperation with the United States on counterterrorism issues is generally strong. U.S. law enforcement and justice sector authorities have provided assistance to Serbian counterparts in Serbian terrorism cases.

The Government of Serbia is engaged in limited regional and international cooperation on counterterrorism issues. In January, the Government of Serbia offered counterterrorism assistance to Nigeria following attacks there by Boko Haram. Elements of the Government of Serbia, including MUP and BIA, cooperated with INTERPOL and Europol on counterterrorism activities, including watchlists. Regarding regional border security, Serbia's level of cooperation is strongest with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. Cooperation with Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is less developed. Because of the sensitive issue of Kosovo, whose independence Serbia does not recognize, cooperation on border security is least developed between Serbia and Kosovo. However, advances were made on this front in 2015, including such steps as the inclusion of Kosovo's Minister of Interior in a regional counterterrorism/CVE conference co-hosted by the Serbian and U.S. government in Belgrade in April. Serbia held the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2015 and supported the organization's engagement in CVE and counterterrorism issues.

SPAIN

Overview: Spain was an active partner with the United States in efforts to track and disrupt transnational terrorism in 2015. In addition, Spain continued its deep cooperation with Algeria and Morocco, with a focus on the threat posed by instability in Libya. The domestic terrorist group Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) has not launched any attacks since it announced a "definitive cessation of armed activity" in October 2011, and although the group had not formally disbanded or given up its weapons arsenal, its coherence was further eroded by the arrest of more members of its vestigial leadership, often through cooperative Spain-France law enforcement efforts.

Spain has been an active member and its government an outspoken supporter of the Global Coalition to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since its inception. Spain has a 300-strong military training mission in Iraq, co-located with the United States at Besmaya, south of Baghdad.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Spanish Criminal Code specifically punishes any act of collaboration with the activities or purposes of a terrorist organization. In July, an update to Spain's criminal code came into effect to improve its legal framework to more effectively counter the movement of foreign terrorist fighters from Spain to conflict zones, better pursue suspected terrorists without clear affiliation to a known criminal organization, and curtail terrorist preparatory activities online. In terms of terrorism prosecution, Spain already boasts a mature legal framework as a result of its long fight against the indigenous terrorist group ETA.

Spain's counterterrorism capabilities, coordinated by the national Center for Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime Intelligence (CITCO), have proven effective. The National Police and Civil Guard share responsibility for counterterrorism and cooperate well, with strong information sharing and joint threat assessments. Though still developing, Spain is working to implement its cybersecurity strategy to safeguard its critical information systems under the direction of the

Cyber Defense Committee, charged with coordinating cybersecurity across the various government departments.

Spain continued to focus on improved security and the detection of false documents at its borders. Spain participated in the U.S. Immigration Advisory Program, which maintains staff at Madrid-Barajas International Airport, and allows for coordination between Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials, airline security personnel, and police regarding high risk passengers traveling to the United States. Spain finished implementation of an automated system to read EU passports with biometric data, and explosive trace detection equipment was also deployed at Spain's five largest airports at passenger checkpoints. Spain continued to use a network of radar stations, known as the Integrated External Surveillance System, along its maritime borders.

As a founding member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Spain has increased its already proactive efforts to identify and disband terrorist recruitment and foreign terrorist fighter facilitation networks. Spanish law enforcement generally has been proactive in pursuing terrorism-related investigations, arresting about 100 individuals suspected of terrorist recruitment or travel facilitation. Spain is an exceptionally cooperative and capable partner on efforts to apprehend, convict, and punish terrorists, working closely with the United States, and European and regional partners.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Spain is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Its financial intelligence unit, the Executive Service of the Commission for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Monetary Infractions, is a member of the Egmont Group. Spain continued to demonstrate leadership in the area of anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. Spain enacted its current law on Preventing Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism in 2010; the law entered into force immediately. The related regulations greatly enhance authorities' capacity to counter terrorism financing by placing greater requirements, with stiffer penalties for non-compliance, on financial institutions and other businesses, and by strengthening monitoring and oversight. The government diligently implemented relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and had the legal authority to impose autonomous designations. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Spain passed a National Counter Radicalization Strategy on January 30, managed by the Ministry of Interior's CITCO. The whole-of-government effort has established a national level working group, named local level leaders, and is in the implementation phase. Spain claimed success in preventing prison radicalization, and intends to use the kind of victim-centered messaging model that helped turn public opinion against domestic terrorist group ETA in its efforts to counterviolent Islamist extremism. In December, police launched a telephone hotline, email, and mobile application to receive tips on potential radicalization. Security forces also announced the launch of a new ISIL counter-messaging campaign on police websites. With respect to rehabilitation and reintegration, most of Spain's 25 returned foreign terrorist fighters remained in detention.

International and Regional Cooperation: Since 2004, Spain has been part of the informal working group on violent Islamist extremism known as the 5 + 5. The group brings together

defense ministers or their designees from five European countries (Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and Malta) and five Maghreb countries (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya). Its mission is to exchange information and discuss the operational implications of the threat from violent Islamist extremists in the European theater, including that posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters. In July, Spain hosted a Ministerial Level Special Meeting of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. It is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and is also a member of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Spain's participation in the G-4 with Portugal, France, and Morocco also has an operational objective. The four countries freely exchange tactics and intelligence on counter-narcotics, counterterrorism and organized crime/illegal immigration. Spain continued its work with the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Spain cites the lingering effects of its economic crisis as an impediment to further regional and international counterterrorism cooperation. All efforts are made to not reduce operational capacity according to the Ministry of the Interior, but resource constraints reduced Spain's ability to take part in international training exercises. Spain believes the EU should supplement the country in terms of counterterrorism and border issues, especially given the uniqueness of Spain's North African exclaves forming the southern border of the EU.

SWEDEN

Overview: The United States and Sweden maintained good cooperation on counterterrorism and law enforcement issues.U.S. agencies worked with their Swedish counterparts in 2015 to improve information sharing and the evaluation of terrorist-related information. Sweden is also active within the EU, UN, and Council of Europe on countering violent extremism and the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters.

The Swedish Security Services (SÄPO) is concerned with the number of foreign terrorist fighters who have left Sweden to join terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. Of the 280 individuals who traveled, some 40 were killed in action, 125 remained in the country, and 115 have returned to Sweden. Thirty-five of the foreign terrorist fighters were females.

Foreign terrorist fighters in Sweden have been recruited mainly through word of mouth or online by friends and/or family members. Foreign terrorist fighters travelling to Syria and Iraq from Sweden were usually young males of immigrant background, but generally not of Syrian descent. Females who traveled to Syria and Iraq either traveledalone or with male companions or husbands.

SÄPO views the returnees with specific concern as they could potentially plan an attack in Sweden or could radicalize and recruit others for travel. SÄPO reported to Swedish media that it was conducting several "pre-investigations" related to individuals who have returned from conflict areas with fighting experience.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency continuously reached out to various agencies and communities to develop awareness of the foreign terrorist fighter threat. The Counterterrorism Cooperative Council, consisting of 13 government agencies, coordinated Sweden's interagency

counterterrorism cooperation. The National Center for Terrorism Threat Assessment produced long- and short-term strategic assessments of the terrorist threat against Sweden and Swedish interests. SÄPO monitored returned foreign terrorist fighters to evaluate their condition.

On November 18, SÄPO raised the national alert level to "four" (or "high"), just below the highest level of five ("very high"), indicating a real threat from a serious perpetrator with means to carry out an attack. This was the first time in modern history that Sweden had a level four alert.

Sweden is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and has made generous humanitarian contributions to ISIL-impacted populations in Iraq.

Johan Gustafsson, a Swedish citizen who was kidnapped by al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) when visiting Mali in November 2011, remained in AQIM's detention at the end of 2015. Gustafsson was last seen in an AQIM-released video allegedly made on October 20.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Sweden's legislation criminalizes inciting terrorist acts, recruiting to terrorist organizations, and providing terrorism training. While five people have been convicted under these laws, only two convictions have been stayed following appeals. In all of the dismissed cases, the courts deemed that there was insufficient evidence to prove that the defendants would have carried out their terrorist plots had they not been intercepted by law enforcement officials.

In 2015, Swedish law enforcement reorganized to unite the country's current 21 separate county police departments into one national agency with seven regions. This reorganization aimed to streamline police work through clearer guidance and centralization of law enforcement efforts.

In order to implement UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178, 2199 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime, the Swedish government proposed new legislation in December with new counterterrorism provisions, including measures to criminalize travel to support terrorist organizations and the financing of terrorism, and measures to increase information exchange within Swedish intelligence channels and with partner countries. Within the EU Commission, Sweden continued to strongly advocate for a targeted revision of the Schengen Borders Code to provide for more thorough checks of EU nationals on entry into Schengen, including mandatory verification of biometric information.

Sweden also participated in the EU Schengen working group and used the Schengen Information System II for information sharing, port of entry screening, lost and stolen passport information, and watchlisting. Under the auspices of the Passenger Name Record (PNR) Agreement between the EU and the United States, Sweden collects and shares PNR information from commercial flights.

In response to UNSCR 2199, the Nordic culture ministers met in May and adopted a declaration to curb the illegal trade of cultural objects from Iraq and Syria. The Nordic Council also decided to host a conference on the illegal trade of cultural objects in Oslo in December.

With the aim of improving border checks, Sweden has introduced provisions that allow the Swedish Police Authority to request passenger information to perform identity checks (Advance

Passenger Information, from any carrier that transports passengers to Sweden by air from a state outside the Schengen zone. This information provides greater opportunities to identify travelers with links to terrorism at an early stage. Sweden thereby complies with the undertakings set out in Directive 2004/82/EC on the obligation of carriers to communicate passenger data.

On November 12, the Government of Sweden announced that temporary internal border controls would be instituted due to the massive influx of asylum seekers into the country. The border controls consisted of spot checks at the Öresund Bridge to Denmark and at ports connecting Sweden to Germany via ferries. Such temporary border controls are permitted under the Schengen Border Code if a "serious threat to public policy or internal security" exists, which the Swedish government determined to be the case after consulting with the police and the Migration Agency.

On December 14, the Gothenburg District Court sentenced Hassan Al-Mandlawi (32-year-old from Iraq) and Al Amin Sultan (30-year-old from Ethiopia) to life in prison for "the crime of terrorism through murder" after it ruled that graphic video evidence showed the pair taking part in the beheadings of two people in Syria. The verdicts marked the first time foreign terrorist fighters were convicted in Sweden of crimes committed in Syria, and the first time individuals were convicted specifically for the crime of terrorism as opposed to the secondary charges of crimes against humanity and murder.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Sweden has been a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) since 1990. A new penal provision for terrorism financing was proposed in 2015. The new provision will penalize those who collect, provide, or receive funds or other property in the knowledge that it is intended for a person or group of people who commit, attempt to commit, prepare, or participate in a particularly serious crime. Criminal culpability in these cases does not require that the funds or property be intended to be used for a particularly serious crime, but instead focus on the recipient of the financing and the individual's intent to prepare or commit serious crimes. The proposed scale of penalties for ordinary offenses is imprisonment for a maximum of two years.

In 2015, the Swedish Economic Crime Authority and the Prosecution Development Centre prepared a memorandum to provide prosecutors with knowledge and guidance on how to apply the new legislation.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Swedish government appointed its first ever National Coordinator for Safeguarding Democracy from Violent Extremism in 2014. The Swedish government has described its approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) as attempting to address underlying factors behind radicalization. The government seeks to de-polarize Swedish society as a necessary step to counter violent extremism, believing that people who do not feel welcome and integrated in Swedish society might turn to violent extremism. An additional US $1 million was allocated for the setup of a support hotline.

The Swedish government has instructed authorities to strengthen efforts to work against radicalization and has been active on issues related to countering violent extremism within the EU. Sweden belongs to the EU-9, a group within the EU that focuses on the foreign terrorist fighter issue.

National Coordinator against Violent Extremism, Mona Sahlin, announced a CVE pilot program to open Knowledge Centers in January 2016 to aid the cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg, Örebro, and Borlänge. The Knowledge Centers will provide information about violent extremism and advice on how to prevent it. Concerned relatives of individuals who are on the brink of being radicalized and those who seek to leave such an environment will be able to turn to the centers to seek support and will not be shuffled between different authorities and agencies.

International and Regional Cooperation: Sweden is a member of the EU and participated in an ad hoc group consisting of several member states to focus on foreign terrorist fighter issues. In May 2015, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers adopted an action plan entitled "The Fight Against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism."The action plan contained measures regarding the international legal framework for combating terrorism and violent extremism and measures for preventive work. Sweden has been active in ensuring that the action plan focused on areas where the Council of Europe added value, primarily in preventive initiatives.

In 2015, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden established a working group to share expertise to prevent violent extremism. The ministers adopted a joint, non-binding declaration of intent in Oslo in January 2015.

Sweden participated in the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection. The goal was to improve the protection of critical infrastructure in the EU network and information security across the EU (the NIS Directive). All member states were required to provide a national network and information security strategy and ensure there was an agency structure to tackle information security issues. The member states were also asked to identify public and individual subjects ("operators") that could provide critical services on electronic networks and information systems. The Government of Sweden stated that it would act to ensure that the NIS Directive is adopted.

Sweden continued to contribute to counterterrorism capacity-building projects through its development aid work carried out by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and also via funding to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime-Terrorism Prevention Branch and the OSCE. Sweden supported the EU's work with capacity-building projects in prioritized countries and regions, such as Pakistan, Yemen, the Horn of Africa, the Maghreb, and the Sahel. Sweden provided trainers to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Sweden is a member of a number of multinational forums and collaborative groups, including the Counter-Terrorism Group (CTG). The Group comprises security and intelligence services from all the EU Member States, Norway, and Switzerland. EUROPOL is tasked with helping its Member States to prevent and combat serious cross-border crime and terrorism in Europe. EUROPOL has started work to combine its various areas of expertise in counterterrorism into one department (the European Counterterrorism Centre) to further support Member States.

TURKEY

Overview: Turkey has voiced increasing concern about terrorist groups near its border, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Nusrah Front. In 2015, Turkey continued to face significant internal terrorist threats – including the deadliest attack in Turkey's history on October 10 – attributed to ISIL – and took strong action in response. Turkey is a source and transit country for foreign terrorist fighters wishing to join these and other groups in Syria and Iraq. The Government of Turkey intensified efforts to interdict the travel of suspected foreign terrorist fighters through Turkey to and from Syria and Iraq. These efforts included the development and implementation of a "banned from entry list;" standing up additional "Risk Analysis Units" to detect suspected foreign terrorist fighters at airports, seaports, bus terminals, and border cities; deploying additional military units to the border; and undertaking physical improvements to the security infrastructure along the border. Cooperation with other source countries increased during the year in response to the foreign terrorist fighter threat, with both Turkey and source countries seeking to improve information sharing. The United States and Turkey also improved their sharing of counterterrorism information. Turkey deported 2,337 suspected foreign terrorist fighters from 85 countries in 2015.

Turkey is an active member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. It served as a co-chair of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), with the United States and later with the Netherlands, and also co-chaired the Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (WGFTF) with the Netherlands. The WGFTF held three meetings in 2015, in Istanbul April 7, in The Hague June 9, and in Ankara November 23. Turkey opened Incirlik Air Base to Coalition partners in July and formally joined the Coalition's air operations against ISIL in August.

Prominent among terrorist groups in Turkey is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Following three decades of conflict with the PKK, in late 2012 the Government of Turkey and PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan began talks for a peace process. The PKK called for a ceasefire in March of 2013, which both sides largely observed until July 2015. From January to mid-July 2015, the PKK carried out small-scale armed attacks against Turkey's security forces and military bases, which killed at least two security personnel. From mid-July to the end of 2015, more than 180 security personnel died from PKK-attributed attacks. On July 24, Turkish security forces launched large-scale operations against the PKK, as well as operations against ISIL-affiliated targets. Turkish military airstrikes against PKK camps, shelters, underground bunkers and weapon emplacements in Turkey's southeast and Northern Iraq continued through year's end.

In 2015, Turkey continued to face significant internal terrorist threats and took strong action in response. Activity by the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C), a terrorist Marxist-Leninist group with anti-U.S. and anti-NATO views that seeks the violent overthrow of the Turkish state, threatened the security of both U.S. and Turkish interests. So too did the actions of the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons/Hawks (TAK).

Another terrorist group in Turkey is Turkish (Kurdish) Hizballah (unrelated to the similarly-named Hizballah that operates in Lebanon). The Government of Turkey considers the Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army, and the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP), although largely inactive, to be threats. Turkey also considers the Syria-based Democratic Union Party and its military wing, The People's Protection Units, to be terrorist organizations.The

Government of Turkey continued to engage diplomatically with Hamas political bureau chief, Khaled Meshaal.

According to Turkey's semi-official news agency, the Anadolu Agency, from July 24 to November 20, the Turkish National Police (TNP) carried out counterterrorism operations against 7,303 suspects belonging to PKK, ISIL, and other terrorist organizations. Of the 5,624 PKK suspects detained and officially questioned, 1,602 were arrested, while 2,908 were released by judicial order and 1,114 were released under judicial control. Of the 1,132 ISIL suspects detained, 346, including 63 non-Turkish foreign nationals were arrested, while 588 were released by judicial order and 198 were released on judicial control. Of the 386 DHKP/C, MLKP, and other terrorist suspects detained, 122 suspects were arrested, while 167 were released by judicial order and 97 were released on judicial control.

Turkey is a long-standing counterterrorism partner of the United States. It continued to receive U.S. assistance to address the terrorist threat posed by the PKK in 2015. The ceasefire between the PKK and the Turkish government ended in July. In October and November, the PKK issued a unilateral declaration of inaction, but small-scale incidents continued.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Representative attacks included:

- On January 6, a female suicide bomber detonated her vest at a police station in Istanbul's central Sultanahmet district. The attack killed one police officer and injured another. The assailant was identified as a Russian citizen from Dagestan, who had links to ISIL.
- On June 5, four civilians were killed and more than 100 were injured in two bomb blasts at an election rally of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) in Diyarbakir. The assailant was subsequently identified as an ISIL member and arrested on charges of intentional homicide and membership in a terrorist organization.
- On July 20, 32 civilians were killed and 104 were injured in a suicide bombing at the Amara Culture Center in the Suruc district of Sanliurfa province. Victims were mostly members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) youth wing and the Socialist Youth Associations Federation (SGDF). The assailant, an ethnic Kurd from Adiyaman, was tied to ISIL.
- On July 23, ISIL opened fire on Turkish border elements in Kilis, which killed one noncommissioned officer. The incident prompted Turkey to launch "Operation Martyr Yalcin," a series of airstrikes against ISIL positions in Northern Syria. Four Turkish security personnel died as a result of ISIL attacks since July 20.
- On August 10, two individuals fired weapons at the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul. One assailant escaped, and the other was captured and subsequently identified as a member of the DHKP/C.
- On October 10, 102 people died and more than 400 were injured in twin suicide bombings outside Ankara's central railway station. The bombs targeted a "Labor, Peace and Democracy" rally organized by the Peoples' Democratic Party, the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey, the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, the Turkish Medical Association and the Confederation of Public Workers' Unions. One of the two suicide bombers was identified as the younger brother of the perpetrator of the July 20 Suruc bombing. Both brothers had suspected links to ISIL and the ISIL-affiliated "Dokumacilar" group based in Turkey's Adiyaman province.

- On December 23, TAK conducted a mortar attack against Istanbul's Sabiha Gokcen International Airport. One person was killed, another wounded, and several passenger planes were damaged in the attack.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Counterterrorism law enforcement efforts in Turkey remained focused on the domestic threat posed by several terrorist groups, including the PKK. Although resources have also been devoted towards countering threats posed by international terrorist organizations, Turkey's methodology and legislation are geared towards confronting this internal threat. Efforts to counter international terrorism are hampered by legislation that defines terrorism narrowly as a crime targeting the Turkish state or Turkish citizens, although courts have begun to interpret the term more broadly to include all activities associated with foreign terrorist fighters transiting Turkey to join ISIL, including facilitation networks. Turkey's definition of terrorism can be an impediment to operational and legal cooperation against global terrorist networks.

On August 31, the Ministry of Interior instituted a program providing monetary rewards to individuals who volunteer information to the government about suspected terrorists and terrorist-related activities. A seven-member interagency commission representing the police and gendarmerie may award up to approximately US $69,000 to an individual should the information lead to the apprehension of a terrorist or of an individual who provides information about a terrorist's identity or location. Information pertaining to the capture of a high-level terrorist or preventing significant criminal acts against society may be awarded up to approximately US $1.38 million upon the approval of the Interior Minister. Members of law enforcement, the military and employees of the Turkish government assigned to counterterrorism tasks are not eligible to benefit from the program.

On October 8, in support of these initiatives, the government launched a website (http://www.teroraranlar.pol.tr) that provides information on the identity of wanted terrorists categorized in order of importance, and the corresponding monetary award for information leading to their capture.

Due to amendments made in 2013, Turkey's counterterrorism legislation conforms more closely to EU freedom of expression standards, has a narrower definition of terrorist propaganda, and criminalizes propagation of the declarations of an illegal organization only if the content legitimizes or encourages acts of violence, threats or force. Nevertheless, the legislation remains broad-reaching and is still being widely applied. In 2015, Turkish authorities continued to use it to detain and prosecute politicians, reporters, and activists.

While Turkey's law enforcement capacity is advanced, criminal procedure secrecy rules continued to prevent Turkish National Police (TNP) authorities from sharing investigative information once a prosecutor is assigned to the case, which occurs almost immediately.

The Government of Turkey compiled a "banned from entry list" with a view to prevent travel into Turkey by individuals identified by foreign governments and internal security units as potential foreign terrorist fighters. Although the Turkish government does not have an automated Advanced Passenger Information/Passenger Name Record system, it has approached the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for technical assistance in developing its own automated system. Risk Analysis Units operated at major international and domestic airports,

land border crossings, interior transit terminals, and border cities to identify and interdict potential foreign terrorist fighters. Border forces increased their ability to patrol and interdict persons and contraband from crossing the border. According to government statistics, during the April to November timeframe, Turkish military units along the Syria-Turkey border apprehended more than 110,000 individuals, mostly refugees, attempting to illegally cross the border.

The TNP has highly developed counterterrorism capabilities in a number of areas and is planning to expand its law enforcement training for other countries in the region. Notwithstanding police capacity, Turkey's criminal justice system is only beginning to show success in prosecuting and dismantling terrorist or organized crime organizations.

The Department of State provided select bilateral and regional trainings in the areas of border security, aviation security, and investigations, in partnership with Turkish law enforcement authorities and counterparts.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Turkey is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and an observer of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, a FATF-style regional group. In October 2014, the FATF cited improvements in Turkey's counterterrorism finance (CFT) regime and approved Turkey's exit from the targeted follow-up process of the third round of mutual evaluations. No terrorism finance cases were prosecuted in 2015.

While the Government of Turkey has issued freezing orders without delay (three to five days), it remains unknown whether any assets have actually been frozen. Freezing orders are published in the official Gazette. The nonprofit sector is not audited on a regular basis for CFT vulnerabilities and does not receive adequate anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism outreach or guidance from the Turkish government. The General Director of Foundations issues licenses for charitable foundations and oversees them, but there are a limited number of auditors to cover the more than 70,000 institutions.

The Department of State supported a Resident Legal Advisor (RLA) from the Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development and Assistance Training, based in-country. The RLA partnered with Turkish counterparts on programs to enhance legal frameworks and the investigative skillsets of law enforcement officials to effectively counter the financing of terrorism.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Turkish government has two significant programs to counter violent extremism. The first, administered by the Turkish National Police, is a broad-based outreach program to affected communities, similar to anti-gang activities in the United States. Police work to reach vulnerable populations (before terrorists do) to alter the prevailing group dynamics and to prevent recruitment. Police use social science research to undertake social projects, activities with parents, and in-service training for officers and teachers. Programs prepare trainers, psychologists, coaches, and religious leaders to intervene to undermine violent extremist messages and to prevent recruitment.

The second program, administered by the Turkish government's Religious Affairs Office (Diyanet), works to undercut violent extremist messaging. In Turkey, all Sunni imams are employees of the Diyanet. In support of its message of traditional religious values, more than 140,000 Diyanet religious officials throughout Turkey conducted individualized outreach to their congregations. The Diyanet similarly worked with religious associations among the Turkish diaspora to provide them with access to instruction and to assist them in establishing umbrella organizations. The Diyanet supported in-service training for religious officials and lay-workers via a network of 20 centers throughout Turkey.

On August 10, Diyanet released a report "DAESH's Basic Philosophy and Religious References" which provided a Quran-based refutation of ISIL's interpretation of Islam.

International and Regional Cooperation: Turkey is an active member of the UN, NATO, and the Committee of Experts on Terrorism. Turkey is a founding member of the GCTF and is co-chair with the Netherlands (previously with the United States); as co-chair, Turkey provided extensive secretariat support. It is also a co-chair for the GCTF's Horn of Africa Working Group. Turkey also participated in OSCE expert meetings on the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism organized by the OSCE/Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Secretariat. It is also a founding member of the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law and seconded a judicial expert to the Institute to assist with trainings for judges and prosecutors who are handling terrorism cases.

The Government of Turkey is considering effective means to implement UNSCR 2178. As GCTF co-chair, it is developing policies in line with the framework of The Hague – Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the "Foreign Terrorist Fighters" Phenomenon.

Turkey increased its cooperation with European countries regarding the activities of members of the DHKP/C. It also worked with countries from Asia, Europe, North Africa, North America and the Middle East to interdict the travel of potential foreign terrorist fighters planning to travel through Turkey to Syria.

UNITED KINGDOM

Overview: In 2015, the UK significantly increased its efforts to fight terrorism at home and abroad. The UK expanded its military efforts against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to include airstrikes in Syria. Following ISIL attacks on tourists in Tunisia and Egypt, the UK increased efforts to enhance the counterterrorism capabilities of partner nations. Domestically, Prime Minister Cameron launched a new counter-extremism strategy and introduced legislation to revamp his government's electronic surveillance collection. UK law enforcement agencies announced that they prevented seven terrorist attacks during 2015, illustrating the continued threat posed by both international and homegrown "lone offender" terrorism.

The threat level in Northern Ireland from Northern Ireland-related terrorism remained severe on the UK's threat scale. In October, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland published an

assessment of paramilitary groups. The report indicated that the most serious terrorist threat is posed by dissident republican groups who oppose the peace process. Dissident republicans continued to target police officers primarily, but prison officers and members of the armed forces have also been targeted. The Northern Ireland Executive is developing a strategy to disband paramilitary groups and establish a monitoring and implementation body to end para-militarism. Tension and in-fighting within republican and loyalist organizations persisted.

Following ISIL's simultaneous terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, British air strikes were extended beyond Iraq into Syria. The UK also plays a key role in coordinating the strategic communications lines of effort within the Counter-ISIL Coalition and participates actively in the Coalition's Foreign Terrorist Fighter Working Group.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: In 2015, the UK government reported preventing seven ISIL-inspired or directed attacks in the UK. The majority of domestic terrorist attacks occurred in Northern Ireland. As of December, the UK's Northern Ireland Office recorded 16 national security attacks by dissident republicans.

- On May 4, police discovered two cylinder-type bombs near an Army Reserve center in Derry/Londonderry. The Police Service of Northern Ireland believed dissident republicans placed the devices.
- In May and July, two radio-controlled explosive devices were deployed in Belfast and Lurgan in an attempt to target security force personnel.
- In June, an under-vehicle IED was deployed against two off-duty police officers in County Londonderry.
- On June 26, a Tunisian gunman killed 38 people, including 30 British citizens, at a beach resort near Sousse, Tunisia.Although it occurred outside of the UK, the Sousse attack was the most significant terrorist attack against UK citizens in 2015.
- In August, an explosive device initiated inside a postal van while it was parked in Palace Barracks in County Down.
- In October, a viable IED was recovered from the grounds of a Derry/Londonderry hotel that was due to host a police recruitment event, and several days later an under-vehicle device was planted in Belfast.
- On December 5, a British citizen stabbed two commuters in an east London Tube station. During the attack, the perpetrator yelled "This is for Syria, my Muslim brothers." Police apprehended the suspect, who was facing trial on murder charges at year's end.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: UK counterterrorism efforts enjoyed the support of a broad statutory foundation. UK law enforcement officials continued to make use of reinforced counterterrorism legislation permitting the government to surveil, interdict, and control the movements of suspected terrorists. In November, the government delivered to Parliament a draft of the Investigatory Powers Bill, which will reframe the statutory basis for the collection of electronic communications, including bulk data, by intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The draft bill increases oversight mechanisms while expanding the investigative tools available to UK authorities.

The Metropolitan (Met) police lead the UK's national counterterrorism law enforcement effort. The Met's Counter Terrorism Command operates against the threat of terrorism at a local, national, and international level and supports the national Counter Terrorism Network and the

Senior National Coordinator of Counter Terrorism. The Met works closely with other UK police constabularies, MI5, and other agencies in all matters related to terrorism, to include investigation, prosecution, prevention, and protection. UK counterterrorism agencies conducted advanced international investigations, managed crisis response, and provided border security.

The UK is committed to implementing fully UN Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, and 2199, and is an important partner in urging other nations to do the same, especially within the EU. The UK issues machine readable passports with an imbedded electronic chip. The last non-electronic passports issued by the UK in 2006 will age out in early 2016. UK travel documents and visas contain a number of security features to prevent tampering and fraud. The UK has advanced biometric screening capabilities at some points of entry, but at others, such as ferry ports, there is no screening at all. The UK requires international airlines to collect Advance Passenger Information and pressured the EU to collect intra-Schengen Passenger Name Record data.

The U.S. and UK law enforcement communities have excellent information sharing and collaboration in the counterterrorism realm. Several UK and U.S. law enforcement agencies embed personnel in each other's organizations to improve communication, information sharing, and joint response. U.S. law enforcement agencies routinely coordinate their investigations with their UK counterparts, resulting in numerous arrests and convictions.

In Northern Ireland, the Crime Operations Department is responsible for conducting terrorism investigations and works closely with MI5 and An Garda Síochána (Ireland's police force) on a range of issues. The Police Service of Northern Ireland reported an increase in bombing incidents and paramilitary style assaults in 2015, but a decrease in terrorism-related arrests, shooting incidents, and confiscation of explosives and firearms. Major 2015 law enforcement actions in Northern Ireland included:

- As part of an investigation into dissident republican activity in September, police confiscated more than half a kilogram of Semtex explosives, two handguns, more than 200 rounds of ammunition and two detonators in west Belfast. This led to the arrest of an individual in England days later in connection with terrorism offenses.
- In October, police conducted a series of separate arrests of individuals allegedly involved in dissident republican terrorism.

The United States and UK cooperated closely in the investigation, apprehension and prosecution of suspected terrorists. In 2015, the UK continued to assist with several U.S. terrorism prosecutions.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The UK is an active member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and has observer or cooperating status in five regional bodies: the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism; Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group; Caribbean Financial Action Task Force; Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering; and Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force. New counterterrorism finance legislation in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 amended the Terrorism Act 2000 to make it an offense for an insurer to reimburse a kidnap or ransom payment made in response to a demand made wholly or partly for the purposes of terrorism. The Charities and Social Investment Bill,

which will enable the Charity Commission to more effectively deal with abuse of the charitable sector – including for terrorist and violent extremist purposes – was before Parliament at year's end.

The UK prosecutes those involved in terrorism finance. Since 2001, 49 individuals have been charged under sections 15-19 of the Terrorism Act 2000 ('fundraising'); of these, 21 individuals were convicted. In the period between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, three individuals were convicted where the principal charge was funding terrorism. Additionally, individuals suspected of funding terrorism were convicted of related offenses (fraud, money laundering, etc.). The UK electronically distributes a consolidated list of all UK designated terrorists and terrorist entities (to include UN targets, EU targets, and UK domestic targets under TAFA) to 16,000 subscribers, mainly in the UK and its overseas territories.

The UK freezes assets in accordance with UNSCR 1373 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. Like other members of the EU, the UK currently implements UN listings by way of EU Regulation, which involves a delay between UN adoption and listings taking legal effect. Asset freezes under UN obligations are made as soon as corresponding EU regulations come into force. If aware of assets held in the UK, the government proactively notifies financial institutions, to compensate for any delay in legal effect of the UN decision. While work is underway by the European Commission to streamline that process and speed up implementation, the UK government has decided to bring forward domestic legislation to bridge the gap. On December 17, 2015, the UK announced that it would legislate to remove the delay between the adoption of UN sanctions decisions and their implementation in the UK. This would apply to both existing and new UN regimes, and would mean that designations will take legal effect in the UK immediately following UN adoption. For domestic asset freezes under UNSCR 1373, action is taken immediately. As of September 2015, the UK held approximately US $151,290 in frozen assets: US $59,003 under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing Act 2010, US $16,642 under the EU terrorist asset freezing regime, and US $75,645 related to the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. Her Majesty's Treasury licenses funds to individuals subject to asset freezes for daily living expenses and legal costs; therefore the amount frozen fluctuates over time.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regulates money transfer and remittance services. HMRC requires remitters to understand to whom they are sending money, and collect originator and recipient information. UK charities have a duty to report suspicions or beliefs of terrorism financing offenses under section 19 of the Terrorism Act 2000; it is an offense to fail to make such a report. Such reports are filed directly with the police or with the National Crime Agency. Charities with an annual income of US $40,500 per year are obliged to file with the Charity Commission serious incident reports of fraud, theft, or other criminal behavior to include support for proscribed organizations or individuals. Charities with annual income under US $40,500 per year "should" report such incidents to the Commission, but failure to do so does not result in a criminal offense. This is separate from the legal requirement to make a report under section 19 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The UK continued to be an important partner in the effort to counter violent extremism. In October 2015, the UK announced a new domestic strategy to counter extremist ideologies in all of theirforms as well as violent extremism. The strategy provides an official definition of extremism as "the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs." Through the strategy, the UK government seeks to combat all forms of extremism and not just violent extremism. The strategy laid out a four-fold approach to countering extremism: countering extremist ideology; building partnerships with civil society; disrupting extremists; and building more cohesive communities. The UK government also announced US $7 million in new funding to provide direct and in-kind practical support to domestic counter-extremist groups to expand the reach and scale of their counter-messaging efforts.

International and Regional Cooperation: The UK robustly supported counterterrorism efforts in regional and multilateral organizations in 2015. In response to terrorist attacks targeting Western tourists in North Africa, such as in Tunisia, the UK expanded its protective and aviation capacity building efforts in third countries through regional and multilateral organizations. The UK led the call for an EU Directive on Passenger Name Record information for people travelling within the Schengen Area. In addition, the UK exercised leadership in the EU to amend the EU Firearms Directive, resulting in the tightening of controls on the acquisition and possession of firearms. The UK also supported stronger external border controls through the better use of information sharing and border checks. In April, the UK adopted the Schengen Information System, which facilitates cooperation among European law enforcement, immigration, and border control agencies. In September, Prime Minister Cameron and Home Secretary May spoke on counterterrorism and CVE at the UN. The UK is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and along with the United Arab Emirates, co-chaired the Countering Violent Extremism Working Group. It is also a founding member of the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law and seconded a law enforcement advisor to the Institute who helped develop and deliver counterterrorism-related trainings for police officers.

THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The Middle East and North Africa remained a primary theater for terrorist activity throughout 2015. During the year, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued to occupy large areas of Iraq and Syria while ISIL branches – particularly those in Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen – persisted in fomenting sectarian strife and conducting attacks in the region. Al-Qa'ida (AQ) and its affiliates continued to seek and take advantage of opportunities to conduct attacks amidst the fragile political and security climate across the region, including in Yemen, Syria, and North Africa.

In North Africa, the Libya conflict between the then internationally-recognized government in Tobruk and the Tripoli-based faction enabled an expansion of violent extremist groups, including the holding of territory by the ISIL branch in Libya. While the UN sought to facilitate the formation of a Government of National Accord, porous borders, continued proliferation of weapons, and weak security institutions provided an environment where terrorists could operate with impunity. Libya continued to serve as a key operational and transit hub for foreign terrorist fighters traveling to and from Syria and Iraq. ISIL-affiliated terrorists conducted several attacks in Tunisia, most notably at the Bardo Museum in March, at a hotel in Sousse in June, and on a Presidential Guard bus in downtown Tunis in November. The perpetrators of all three attacks had been trained in Libya. The al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb- (AQIM-) affiliated Okba Ibn Nafie group continued attacks on security personnel and civilians in the mountainous west of Tunis.Within Algeria, AQIM and the ISIL-affiliated Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria (JAK-A) attacked Algerian targets and Western interests. Algerian government efforts appeared to significantly degrade at least JAK-A's capabilities during 2015.

ISIL's core continued to operate in Iraq and Syria, from which it projected its "caliphate." ISIL maintained a formidable force in Iraq and Syria, including thousands of foreign terrorist fighters from more than 100 countries, while Raqqa continued to serve as ISIL's administrative capital and its headquarters for most external plotting operations. Since May 2015, however, ISIL has not had a significant battlefield victory in either country. For more than a year, the United States has led a coalition of 66 countries and two international organizations to cut off ISIL's financing, disrupt their plots, counter its narrative, and stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Nearly 10,000 air strikes have targeted ISIL's key leaders, heavy weapons, oil tankers, training camps, and its economic infrastructure. Ramadi was the first major complex operation to be completed entirely by retrained Iraqi security forces and local tribal partners. Other key Iraqi cities liberated in 2015 included the Sunni city of Tikrit, the oil infrastructure hub of Bayji, and Sinjar, where ISIL murdered hundreds of Yazidis and enslaved thousands more. In Syria, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), with air support from the Coalition, have taken back a key route connecting Raqqa and Mosul; Tishreen, which connects Raqqa to ISIL's lifeline on the Turkish border; and Tel Abyad, which used to be ISIL's primary point of access to the outside world.

In Yemen, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIL's Yemen branch capitalized on the ongoing conflict between the Government of Yemen, supported by the Saudi-led coalition, and the Houthi-led opposition to gain deeper inroads across much of the country. AQAP expanded its safe haven by seizing several towns, including the port city of Mukalla, which has given it access to increased financial resources. Despite losing a number of senior leaders during 2015, the group was able to increase its recruiting and expand its safe haven in Yemen. ISIL's

affiliate conducted hundreds of attacks during the year, primarily against Houthi forces and Zaydi Shia mosques, in a bid to stoke sectarian tensions similar to ISIL's tactics in Iraq and Syria. Although the Yemeni government has reestablished a presence in Aden, a large security vacuum persisted that both ISIL and AQAP have taken advantage of to strengthen their footholds and forces inside the country.

Egypt faced an increase in terrorist activity, threats, and security challenges. Hundreds of civilians and scores of security forces (police and military) were killed by terrorists. The terrorist attacks have been varied – high profile (the October 31 crash of a Metrojet airliner, purportedly as the result of an ISIL-Sinai attack), Egyptian government targets (the June 29 Assassination of Prosecutor General Barakat), and foreign targets (the July 22 beheading of a Croatian national). ISIL Sinai Province (ISIL-SP) continued its terrorist campaign, predominantly in northern Sinai. A group calling itself Islamic State-Egypt has begun to claim responsibility for terrorist attacks in the rest of the country, notably the June 20 failed attack against foreign tourists in Luxor and the July 11 bombing of the Italian Consulate in Cairo.

Israel again faced terrorist threats from Palestinian terrorists from Gaza and the West Bank. Since October 1, a series of lone-offender attacks by Palestinians in Gaza, Israel, Jerusalem, and the West Bank has increased tensions between Israel and the Palestinians. Israeli and Palestinian security forces continued coordination in an effort to mitigate the ongoing violence. Gaza-based Palestinian terrorist organizations continued rocket and mortar attacks into Israeli territory, and multiple terrorist attacks were launched along Israel's security barrier with Gaza. Israeli counterterrorism officials reported that Hamas and other Gaza terrorists made significant advances in their military capabilities. Hizballah, in Lebanon and Syria, and ISIL and AQ affiliates all presented continued threats to Israel. Terrorists continued their arms and dual-use smuggling efforts through the Sinai into Gaza via tunnels, although the Government of Egypt undertook efforts to prevent such smuggling from its side, which Israeli officials welcomed.

In 2015, Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism worldwide remained undiminished through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF), its Ministry of Intelligence and Security, and Tehran's ally Hizballah, which remained a significant threat to the stability of Lebanon and the broader region. [See Chapter 3, *State Sponsors on Terrorism*, for more information about Iranian activities.]

ALGERIA

Overview: Algeria remained an important counterterrorism partner. The Government of Algeria has a long history of fighting terrorism and has devoted considerable resources to advancing its security agenda. Military forces and multiple law enforcement, intelligence, and security services with delineated responsibilities addressed counterterrorism, counter-intelligence, investigations, border security, and crisis response. These included the various branches of the Joint Staff; the army; National Gendarmerie (GN); the Border Guards; the Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS) under the Ministry of National Defense (MND); and the national police, or General Directorate of National Security (DGSN), under the Ministry of Interior.

Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Mali-based Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), al-Murabitoun, and Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria (JAK-A, Soldiers of the

Caliphate in Algeria), were active terrorist threats within Algeria and along its borders. These groups aspired to establish their interpretations of Islamic law in the region and to attack Algerian security services, local government targets, and Western interests. AQIM continued attacks using IEDs, bombings, false roadblocks, and ambushes. Although criminal groups engaged in kidnapping, there were no reports of kidnappings executed by terrorist groups in 2015. The Algerian government maintained a strict "no concessions" policy with regard to individuals or groups holding its citizens hostage.

JAK-A, which has sworn allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), claimed responsibility for a few, sporadic attacks, although efforts by the Algerian government appeared to have significantly limited the group's ability to operate in 2015. During large-scale operations in May, the Algerian military reportedly killed at least 21 JAK-A fighters in the Boumerdes region. Four other Algerian factions have issued statements claiming allegiance to ISIL, but there was little indication that these groups contained more than a small number of fighters.

Algeria continued an aggressive campaign to eliminate all terrorist activity, and sustained its policing efforts to thwart terrorist activity in the capital and other major urban centers. Military forces and security services, primarily the GN under the MND, conducted regular search operations for terrorists in the mountainous Kabylie area east of Algiers, and in the expansive desert regions in the south.

Rising regional political and security instability contributed to the terrorist threat to Algeria. Violent extremist groups and criminal networks in the Sahel attempted to operate around Algeria's nearly 4,000 miles of borders. Continuing instability in Libya, terrorist groups operating in Tunisia, fragile peace accord implementation in Mali, as well as human and narcotics trafficking, were significant external threats that made regional coordination on border security a necessity. The Algerian government frequently cited links between terrorist activity, organized crime, and narco-traffickers in the Maghreb and the Sahel.

In part in response to concerns regarding online radicalization, the President published a decree on October 8, establishing an anti-cybercrime agency, the National Preventative Organ for the Fight against Infractions Linked to Information and Communication Technology. This entity, with members across the law enforcement and national defense establishment over which the Minister of Justice presides, is responsible for monitoring electronic communication to detect terrorist violations of the law, subversive acts, and breaches of national security. It has not been operating long enough to determine its effectiveness.

Algerian government officials and Muslim religious and political leaders publicly condemned ISIL and criticized acts of violence committed in the name of Islam.

Algerian government officials have declined to join the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, citing its "cardinal principle" of non-intervention in sovereign nations' affairs. Nevertheless, Algeria actively supported the effort to counter ISIL in other ways, such as intelligence sharing, imam training, capacity-building programs with neighboring states, and participation in the White House Countering Violent Extremism Summit process.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Open sources reported more than 62 terrorist acts in 2015. Attacks included:

- On June 20, an IED killed an Algerian colonel and two soldiers near Beni Fedala in the Batna province.
- On July 6, at least two policemen were injured in a shootout in downtown Bouira that started when a patrol of the Mobile Brigade of the Judicial Police was attacked by a terrorist group.
- On July 17, AQIM ambushed Algerian soldiers while on patrol in the province of Ain Defla. AQIM claimed on July 18 to have killed 14 soldiers in the attack, but a press statement from the Algerian Ministry of Defense on July 19 indicated nine soldiers were killed and two others wounded.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In November, Algeria's Minister of Justice presented to Parliament a bill to add provisions to the criminal code to prohibit traveling to other countries to take part in armed conflict, and providing financing or organizing travel operations to other countries for the purpose of committing or inciting terrorist acts, including by using information and communication technologies, or by any other means. This law is intended to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015), and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime.

The Algerian government continued its decade-long push to increase the strength of its military and security forces and to professionalize and modernize them. The 130,000 members of the Gendarmerie, which performs police functions outside of urban areas under the auspices of the Ministry of National Defense, and the approximately 210,000 members of the DGSN, or national police, organized under the Ministry of Interior, share general responsibility for maintaining law and order. During 2015, the government restructured the Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (DRS), the Algerian intelligence service. As a result, the Algerian Central Service for Anti-Terrorism (SCAAT), formerly known as the Service for Operational Coordination and Antiterrorist Intelligence (SCORAT), was placed directly under the control of the Vice Minister of Defense.

Public information announcements from the MND provided timely reporting on incidents during which MND forces captured or eliminated terrorists and seized equipment, arms, ammunition caches, and drugs. MND reported it captured or killed 157 terrorists in 2015 as a result of operations.

The Government of Algeria underscored that border security remained a top priority to guard against the infiltration of terrorists from neighboring countries. Official and private media outlets reported on measures to increase border security, including closed military border areas, new observer posts in the east, reinforced protection of energy installations, additional permanent facilities for border control management, new aerial-based surveillance technologies, upgrades to communication systems, and additional troops deployed on the borders with Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. Since the start of the Arab Spring, Algeria has reportedly deployed at least 75,000 security forces to monitor the country's southern and eastern borders, including at least 50,000 reportedly along the Libyan border. Algerian officials reported that they have provided training and equipment to border security officials in Tunisia to ensure effective cross-border communication. Border security measures included new joint checkpoints and patrols along the frontiers, information sharing, and training and equipment programs.

The Government of Algeria closely monitored passenger manifests for inbound and outbound flights and scrutinizes travel documents of visitors, but does not collect biometric information. Algeria usesa computerized fingerprint identification system, undertakes training, and is equipped to recognize fraudulent documents. The Government of Algeria used INTERPOL channels, alerts, and diffusion notices to stay informed on suspicious travelers at land, air, and maritime borders.

Human rights organizations asserted there has been overuse of pretrial detention by judges and magistrates. On December 6, Parliament approved changes to the Algerian Code of Criminal Procedure limiting the use of police custody and pretrial detention and allowing persons in police custody to receive a visit from a lawyer.

To enhance its capacity to deal effectively with security challenges within its borders and defend against threats to regional stability, Algerian law enforcement agencies participated in the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program and other training offered by third countries as well as by the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ). Algerian participants attended and hosted numerous workshops conducted under the aegis of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). Algerian law-enforcement personnel participated in ATA, GCTF, and IIJ programs that were designed to enhance investigative and screening capacities, improve border security, prevent terrorist transit or operations, and build response capacity to critical incidents. The U.S. Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program concentrated on capacity-focused consultations and mentoring in forensics, border security, criminal investigation, and evidence collection at crime scenes.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Algeria is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, known as the Financial Intelligence Processing Unit (CTRF), is a member of the Egmont Group. The banking system in Algeria is underdeveloped and tightly monitored by Algerian authorities. Processes within the banking system are bureaucratic and require several checks at various points of the money transfer process. Given an over-regulated business environment, an informal cash-based economy with an annual value of roughly US $30 to 40 billion has developed. In recent years, Government of Algeria authorities have increased efforts to close down illegal markets and reopen them legally, although these illegal markets often open in a different location after a few weeks. The large scale of the informal market makes its eradication extremely difficult. A network of informants and Algerian undercover officers monitored significant unregulated cash transactions, but given the informal nature of the system, it was difficult to adequately police.

During the year, Algeria enacted reforms to establish an anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime that provides for the freezing and seizure of terrorist assets without delay, whichthe government was in the process of implementing at year's end. In February, the CTRF and the Bank of Algeria promulgated mandatory guidelines on customer due diligence. Also in February, Parliament passed – and the President signed – a statute broadening the criminal offense of terrorism financing and providing a framework for the seizure of terrorist funds. In May, the Prime Minister issued an executive decree addressing the seizure of terrorist funds. Later in May, the Minister of Finance issued ministerial orders providing further detail for such seizures. In September, the CTRF and the Bank of Algeria each issued further

guidelinesthat closed potential loopholes and provided more details and procedural protections in connection with seizure mechanisms.

On October 23, the FATF removed Algeria from its Public Statement, and moved it to the list denoting a jurisdiction that is improving its compliance with international standards on AML/CFT. The FATF noted that Algeria had established the necessary legal and regulatory framework to meet the commitments established in the action plan to address deficiencies in itsCFT regime.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Algeria underscored the value of state oversight for religious education, including the training of imams, the content of prayers, and credentialing imams in a way that promotes tolerance and sensitizes the religious leaders to the risks of using religion for political objectives. The Algerian government appoints, trains, and pays the salaries of imams. The penal code outlines punishments, including fines and prison sentences, for anyone other than a government-designated imam who preaches in a mosque. The Algerian government monitors mosques for possible security-related offenses and prohibits the use of mosques as public meeting places outside of regular prayer hours. Government officials publicly affirm Algeria's Sunni Maliki tradition of Islam, which upholds the values of tolerance, brotherhood, and acceptance of others.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MRA) warns Algerians against foreign violent extremist trends (ISIL, Wahhabism) and heeding *fatwas* (judicial rulings) that originate outside Algeria. In 2015, Algeria continued working to create an Academy of *Fatwas* in Algeria. The MRA identified 50 imams from different parts of the country to receive advanced training. In November, the MRA announced plans to establish an "observatory" in 2016, to guard against untrained imams, importation of values "alien" to Algeria's religious tradition, and the promotion of sectarianism and terrorism.

Viewing broad-based socioeconomic opportunity as a way to prevent radicalization to violence, Algerian government programs targeted youth and the unemployed by providing tuition, job placements, and paid internships to university students. The Algerian government recruited repentant terrorists to become voices in the community to prevent a drift toward radicalism.

The Government of Algeria aired content through Radio Quran aimed at countering religious extremism, specifically violent forms of Salafism. Mini lectures to "defuse" radical religious discourse aired regularly, and the most relevant lectures were broadcast two to three times per week.

The MND released communiques from its website on terrorists captured or eliminated, indicating where the operation occurred and where arms were recovered, with no further commentary or analysis. The MND excluded group affiliation to deny terrorists publicity. Algerian leaders publicly condemned terrorism in televised addresses and statements to the press. Posting photographs and videos of terrorist acts on the internet is prohibited. MND

officials and the MND website reminded citizens to verify their sources and statistics related to security matters with the MND communications office.

Under the 2006 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, Algeria offers amnesty to former terrorists who laid down their weapons and disavowed violence. Exceptions are made for perpetrators of particularly egregious acts, such as rape, murder, and bombings. The Charter works through offices located nationwide to extend judicial assistance and social and job reintegration measures to repentant terrorists, victims of terrorism, and families of terrorists. Some 9,000 terrorists have been pardoned under the Charter since its inception.

International and Regional Cooperation: In 2015, Algeria continued strong diplomatic and mediation efforts to promote regional peace and security. On the diplomatic front, it facilitated an inclusive national dialogue for Malian groups and regional partners that resulted in the signing of a Mali peace accord. In coordination with the UN, Algeria hosted talks among Libyan groups and stakeholders to help reach a political solution. Algeria also participated in various Sahel-Saharan fora to discuss development and security policies, the evolution of regional terrorism, and donor coordination; these included the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation, the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. However, Algeria and Morocco's political disagreement over the Western Sahara remained an impediment to bilateral and regional counterterrorism cooperation.

Algeria is an active member and participant in the AU, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Arab League. It is a delegate for the Africa region on the INTERPOL Executive Board and is a founding member of the IIJ. Additionally, Algeria participated in the White HouseSummit on Countering Violent Extremism in February, and – as a follow-on event – hosted a regional de-radicalization conference, which produced 58 recommendations. Algeria participated in critical counterterrorism-related projects implemented by the UN Office on Drug and Crime's Terrorism Prevention Branch; participated in CEMOC (Comite d' État-Major Opérationnel Conjoint) meetings with Mali, Mauritania, and Niger that were designed to promote security cooperation in the region; and hosted CEMOC's Liaison and Fusion Center for information sharing.

In a leadership role, Algeria sits on the UN Counter-Terrorism Center's Advisory Board and hosts the headquarters of AFRIPOL, a pan-African organization that fosters police training and cooperation in response to security threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and cybercrime. Algeria actively participates in the 5+5 Defense Initiative, which brings together five European and five North African countries to address security issues in the western Mediterranean. As a founding member of the GCTF and co-chair of its Sahel Region Capacity Building Working Group, Algeria continued to champion the implementation and development of the Algiers Memorandum on Good Practices on Preventing and Denying the Benefits of Kidnapping for Ransom by Terrorists.

Algeria also provided capacity-building assistance to some neighbors. The Tunisian Defense Minister stated to Tunisian media that Algeria is providing training for Tunisian Special Forces on border security pursuant to a bilateral agreement.

BAHRAIN

Overview: During 2015, the Bahraini government continued to make gains in detecting, neutralizing, and containing terrorist threats from violent Shia militant groups and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) sympathizers. Those groups' use of real and fake IEDs remained a key threat to security services, resulting in the death of three police officers. The government also began to implement new counterterrorism laws the legislature approved in 2014, including revoking the citizenship of suspected and convicted terrorists. By year's end, the Bahraini government had interdicted several smuggling operations and seized sizeable caches of military-grade explosives, shaped charges, and sophisticated detonators. These raids ensnared several militant cells and significantly eroded militant attacks on police.

The Bahraini government supported the international Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and in December joined the Saudi-led 34-country Islamic counterterrorism alliance. The Bahraini government often did not publicize details about the arrests or convictions of Sunni terrorists, complicating efforts to track its progress against the domestic ISIL threat. Nevertheless, Bahraini leaders publicly condemned ISIL's worldwide activities, ideology, and recruitment, while the government worked to detect, counter, and discourage domestic ISIL recruitment and extremist messaging. In October, the government announced it had charged 24 individuals – seven of whom were in detention and the rest of whom remained at large in Iraq and Syria – with forming an ISIL cell that plotted suicide attacks in Bahrain and recruited fighters for the organization. In December, however, the Public Prosecutor released four of the detained suspects for lack of evidence. Security services also arrested another Sunni man and charged him with purchasing arms for the terrorist group. On several occasions in 2015, ISIL-affiliated social media accounts claimed the group would carry out attacks in Bahrain, but these failed to materialize. Bahrain participated in Global Coalition to Counter ISIL Political Directors meetings in Amman, Quebec, and Brussels; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the June 2 Coalition Group Ministerial Meeting in Paris.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Bahrain continued to experience periodic bomb attacks from Shia militants throughout the year with targeting focused exclusively on Bahraini security forces. In previous years, the attacks mostly involved homemade devices, but in 2015 the militants began to use military-grade explosive materials, such as C-4 and RDX.

- On March 19, a bomb injured two policemen in the predominantly Shia village of Karranah.
- On July 15, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) reported a man accidentally blew himself up when attempting to plant a bomb that targeted police in the Shia village of Eker.
- On July 28, a bomb killed two policemen and injured six policemen outside a girls' school on the Shia majority island of Sitra.
- On August 28, a blast killed one policeman in Karranah and seven civilians were injured in collateral damage.
- On September 10, a bomb targeted a police station in the town of Bilad Al-Qadim but caused no casualties.

Suspected Shia militants targeted security services with Molotov cocktails and other homemade devices throughout 2015 and other blasts occurred with fewer or no casualties.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Throughout 2015, Bahrain moved to bolster existing counterterrorism laws and criminal penalties. In March, the Shura Council – Bahrain's appointed, upper legislative chamber – approved a draft law increasing sentences for those who "promote or glorify" terrorists acts to 10 years and/or a fine of US $13,350, which the Cabinet approved in September and referred to the elected lower house. In December, the Council of Representatives – Bahrain's elected, lower chamber – approved a royal decree amending provisions of the 2006 terrorism law, allowing security forces to detain suspects for longer periods of time without charging them, and to take other measures, such as shutting off electricity in a given city block where a suspected terrorist incident occurred, when searching for suspects. Terrorism-related acts, a broadly-defined category, are treated as criminal cases, with prescribed penalties spelled out in the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2006 and Articles 155 and 168 of the Penal Code. While many of the terrorism cases in 2015 involved criminals who engaged in violent acts against security services, there were concerns that the government sometimes used counterterrorism laws – specifically citizenship revocations – to prosecute or harass individuals for their criticism of the government.

Throughout 2015, security services were able to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents. The MOI is the lead government agency charged with detecting and preventing acts of terrorism and arresting suspects in terrorist-related acts, with the Bahrain National Security Agency providing intelligence support. The Bahraini Coast Guard also contributes to the counterterrorism mission by monitoring and interdicting the seaborne movement of weapons and terrorists into and out of the country. The major deterrents to more effective law enforcement and border security remain the lack of interagency coordination and limited training opportunities to develop requisite law enforcement skills.

Bahrain has participated in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program since 1987. One Combatting Domestic and Transnational Terrorism ATA course took place in 2015 that graduated approximately 20 officers.

Bahrain's ability to detect transnational plots remains limited due to capacity, detection, and information-sharing deficiencies. Every year, millions of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nationals transit the King Fahad Causeway connecting Bahrain to Saudi Arabia with relatively little screening. The Saudi citizen who killed 27 worshippers in a Kuwaiti mosque in June transited Bahrain via the airport, highlighting the country's vulnerability to threats from violent extremists residing in neighboring countries.

Security forces reported they thwarted several plots through arrests and the discovery of at least two large weapons caches. In March, police and customs officials intercepted a bus containing bomb-making materials attempting to enter Bahrain from Saudi Arabia across the King Fahad Causeway. In June, the government uncovered a warehouse in the Dar Kulaib village containing explosives and bomb-making materials. In September, security forces discovered a facility that contained bomb-making equipment and 1.4 tons of explosives. In November, the Bahraini government announced it had conducted a major counterterrorism operation resulting in the arrest of 47 individuals, the confiscation of bomb-making materials, and the disruption of several terrorist plots.

In 2015, Bahrain initiated dozens of cases for terrorism-related crimes and secured 11 convictions. Sentences varied but included the death penalty and revocation of citizenship for

those accused of more serious crimes. However, the government has not carried out an execution of a foreign national since 2010 and has not executed a Bahraini national since 1996. In January, the government cited the 2006 terrorism law when it revoked the citizenship of 72 citizens, many of whom were out of the country at the time. In March, the High Criminal Court sentenced three Bahrainis to death and seven others to life in prison while revoking the citizenship of eight of them for a 2014 bombing that killed three policemen. In April, the same court sentenced a man to death and gave varying sentences to 11 others, ranging from 10 years to life for another 2014 bombing that killed a policeman. In June, a court sentenced two men who previously had their citizenships revoked to life in prison for terrorism-related charges. In November, a lower court convicted five Bahrainis of plotting terrorist attacks, revoked their citizenship, and sentenced them to life in prison. Also in November, a court sentenced 12 Bahrainis to life in prison and revoked their citizenships for terrorist acts and targeting police. Various other suspects received sentences ranging from a few years to life in prison for other planned or executed attacks against the security services.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Bahrain is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, the Anti-Money Laundering Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group. Bahrain is an important regional financial hub, which makes it vulnerable to large amounts of money flowing through the Gulf region to support various terrorist groups. In 2015, Bahrain organized or participated in several meetings focused on disrupting the financial support systems for terrorist entities. The government sent a delegation with representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Interior to the three initial meetings for the Counter-ISIL Finance Group in Rome, Jeddah, and Washington, DC. In April, Bahrain hosted the 8th EU-GCC Workshop on Combatting Terrorist Financing. In November, Bahrain hosted the "Good Giving Conference," a workshop focused on combating the financing of terrorism through preventing abuse of the charitable sector. The program focused on international good practices used to ensure charitable donations are not used or diverted for nefarious purposes.

Throughout 2015, the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) continued its efforts to upgrade the country's AML/CFT regulatory framework via an entity known as the Policy Committee, which formulates AML/CFT policies and is in charge of implementing FATF recommendations. The CBB periodically reviewed financial institutions' licenses to ensure compliance with CBB regulations. In April, the CBB took organizational control of the Iran Future Bank, which the U.S. government had previously sanctioned for aiding in Iran's nuclear proliferation and missile acquisition activities, and the Iran Insurance Company in order to "protect the rights of depositors," but declined to provide further details. In August, the government detained former opposition parliamentarian Hassan Isa on terrorism finance-related charges, although opposition groups and activists complained the detention was politically motivated.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Development's (MOLSD) Directorate of Civil Societies monitors and administers civil society and NGOs, including charitable institutions that could be used to finance terrorists or terrorist groups. When a group petitions the MOLSD to form a new civil society group, the Ministry's Financial and Legal Departments scrutinize the potential new group's finances in coordination with the CBB and MOI. The CBB also works with the MOLSD to prepare a report regarding the groups' internal and external fund transactions. The Directorate of Civil Societies submit an annual financial report issued by an accredited auditing firm, which is reviewed by the Ministry's Financial and Administrative departments, andis subject to

inspection visits throughout the year by the MOLSD's Registration and Public Relations Departments.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs (MOJIA) heads Bahrain's efforts to counter radicalization to violence and violent extremism, in part by organizing regular workshops for clerics and speakers from both the Sunni and Shia sects. The MOJIA also undertakes an annual review of schools' Islamic Studies curricula to evaluate interpretations of religious texts.

International and Regional Cooperation: Bahrain worked closely and cooperatively with international, multilateral, and regional partners. It is a member of the GCC and participated in the August U.S.-GCC Counterterrorism and Border Security Working Group meeting in Riyadh. Since formally endorsing the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in March 2008, Bahrain has proactively worked to expand air, sea, and causeway border control points, although its data collection and information-sharing capabilities remain limited.

EGYPT

Overview: In 2015, the Egyptian government continued to confront active terrorist groups, which conducted deadly attacks on government, military, and civilian targets throughout the country. During the latter half of the year, the number of reported IEDs, anti-government demonstrations, and attacks on security forces declined considerably, particularly after the Egyptian Economic Development Conference held in Sharm El-Sheikh in March 2015. However, terrorist groups have succeeded in launching several large-scale attacks in Cairo and other urban areas.

Recent attacks and social media propaganda suggest that terrorist groups are increasingly seeking to expand the geographic scope of attacks outside the restive areas of northeast Sinai. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-Sinai Province (ISIL-SP) remained a significant threat; however, a new group calling itself "Islamic State Egypt," distinct from ISIL Sinai, has begun to claim responsibility for terrorist attacks outside of Sinai. While these organizations receive some external financial and logistical support as a result of their affiliation with ISIL, there is no evidence of a significant presence of non-Egyptian "foreign terrorist fighters" in Egypt.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi continued to focus on counterterrorism in Egypt. In the wake of the assassination of Egyptian Prosecutor General Hisham Barakat, the Egyptian government approved a new counterterrorism law, increasing the state's legal authorities to counter terrorism. The law provides a broad definition of terrorism, to include "any act harming national unity or social peace."

The Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) had limited success in combatting terrorist groups. The EAF launched a stepped-up counterterrorism campaign (known as Operation "Right of the Martyr") against ISIL-SP on September 7. The EAF also continued to seize and destroy numerous tunnels

used for smuggling between Egypt and Gaza. On November 9, security forces killed senior ISIL-SP member Ashraf Gharabli, whom security officials alleged orchestrated several large-scale terrorist attacks.The EAF also undertook actions to counter the movement of ISIL personnel in western Egypt; however, an errant Egyptian counterterrorism operation on September 14, 2015 killed 12 Mexican tourists mistaken for terrorists. The Government of Egypt has taken responsibility for the action and is compensating the victims' families.

Egypt is a member in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and the Counter-ISIL Finance Group.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Groups claiming to be affiliated with ISIL and other terrorist groups carried out numerous attacks throughout Egypt. Methods included vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs), ambushes, kidnappings, and targeted assassinations. The following list details only a small fraction of the incidents that occurred.

- On June 29, an explosive device targeted Prosecutor General Hisham Barakat's motorcade shortly after Barakat departed his home in Heliopolis. Barakat succumbed to his wounds later that afternoon and nine other people were injured. A claim of responsibility by a group that calls itself Giza Popular Resistance could not be confirmed.
- On July 1, as many as 70 ISIL-SP operatives simultaneously attacked several police and security installations in the Sinai's Sheiykh Zuweid region. The multifaceted attack resulted in the deaths of 35 people.
- On July 11, a bomb heavily damaged the Italian Consulate in downtown Cairo and killed one civilian. Islamic State-Egypt claimed responsibility for the attack on social media.
- On July 16, a missile was launched from the shore in Sinai and hit an Egyptian naval vessel and set it ablaze. ISIL-SP claimed responsibility.
- On July 22, Croatian citizen Tomislav Salopek, who worked as a topographer for a French energy company, was kidnapped in the Western Desert, west of the Cairo suburb of 6th of October City. On August 5, in a video posted on a Twitter account associated with ISIL-SP, the group claimed responsibility for the abduction and demanded the release of all female Muslims in Egyptian prisons within 48 hours in exchange for Salopek. Salopek was ultimately beheaded; ISIL-SP claimed responsibility for the killing.
- On August 20, a VBIED attack occurred adjacent to a National Security Sector (NSS) building in Cairo's Shubra El Kheima neighborhood. The explosion resulted in substantial damage to the exterior of the building and injured 30. Islamic State-Egypt claimed responsibility via social media.
- On October 31, an A-321 Airbus operated by the Russian charter company Kogalymavia crashed 23 minutes after taking off from Sharm El-Sheikh International Airport, killing all 224 people on board. While the official investigation remained ongoing at year's end, ISIL-SP claimed responsibility.Russian and other international investigators have claimed that an explosive device was responsible for the crash.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Egypt adopted two significant new counterterrorism laws by Presidential decree in 2015. The "Terrorist Entities Law," adopted on February 24, establishes a mechanism for designating organizations or individuals as terrorist entities, a procedure which had previously been ad hoc. On August 15, spurred in part by the assassination of Prosecutor General Barakat, the government issued a sweeping new

counterterrorism law, after several years of discussion. The government says the law consolidates existing legislation addressing terrorism-related crimes and closes legal gaps. The law expands the definition of terrorism to encompass acts committed outside of Egypt and also establishes penalties for those who travel in order to commit acts of terrorism, as well as those who support and recruit for them. The law also imposes a steep fine, equal to many times the average annual salary of most local journalists, for publishing "false news" that contradicts official government reports on terrorism, which some civil society organizations worry could be used to stifle dissent and could lead to under-reporting on acts of terrorism.

The NSS is primarily responsible for counterterrorism functions in Egypt, but also works with other elements of the Ministry of Interior (MOI), the Egyptian General Intelligence Service, and the EAF. There was interagency cooperation and information sharing among the various counterterrorism elements within the Egyptian government in 2015.

Egypt continued to take actions to improve its border security measures. At border crossings and airports, Egyptian authorities checked for the presence of known security features within travel documents, such as micro-printing, UV features, and digital schemes. They also scanned and cross referenced documents with criminal databases that alert them when there is derogatory information present. Egypt maintains a terrorist watchlist with a simple listing provided to Egyptian immigration officials at the ports of entry and detailed information maintained within the NSS.

Egypt's primary physical border security concerns are along the borders with Gaza and Libya. The EAF aggressively sought to destroy underground tunnels that connect Gaza and Sinai. The EAF also established and de-populated a buffer-zone along the border with Gaza, which extended to 1.5 kilometers from the border at the end of the year. Egypt increased its military presence along the Libya border; the government installed cargo and passenger vehicle x-ray scanning devices at the Libyan border crossing to inspect traffic traveling both into and out of Egypt. The EAF was also working to procure a suite of mobile surveillance technologies to improve its situational awareness along the border with Libya.

In an effort to prevent the travel of foreign terrorist fighters to areas of conflict, the government increased the number of countries for which citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 must first obtain permission prior to travel, and expanded this requirement to include women.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Egypt is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body.Egypt's financial intelligence unit, theEgyptian Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Combating Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group. Egypt is not considered a regional financial center or a major hub for money laundering. The Government of Egypt has shown increased willingness to tackle money laundering, but Egypt remained vulnerable by virtue of its large informal, cash-based economy. In 2015, the Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, and other government entities strengthened efforts to promote financial inclusion by incentivizing individuals and small and medium enterprises to enter the formal financial sector. Recent measures included digitization of government payments, introduction of smartcards, and increased banking services with mini-branches and more ATMs. Sources of illegal proceeds reportedly included the smuggling of antiquities and trafficking in narcotics and/or arms. However, some organizations have used new technologies and social media to raise funds. For

example, ISIL-SP solicited funds using Twitter to finance terrorist activities in Egypt, relying on anonymous prepaid value cards. Authorities also noted increased interception of illicit cross-border fund transfers by customs agents in recent years. For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Ministry of Islamic Endowments (Awqaf) is legally responsible for issuing guidance to which all imams throughout Egypt are required to adhere, including weekly instructions on a provided theme that aims to prevent extremist language in sermons. The Ministry is also required to license all mosques in Egypt; however, many continued to operate without licenses. The government has the authority to appoint and monitor the imams who lead prayers in licensed mosques, and the government pays their salaries.

Egypt's Dar Al-Iftaa (Egypt's official body for drafting religious edicts) has increased its efforts to counter violent extremism and extremist religious rhetoric, particularly online, where it has millions of followers on social media. Dar Al-Iftaa's countering violent extremism activities included sending scholars to remote areas of the country to engage communities considered vulnerable to violent extremist messaging; organizing international outreach and speaking tours throughout Muslim majority countries and the West; publishing books and pamphlets to undermine the alleged religious foundations of violent extremist ideology; running rehabilitation sessions for former violent extremists; and confronting violent extremists in cyber space.

International and Regional Cooperation: Egypt continued to participate in the Global Counterterrorism Forum, co-chairing (along with the United States) the Criminal Justice and Rule of Law Working Group. Egypt was elected in October to a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for a two-year term, beginning in 2016. In December, Egypt was selected to preside over the UNSC Counter Terrorism Committee. It is also a member of the AU.

IRAQ

Overview: Iraq witnessed a continued surge of terrorist activity in 2015, primarily as a result of the actions of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which has occupied large areas of the country since early 2014. ISIL had no strategic victories after its capture of Ramadi in May 2015, however, and lost more than 40 percent of the Iraqi territory it once controlled. A series of successive ISIL defeats shifted the momentum in favor of the Iraqi government and the Coalition by year's end.

In April, an Iraqi-led military effort retook the city of Tikrit, the symbolically-important hometown of Saddam Hussein. The subsequent return of 80 percent of internally displaced persons to the city by the end of the year was a major milestone in the effort against ISIL, and the Iraqi government coordinated closely with the international community to stabilize the city. In November, Peshmerga forces retook the town of Sinjar, a city that came to the world's attention with brutal attacks by ISIL against the Yezidi community in the summer of 2014. At the end of the year, newly-empowered Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) units, accompanied by local Sunni fighters, liberated large parts of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Province and a strategically important hub.

Although the Government of Iraq – supported by the 66-member Global Coalition to Counter ISIL – made significant progress in its campaign to retake occupied territory from ISIL, there remained a security vacuum in parts of Iraq.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Terrorist groups continued to mount a large number of attacks throughout the country. Most notably, ISIL's use of military equipmentcaptured in the course of fighting gave it greater capabilities in line with a more conventional military force, including the reported use of eastern bloc tanks, artillery, and self-developed unmanned aerial drones. According to estimates from the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), acts of terrorism and violence killed more than 7,500 civilians and injured more than 13,800 in 2015.

Iranian-backed groups, including Kata'ib Hizballah (KH), continued to operate in Iraq during 2015, which exacerbated sectarian tensions in Iraq and contributed to human rights abuses against primarily Sunni civilians. KH and other Iraqi Shia militias associated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards have been brought into the Iraqi government's Popular Mobilization Forces. The inclusion of KH, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, in the Popular Mobilization Forces enlisted by the Iraqi Government in the effort against ISIL, threatens to undermine counterterrorism objectives.

The following is an illustrative sample that highlights only a small number of the most egregious terrorist attacks conducted in 2015:

- On January 1, 15 members of the Jamilat tribe in Ninewa Province were executed after refusing to join ISIL.
- On February 7, three separate bombings in Baghdad, including one suicide bomber, killed 36 people and injured 70.
- On April 17, ISIL claimed responsibility for a car bomb attack that killed three and wounded five outside the U.S. Consulate in Erbil.
- On April 22, eight pilgrims returning from a Shia shrine in Samarra were killed in a suicide bombing; 16 others were injured.
- On May 8, three suicide bombers attacked the al-Zahraa mosque and the Imam Hussein mosque, killing at least 22 people in total, including a senior police officer.
- On May 12, a suicide bomber and two mortar attacks that were launched during a Shia march in Baghdad killed six and injured 16.
- On June 25, five separate bombings and a shooting incident in Baghdad killed eight and injured more than 20.
- On July 17, a suicide car bombing using an ice cream truck in Khan Bani Saad (Diyala Province) targeted a local marketplace. Approximately 130 people were killed with a similar number injured. Several others were killed by buildings that collapsed as a result of the explosion.
- On July 25, two suicide bombers attacked a crowded swimming pool in Tuz Khurmatu causing at least 12 deaths and 45 injured.
- On August 13, a truck bomb targeted a food market in a predominantly Shia neighborhood in Sadr City killing two and injuring 10.
- On October 3, twin suicide bombings in Baghdad killed 18 and wounded more than 60.

- On November 30, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a checkpoint along a route used by Shia pilgrims in the northern Baghdad neighborhood of al-Shaab, killing nine and wounding 21. The victims were taking part in the annual Arba'een ceremony.
- On December 9, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives in the doorway of a Shia mosque at the end of prayer in Baghdad killing 11 and wounding 20.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: ISIL offensives in 2014 and early 2015 significantly degraded ISF capabilities, manpower, and equipment. The Government of Iraq suffered losses across its national security apparatus, especially in the Iraqi Army and federal and local police. However, with substantial assistance received from the Coalition to address training and equipping shortfalls, the Government of Iraq worked to redress those losses.

Iraq adopted the Terrorist Interdiction Program's Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) in an effort to secure its borders and identify fraudulent travel documents. The Government of Iraq has the capability to conduct biographic and biometric screening at multiple land and air ports of entry. Iraq also continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program; ATA training for the Emergency Response Brigades contributed to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Since 2005, Iraq has been a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body.Iraq is also under review by the FATF, due to a number of strategic deficiencies in its anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime. In December, the Iraqi government adopted a new AML/CFT law, which will require extensive implementing regulations to ensure its compliance with international (FATF) standards. Although that law represented significant progress in strengthening Iraq's AML/CFT regime, in and of itself it did not fulfill all of the country's commitments to the FATF. In December, as part of its Action Plan with the FATF, the Iraqi government adopted a new AML/CFT law, which will require extensive implementing regulations to ensure it is compliant with international standards.

In 2015, the Central Bank of Iraq took a number of steps to disrupt ISIL's financial activity, including: issuing a national directive to prohibit financial transactions with banks and financial companies located in ISIL-controlled areas; cutting off salary payments to government employees located in ISIL-controlled areas to prevent those salaries from being "taxed" by ISIL and so used to fund ISIL operations; and publishing a list of exchange houses and transfer companies prohibited from accessing U.S. currency auctions.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Iraq recognizes that to defeat ISIL it must use soft power along with hard power. The Iraqis took a good first step when the Iraqi National Security Council, in conjunction with Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve, hosted an International Military Conference on Psychological Operations to Counter Da'esh Media on December 16-17 in Baghdad. The conference brought together representatives from 17 nations in an effort to increase the effectiveness of combined operations to degrade ISIL

propaganda and to aid the Iraqi government and Security Forces in communicating a more viable narrative than that offered by ISIL. The conference received extensive media coverage and the public acknowledgement by many prominent Iraqis of the divisiveness caused by sectarianism was an encouraging development.

International and Regional Cooperation: Iraq is a member of multilateral and regional organizations including the UN, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Arab League. The U.S.-led Global Coalition to Counter ISIL focused on training, equipping, advising, and assisting the ISF, including Kurdish forces. Seventeen Coalition members joined the United States in deploying military personnel to assist the Iraqi government in training, along with "advise and assist" missions. Coalition partners trained more than 30,000 ISF, while 12 Coalition members conducted more than 6,000 air strikes in Iraq, including 630 in support of the Ramadi liberation. In addition, more than a dozen Coalition partners contributed $50 million to the Funding Facility for Iraq Stabilization.

There were a number of global events meant to focus the international community on supporting counter-ISILefforts as well as the many post-conflict stabilization needs in Iraq. In January, the Small Group Ministerial met in London to assess the counter-ISIL campaign and reconvened in Brussels in June again to assess progress. The Global Coalition convened the Stabilization Working Group in March in Berlin followed by a subsequent meeting in May in Abu Dhabi. In July, the political directors of the Coalition Small Group met in Quebec City following a meeting of the Lines of Effort leads and the one-year anniversary of the Counter-ISILCoalition on September 28. On November 4, the Small Group of the Counter-ISILCoalition met in Brussels to take stock of developments on the ground and continue expanding efforts to degrade and defeat ISIL. Later that same month, the Ambassadors of the Global Coalition met at the Department of State where the Vice President called on the Coalition to intensify its efforts against ISIL.

ISRAEL, THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, AND JERUSALEM

Overview: Israel was a committed counterterrorism partner in 2015. Israel again faced terrorist threats from Palestinian violent extremists including Hamas, the Popular Resistance Committees, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), particularly from Gaza but also from the West Bank. Other threats included Hizballah in Lebanon and Syria; al-Qa'ida (AQ) and its affiliates, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its affiliates in the country and along its borders, such as ISIL Sinai Province (ISIL-SP) and al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade in the Golan Heights. In addition, since October 1, Israel has faced a wave of terrorist attacks committed by individuals with no clear organizational affiliation. Israeli officials argued that the spike in violence has its roots in part in Palestinian fears that the Government of Israel intends to alter the status quo at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and is fanned by incitement by senior figures in the Palestinian Authority, while representatives of the Palestinian Authority argued that the attackers were largely motivated by frustration over the occupation and the lack of a political horizon.

Gaza-based Palestinian terrorist organizations continued rocket and mortar attacks into Israeli territory, and multiple terrorist attacks were launched along Israel's security barrier with Gaza. Most of these were initiated by the Omar Hadid-Bayt Almaqdis Brigades, a Salafi organization based in Gaza and inspired by ISIL. Israel saw an increase in the number of launches in 2015, totaling 24 for the year, and a maximum of seven launches during the month of October. The

Gaza-based Palestinian organization "Al-Sabirin", which is supported by Iran and identifies with Lebanese Hizballah, has claimed responsibility for launching rockets into Israel as well. Militants continued efforts to smuggle arms and dual-use materials through the Sinai into Gaza via tunnels. Israeli officials welcomed significant efforts by the Government of Egypt to prevent such smuggling.

Israeli counterterrorism officials said Hamas and other Gaza terrorists made quantitative and qualitative advances in their military capabilities. Israel assessed that Hamas and PIJ have regained most of the military capabilities that were severely damaged during operation "Protective Edge" (July 7 to August 26, 2014), and have, in some cases, expanded their capabilities, including by constructing new offensive tunnels and acquiring other advanced capabilities such as an arsenal of medium-to-long range rockets and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Hamas continued to develop its terrorist infrastructures and activities in the West Bank, specifically in order to attack Israelis. During 2015, Israel's Security Agency, IDF, and Police exposed and foiled several cells of Hamas operating in the West Bank, which were planning to execute terrorist attacks in Israel.

Since October 2015, Israeli and Palestinian security services continued coordination to address a wave of terrorist attacks committed by individuals with no clear affiliation to terrorist organizations. These attacks consisted mostly of stabbings of soldiers and civilians, as well as shootings or rammings by vehicles. The attacks occurred in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and in Israeli cities.

Israeli officials estimated that the level of threat from global terrorist organizations such as ISIL and AQ and its affiliates increased in 2015. Attacks from ISIL-SP continued as the organization launched rockets toward Israel in July. In addition, ISIL released several audio and video recordings, in Arabic, English, and Hebrew, stating its ambition to attack and destroy Israel and the Jewish people. ISIL leader Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi released an audio recording in late December (his first since being wounded in May), calling on Muslims to attack Israel. One group claiming affiliation with ISIL, the Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade, controlled areas inside Syria close to the Israel-Syria border. Israel was also concerned with potential attacks by terrorists against Israeli targets abroad. For example, in December, German media reported that two ISIL activists were arrested while trying to assemble an IED. The two planned to plant explosives at the Israeli Embassy in Berlin.

Israeli government officials estimated that about 55 Israeli citizens and residents left Israel to join the fighting in Syria and Iraq. Several of those have died in battle and seventeen have returned, of whom 11 were prosecuted and sentenced.

Israeli security officials and politicians remained concerned about the terrorist threat posed to Israel from Hizballah and Iran, highlighting that Iran, primarily through the efforts of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF), continued to transfer arms to Hizballah. Israeli experts believed that Iran has transferred to Hizballah advanced weapons systems such as anti-aircraft and anti-ship cruise missile systems, and was continuing to transfer long-range rockets into Lebanon. Also, Israeli officials were concerned about the proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons from Syria to terrorist organizations. According to

the Government of Israel, Hizballah has stockpiled more than 100,000 rockets and missiles in Lebanon since the 2006 Lebanon War.

Hizballah continued to act against Israel and Israeli targets around the world. In January, Hizballah launched mortar shells toward Israeli cities in the north and fired anti-tank missiles at an IDF patrol, killing two Israeli soldiers and wounding several others. Hizballah also continued to operate proxy groups based in the Syrian Golan Heights against Israel. One of these groups was headed by Samir Kuntar who publicly announced that he was operating from the Golan Heights with support from Hizballah against Israel. Several attacks by Kuntar's group were foiled. In December 2015, Hizballah officials alleged that Kuntar had been killed in an airstrike in Syria, attributing this attack to the Israeli government.

Iran and Hizballah reportedly continued to prepare for attacks against Israeli targets outside the country. In late November, Kenyan security agencies announced that they had arrested two Iranian citizens, allegedly sent by the Iranian IRGC/Quds force to execute a terrorist attack against Israeli targets in Nairobi. In May, Cypriot police arrested a Lebanese-Canadian national, Hussain Abdallah, who later admitted he was working for Hizballah's External Security Organization. Abdallah possessed about 8.5 tons of chemicals used for manufacturing explosives. Abdallah acknowledged to Cypriot investigators that that the explosive pre-cursors interrogation showed the explosives were supposed to be used against Israeli targets in Cyprus and other places in Europe. Iran has stated publicly that it armed Hizballah with advanced long-range Iranian-manufactured missiles, in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1701 and 1747.

While Israel is not involved in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, it shares information to help track and stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters through information exchanges on counterterrorism issues with numerous governments. In support of the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime, Israel regularly updates the list of foreign terrorist organizations and individuals involved in terrorism to better align with UNSC sanctions lists. Additionally, in November 2015 the Israeli interagency team appointed by the Israeli government submitted its report about the need and methods of requiring and collecting advance passenger information and Passenger Name Record data from airlines operating in its territory, to achieve better safety measures and as part of Israel's implementation of UNSCR 2178.

Attacks by Jewish Israelis against Arab citizens of Israel – many of whom self-identify as Palestinian – and Palestinian residents, property, and places of worship in Israel, Jerusalem, and the West Bank continued. Israeli President Reuven Rivlin spoke out against extremist violence and "price tag" attacks (property crimes and violent acts by extremist Jewish individuals and groups in retaliation for activity they deemed to be anti-settlement) on multiple occasions, as did Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other elected officials.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The Israel Security Agency (ISA) reported 22 rocket attacks from Gaza in 2015.On July 3, ISIL-SP claimed responsibility for launching two rockets towards Israeli communities in the northern Negev. There were no reported injuries or property damage from the attack.

Notable terrorist attacks from the northern border included:

- On January 28, in two incidents, Hizballah launched anti-tank missiles at an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) patrol on the Israel-Lebanon border, killing two soldiers and wounding seven.
- On April 26, Israel foiled an attempt by four terrorists from the Syrian Golan heights to plant IEDs along the Israeli-Syrian border. The four were members of a proxy terrorist cell of Hizballah, headed by Samir Kuntar.
- On December 20, the same day that Hizballah terrorist Samir Kuntar's death was announced, three rockets were fired at northern Israel from Lebanese territory near the Palestinian refugee camp of Rashidiya. The rockets landed in unpopulated areas, causing no injuries.

Lone offender attacks included:

- On January 21, a Palestinian national who entered Israel illegally boarded a municipal bus in Tel Aviv and began stabbing other passengers with a sharp object, injuring 12, some seriously, before police apprehended him. Hamas praised this attack as a "bold and heroic act."
- On April 20, in the Tel Aviv suburb Herzliya, an Arab Israeli male was stabbed by a man who shouted "Death to Arabs" in a Russian accent before fleeing. Police treated this incident as a terrorist attack.
- In July, an Israeli ultra-Orthodox violent extremist stabbed to death one Israeli and injured six others during the Jerusalem LGBT Pride March. Israeli security forces apprehended the attacker.
- On October 8 an off-duty uniformed IDF soldier and others were stabbed near the Israel Defense Headquarters in Tel Aviv. One victim was seriously wounded. The perpetrator was killed trying to flee the scene.
- On October 13 in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ra'anana, there were two separate stabbing attacks at public bus stops, leaving five wounded. Both perpetrators were apprehended.
- On October 18, an attack at the Be'er Sheva bus terminal resulted in one dead and 10 wounded. Police killed the perpetrator. This was followed by mob violence against an innocent Eritrean bystander who had been shot by security forces in the melee and mistakenly was thought by the mob to be a second attacker; he later succumbed to his wounds.
- On October 22, there was a stabbing and shooting incident in Beit Shemesh. This was followed by calls for a "Day of Rage" for the following day.
- On November 2, there were stabbing attacks in the Tel Aviv suburb of Rishon LeZion and in Netanya.
- On November 19, a stabbing attack in a synagogue in the Panorama Building in Tel Kabir (south of Tel Aviv and east of Jaffa) resulted in one dead and three injured.
- On December 19 in Ra'anana, a Palestinian man stabbed three individuals and severely injured one of them. He subsequently tried to enter a synagogue, but was caught by the police.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Israel has a robust legal framework to combat terrorism and promote international legal assistance in the investigation and prosecution of terrorists.

Israel regularly adopts the UNSC designations of the AQ-ISIL list in its list of terrorist entities and other sanction lists according to Israel's Prohibition of Terror Financing Law (2005), which allows the Israeli Security Cabinet to declare a foreign association to be a foreign terrorist organization on the basis of the relevant determination by a foreign country or by the UNSC.

On the law enforcement front, the ISA and Israel National Police (INP) continued to cooperate with U.S. law enforcement agencies on cases involving U.S. citizens killed in terrorist attacks, as well as other counterterrorism initiatives of mutual interest.

In recent years the ISA exposed and arrested several cells of Israeli nationals who vowed allegiance to ISIL or AQ and who were planning to execute a terrorist attack inside Israel. In June, several men, some of whom worked as high school teachers, were arrested in the Bedouin village of al-Hurra for recruiting support for ISIL and planning to travel to Syria and Iraq. In August, a cell of the organization was exposed in Yafi'a. Its members were planning to acquire weapons and attack Israeli soldiers or policemen. In November, two Israelis from the Nazareth area were arrested and accused of supporting the organization and planning an attack inside Israel.

Counterterrorism raids also targeted, among others, the alleged local Hamas commander, who worked to renew the organization's activity in the Qalqilya region and in surrounding villages. The activities included "preparing the ground for terrorist activities," the ISA said. Security forces seized more than NIS 35,000 (US $8,950) during the operation.

The Israeli Ministry of Interior maintains a voluntary biometric passport control system at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport, which is available for Israeli passport holders over the age of 18. The system facilitates both entry into and exit from Israel via an automatic kiosk for Israeli citizens who successfully pass a background check and provide a scan of the back of their hand.

Israel maintains a border fence along the length of its border with the Sinai Peninsula to stem the flow of illegal immigrants into Israel, augmented by cameras and sensors to similarly reduce the threat of terrorism.

Israel does not collect advance Passenger Name Records on commercial flights. However, an Israeli interagency team appointed by the Israeli government in 2014 submitted a report in November 2015about the need and methods of requiring and collecting advance passenger information and Passenger Name Record data from airlines operating in its territory, to achieve better safety measures, and as part of Israel's implementation of UNSCR 2178.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Israel is a member of the Council of Europe's Select Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Israeli financial intelligence unit, the Israeli Money Laundering and Terror Finance Prohibition Authority (IMPA), is a member of the Egmont Group. In June 2014, the FATF decided to expand its membership and identified Israel as a candidate for FATF observer status, and in November 2015, a high-level delegation from the FATF visited Israel to review the state for possible observer status. Senior officials in the Israeli government (the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance, the State's Attorney, and the

Governor of the Bank of Israel) reiterated Israel's commitment to becoming a member of the organization, as well as its efforts to advance standards regarding combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism to bring the country in line with international standards.

Israel's counterterrorism finance regime continued to be enhanced through enforcement operations and the inclusion of new groups under national terrorism finance laws. The well-regulated Israeli banking industry worked to address suspected terrorist activity. Israeli experts and officials continued to raise concerns about the issue of state-sponsored funding of Hamas. Hamas is reportedly funding terrorists in the West Bank preparing to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israel, Israelis, or Israeli interests. For example, 24 Hamas-funded operatives were arrested throughout the West Bank on November 19 in a joint ISA, IDF, and INP operation.

Financing of Hamas through charitable organizations also remained a concern for Israeli authorities, as did the funding of Hizballah through charities and criminal organizations.

Israel regularly updates the list of foreign terrorist organizations and individuals involved in terrorism, in order to align with the UN sanctions lists. The UN sanctions lists are registered in the formal government registry. Every designation is published in three languages (Hebrew, Arabic, English), and run in three different newspapers, as required by law. In addition, designations are published on the website of the IMPA and distributed by email to the IMPA's mailing list, which includes banks, lawyers, and finance professionals.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

International and Regional Cooperation: Israel continued its counterterrorism cooperation with a range of regional and international institutions, including the UN, the OAS, and the OSCE. From November 9-11, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted an international conference on "Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism: The Challenge of Terrorists Acting Alone or in Small Cells" with delegates from 42 countries and 10 international organizations. The conference was hosted in partnership with the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the OSCE, and in consultation with the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate. The conference examined critical issues and challenges faced by many governments in their efforts to counter violent extremism, such as prevention, detection, and intervention; the use of the internet for incitement and radicalization; legal frameworks in the fight against terrorism; and rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders.

Israel continued to cooperate with numerous countries regarding efforts to thwart terrorist attacks and plots against Israelis or Israeli interests abroad. In July, Israel and the United States held an interagency counterterrorism dialogue to discuss the broad range of threats in the region and to determine areas of collaboration to address these challenges. Additionally, during 2015, Israel conducted talks on counterterrorism issues with several countries and organizations including Bulgaria,China, France, Germany, Greece,India, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Thailand, the UK, the EU, and NATO.

<u>The West Bank and Gaza, and Jerusalem</u>

The Palestinian Authority (PA) continued its counterterrorism efforts in the West Bank where Hamas, Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) remained present. The PA Security Forces (PASF) constrained those organizations' ability to conduct attacks, including the November and December arrests of PIJ members in the West Bank who were planning to carry out attacks against Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and other Israeli targets. The PA exercised varying degrees of authority over the West Bank due to the IDF's continuing presence in certain areas, per Oslo-era agreements. The IDF and ISA arrested members of suspected terrorist organizations operating in the West Bank, including the March arrest of Hamas members who were planning to carry out attacks against Israeli targets during the Jewish holiday of Purim. The PASF, IDF, and ISA thwarted scores of lone offender attacks, particularly during the period of heightened violence that began October 1.

Violent extremist Palestinians continued to conduct acts of violence in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Since early October and through December, the West Bank and Jerusalem witnessed the highest number of Palestinian attacks against Israelis since the Second Intifada, which resulted in the deaths of 16 Israelis, including two dual U.S.-Israeli citizens, and one U.S. citizen. Most attacks were lone offender stabbing attacks, while others were shooting and vehicular attacks. The majority of the perpetrators did not have any organizational affiliation.

Violent extremist Israelis, including settlers, continued to conduct acts of violence as well as "price tag" attacks (property crimes and violent acts by extremist Jewish individuals and groups in retaliation for activity they deemed to be anti-settlement) in the West Bank and Jerusalem. In the deadliest attack against Palestinians since the Second Intifada, in July, it is suspected that two settlers set fire to a home in the West Bank and killed two adults and one infant, and critically injured a five-year-old. In apparent "price tag" attacks in February, Israeli extremists wrote Hebrew graffiti "redemption of Zion" and set fire to a Greek orthodox seminary in Jerusalem, and in a separate incident, wrote Hebrew graffiti "we want the redemption of Zion" and set fire to a mosque in the West Bank. In October, a Jewish violent extremist attacked and injured the head of an Israeli human rights organization. The UN Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs reported 224 attacks in 2015 by violent extremist Israeli settlers that resulted in Palestinian injuries or property damage, compared to 324 in 2014.

Hamas continued to maintain control of security forces in Gaza. Several Gaza-based terrorist groups launched attacks against Israel from Gaza. The Government of Egypt's latest efforts to destroy smuggling tunnels between Egypt and Gaza, including by pumping large volumes of sea water into that buffer zone to force the collapse of tunnels, further hampered the ability of Hamas and other armed groups to smuggle weapons, cash, and other contraband into Gaza.

Gaza remained a base of operations for several Salafist splinter groups, such as Jaysh al-Islam, and clan-based terrorist groups that engaged in or facilitated terrorist attacks. Membership in these groups reportedly increased and new groups emerged after the 2014 Israel-Hamas conflict, as disillusioned members of Hamas and other terrorist groups reportedly defected to more extremist elements. A new Salafist group called the Omar Hadid Brigades took responsibility for most of the rockets fired toward Israel since June 2015. Hamas confronted the growing Salafist threat in Gaza by arresting and detaining a number of Salafists this year, but has since released the majority of the detainees. Despite claims of responsibility from individuals

purporting affiliation with the ISIL, there was no definitive link confirming membership on a large scale.

2015 Terrorist Incidents:

- In June, a Palestinian assailant shot and killed one Israeli civilian and injured another while they were driving near the West Bank settlement of Dolev. Israeli security forces apprehended the attacker and four suspected accomplices.
- In July, suspected settlers attacked and destroyed by fire two homes in the Palestinian village of Douma in the West Bank, killing an 18-month-old infant, the two parents, and critically injuring a five-year-old. Israeli authorities found Hebrew graffiti with the words "Revenge" and "Long Live King Messiah" painted on the homes. Israeli authorities indicted two Jewish Israelis for the attack on January 3, 2016.
- In October, Palestinian members of a Hamas cell shot and killed two Israeli civilians, one of whom was an American citizen, while they were driving near the West Bank settlement of Itamar. Israeli security forces arrested the individuals responsible.
- In October, two Palestinian assailants stabbed and shot Israelis aboard a bus in Jerusalem, killing two Israelis, mortally wounding an Israeli-American who died two weeks later, and injuring at least 15. Israeli security forces shot and killed one attacker and arrested the other.
- In November, a Palestinian assailant shot and killed two Israelis and injured at least five others, including minors, while they were driving in the West Bank.

The United States continued to assist the PA's counterterrorism efforts through programs that strengthened the capacity of the PASF, primarily through training, equipping, and the provision of infrastructure to PASF personnel in the West Bank. The United States is also assisting the PASF to institutionalize the security gains of the previous decade by helping it to become self-sustaining. U.S.-funded training of PASF primarily took place at the Jordan International Police Training Center, the Academy for Civil Protection, the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center, and the PA's Central Training Institute in Jericho. Concurrently, the United States continued to assist the larger PA criminal justice system to conduct more thorough investigations and prosecutions of terrorist-related activity, among other criminal acts, and to ensure safe incarceration of those held for trial or after conviction of such crimes.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas reiterated his commitment to nonviolence and recognition of the State of Israel. He also continued to express his commitment to pursue an independent Palestinian state through peaceful means. Abbas continued to support a security program involving disarmament of fugitive terrorists, arresting members of terrorist organizations, and gradually dismantling armed groups in the West Bank. The PASF arrested members of Hamas, PIJ, and PFLP when it suspected them of involvement in terrorist or other criminal acts. For example, the PASF arrested five members of a Hamas cell in Hebron in May that was planning terrorist attacks in Israel, according to media. In mid-October, the PASF arrested 19 Hamas members and other individuals suspected of planning stabbing attacks.

Israeli authorities, among others, continued to note improvements in the capacity and performance of PASF as a leading contributor to the improved security environment in the West Bank. Most notable was the relative lack of organized or large-scale disturbances in the West Bank since the heightened period of violence began in early October.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The PA continued to lack legislation specifically tailored to counterterrorism, although existing Palestinian laws criminalize actions that constitute terrorist acts.

The PA continued to arrest terrorists in the West Bank, and the PASF and public prosecutors received training to enable better investigations of terrorism-related crimes. Despite on-again, off-again factional reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah, PASF personnel continued to conduct operations against and detain Hamas elements, which Hamas officials protested. The PA continued to develop its civilian justice institutions (e.g. judiciary, police, prosecutors) to improve both investigative and prosecutorial functions. The United States and other donors provided material and developmental assistance to enable the PA to reduce case backlogs, improve warrant executions, and upgrade forensic services.

The key PA institution by mandate and law that works to prevent internal terrorist events and investigate security-related criminal conduct is the Preventive Security Organization (PSO). In practice, the General Intelligence Organization and the Military Intelligence Organization also play a critical role in this effort. The PSO conducts investigations in coordination with public prosecutors, but this cooperation could improve, especially in terms of the PSO's ability to conduct criminal investigations and gather admissible evidence. During 2015, the United States continued assistance to the PSO, as well as the Security Justice Commission, to help the PA move the prosecution of all civilian cases, including those involving terrorism and security-related offenses, to the exclusive jurisdiction of the civilian courts, and enhance cooperation between security service investigators and civilian prosecutors. The PA Security Forces have a mixed although improving record of accountability and respect for human rights.

Per the Oslo-era Accords, Israel controls border security in the West Bank.

The primary limitation on PA counterterrorism efforts in Gaza remained Hamas' control of the area and the resulting inability of PASF to operate there. Limitations on PA counterterrorism efforts in the West Bank included restrictions on the movement and activities of PASF in and through areas of the West Bank for which the Israeli government retained responsibility for security under the terms of Oslo-era agreements.

While the PA continued to lack modern forensic capability, the multi-year assistance efforts that the Canadian International Development Agency started in late 2012 through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime continued. The forensic science laboratory is fully equipped and training in firearm and tool mark evidence, document examination, and drug analysis was ongoing. The PA already has a basic ability to examine and compare unknown prints to known prints.

PA justice and security leaders continued to participate in regional conferences and meetings to counter terrorism. PASF personnel attended a variety of international counterterrorism training courses at training facilities in Jordan, Europe, and the United States.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: In 2015, the PA became a full member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body,and later the same year became a member of the MENAFATF's mutual evaluation working group.Effective December 30, 2015, President Abbas issued Anti-Money Laundering

and Terrorism Financing Decree #20. Among the many improvements it made over the inadequate 2007 AML law (the Anti-Money Laundering Decree Law #9) was to make terrorism financing a criminal offense and to define terrorists, terrorist acts, terrorist organizations, foreign terrorist fighters, and terrorism financing. It also makes terrorism and terrorist acts predicate money laundering offenses, although the decree does not fully meet international standards as it does not criminalize all forms of material support or the financing of an individual terrorist in the absence of a link to a specific terrorist act. The legislature has not convened since 2007 and prospects are dim that one will be seated in the foreseeable future. Consequently, the PA remained unable to make legislative improvements (without decree) that were required to bring it up to international standards.

The Palestinian Financial Follow-Up Unit (FFU) is a fully functional financial intelligence unit with 12 employees and a computer system linking it with all 16 banks licensed to operate in the West Bank. Seven banks are local and nine are foreign, operating through a network of 274 branches in the West Bank and Gaza. There are also 306 money changers. The banks file both suspicious transaction reports (STRs) and currency transaction reports electronically through this system. In 2015, banks filed 108 STRs, compared to 54 in 2014. Although the FFU has adequate staffing, authority, and equipment, it has been unable to realize its full operational effectiveness due, in part, to restrictions in the law. The 2007 law restricted information sharing between the FFU and any law enforcement agency, with the exception of the Attorney General's Office (AGO). While the FFU may pass information, including analysis, to any requesting competent authority according to the 2015 Decree, the AGO is still the recipient for case dissemination. Moreover, the PA has no effective control outside of Area A in the West Bank. The absence of PA law enforcement and regulatory power in Areas B and C increased vulnerability.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The PA has taken significant steps to ensure that official institutions in the West Bank that fall under its control do not create or disseminate content that incites violence. While some PA leaders have made provocative and inflammatory comments, the PA has made progress in reducing official rhetoric that could be considered incitement to violence. There has been a noteworthy decline in the worst forms of PA official or media incitement to violence for most of President Abbas' tenure (2005 to date), as compared with the previous period under President Arafat, leading up to and through the Second Intifada (1999-2004). Explicit calls for violence against Israelis, direct exhortations against Jews, and categorical denials by the PA of the possibility of peace with Israel are rare and are generally not tolerated by the leadership. For example, in July 2015, President Abbas instructed Foreign Minister Riad Malki to recall Palestinian Ambassador to Chile, Imad Jamil Jadaa, for making anti-Semitic comments at a conference, quoting from the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." According to the PA's Palestinian Broadcasting Company's code of conduct, no programming is allowed that encourages "violence against any person or institution on the basis of race, religion, political beliefs, or sex." In practice, this code of conduct is not always observed, with some instances of incitement taking place via official media.

The PA maintains control over the content of Friday sermons delivered in more than 1800 West Bank mosques to ensure that they do not endorse incitement to violence. Weekly, the PA Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs distributes approved themes and prohibits incitement to violence. The PA's ability to enforce these guidelines varies depending upon its location, and it has limited authority to control the context of sermons in Israeli-controlled Area C. While the PA also monitored official social media websites to ensure that no inciting materials were present, there have been instances where inciting materials have appeared, including the posting of political cartoons glorifying stabbing attacks on one of the official Fatah Facebook pages in October. As part of a policy codified in 2003, the PA provided significant financial packages to Palestinian security prisoners released from Israeli prisons in 2014 in an effort to reintegrate them into society and prevent recruitment by hostile political factions.

JORDAN

Overview: Jordan remained a key U.S. ally in countering terrorism and violent extremist ideology in 2015. Jordan's location in a tumultuous region made it vulnerable to a variety of threats, yet also facilitated its regional leadership in confronting them. Jordan continued to take part in all key aspects of the Global Coalition to CounterIslamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF) participated in coalition military operations, and the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF) continued to bolster defenses against terrorist incursions in the northern and eastern border regions. Jordan continued to host U.S. and other coalition partners' military unitsfor Counter ISIL operations and joint counterterrorism exercises and training. Jordan worked to prevent flows of foreign terrorist fighters headed to Syria and Iraq and restricted terrorism financing.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: In February, ISIL released a video of the group burning alive a Jordanian pilot captured in Syria. In November, a Jordanian police officer killed two U.S. citizen trainers and wounded two others in a shooting at the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC) outside Amman. He also killed a South African trainer and two Jordanian interpreters. All five personnel killed were working on U.S.-supported programs at the facility. The shooter, who was killed in the incident, had recently submitted his resignation from the police. An investigation into the attack by the Government of Jordan was ongoing at the end of 2015.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The State Security Court (SSC) is the primary legal apparatus for trying and convicting alleged terrorists. The SSC oversees the prosecution of civilians charged with crimes effecting national security. The Counterterrorism Law, as amended in 2014, limits the court's jurisdiction to five crimes: treason, espionage, terrorism, drug-related offenses, and currency forgery.

The Government of Jordan used the SSC to prosecute crimes associated with terrorist activity. However, the Counterterrorism Law has a broad definition of terrorism, including: harming relations with a foreign state, exposing Jordan to hostile acts, using the internet to facilitate terrorist acts or promote terrorist ideas, forming a group with the intention of committing terrorist acts, and attacks on the life or liberty of members of the royal family. The penal code also provides a broad definition of terrorism to include acts intended to "contravene the public order."

Jordan has advanced capabilities to detect, deter, and prevent terrorism within its territory. The General Intelligence Directorate (GID) has the authority to investigate terrorism. The Public Security Directorate (PSD) has authority over non-terrorism related crimes, but frequently supports GID counterterrorism activities through PSD Special Branch, which includes a criminal intelligence function. The GID also coordinates with the JAF and its intelligence branch, particularly on cases involving border security, which the JAF oversees. Prosecutors typically are not consulted until the later stages of investigations, when terrorism cases are referred to the SSC. Jordan's security and intelligence services do not coordinate with one another in all situations, including in terrorism incident response.

Jordan remained committed to securing its borders and denying safe haven to terrorists, and continued to develop its border security infrastructure, largely through the Jordan Border Security Program (JBSP), which began in 2009. JBSP consists of a sophisticated package of sensors to improve situational awareness along the border and prevent infiltrations into, and unauthorized departures, from Jordan. Phases II and III were completed in 2015, covering most of the Syrian border and the border with Iraq. Jordan monitored airports and border crossings for potential foreign terrorist fighters. Jordan maintained a terrorist watchlist, used biographic and biometric screening, and actively engaged in passenger information sharing.

During 2015, Jordanian authorities arrested and began prosecuting men accused of seeking to join al-Nusrah Front and ISIL; recruiting for or otherwise supporting ISIL, including on the internet; and attempting to travel to or return from Syria to fight with violent extremist groups.

- In July, authorities arrested an Iraqi man found in Jordan with 45kg of explosives. Jordanian officials believed him to be a member of Iranian-supported Bayt al-Maqdis, and charged him with plotting to attack a JAF installation.
- In December, the SSC sentenced three unnamed defendants to 10 years in prison with hard labor for planning to attack a GID building in Ar Rusayfah with explosives, and to kill or incapacitate RJAF pilots. Jordanian officials believed the three were ISIL supporters.
- Security officials regularly arrested scores of ISIL supporters, many for posting pro-ISIL videos or statements on social media sites. The government charged them before the SSC for using the internet to propagate terrorist ideology.
- Security forces regularly arrested departing or returning Jordanian foreign terrorist fighters, charging them with joining armed groups, including al-Nusrah Front and ISIL.

The Government of Jordan's investigation into the November attacks targeting U.S. citizens at JIPTC was ongoing at year's end. Aside from the shooter who died in the attack, no other suspects have been named or arrested in connection with this incident.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Jordan is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body.Jordan's financial intelligence unit, the Anti-Money Laundering Unit (AMLU), is a member of the Egmont Group. Jordan has continued to develop its capacity to address money laundering and terrorism financing throughout 2015, which included amending the 2007 Anti-Money Laundering and Counterterrorism Financing Law, bringing Jordan more in line with international standards. However, the Anti-Money Laundering Law does not oblige non-profit organizations to file suspicious transaction reports (STRs). Although the number of STRs increased by 48

percent in 2015 compared with 2014, officials prosecuted no money laundering cases in 2015. Officials attributed the rise in STR filings to extra caution taken by the financial sector. For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Jordan has sought to confront and weaken the violent ideology that underpins ISIL and other violent extremist organizations. The Prime Minister's interagency anti-extremist strategy, announced in fall 2014, remained under-resourced and unstaffed, however, and Jordan's leaders are reticent to acknowledge domestic radicalization, including self-radicalization. Jordan continued efforts to improve counter-radicalization in schools and mosques, but these efforts were rarely well-coordinated across government agencies.

King Abdullah II continued to promote his "Amman Declaration" of 2004, calling for tolerance and peace within the Islamic community, and rejecting "wanton aggression and terrorism." The Government of Jordan has also created two counter-extremist messaging entities and has become more involved in Coalition messaging efforts. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs conducted outreach to imams and *waedat* (female preachers) across the country, encouraging them to refute radical extremist ideology in their sermons. Civil society organizations conducted activities at schools, universities, youth organizations, community centers, and religious centers to promote moderation and encourage the rejection of violence and community engagement in anti-radicalization efforts.

Jordanian prisons have a religiously-based de-radicalization program that seeks to re-engage violent extremist inmates into the non-violent mainstream of their faith.

International and Regional Cooperation: Jordan is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the GCTF-inspired Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law; and is a member of the Arab League, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. In April, Jordan held the presidency of the UN Security Council (UNSC), and led an open debate on the role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace. In December, the UNSC adopted a Jordanian-sponsored resolution on youth, peace, and security, which focuses on the role of young men and women in peacebuilding and countering violent extremism.

Jordan continued to assist Palestinian Authority law enforcement institutions through training at JIPTC. In 2015, Palestinian law enforcement officers received both advanced-level and refresher courses, in addition to basic-level courses.

KUWAIT

Overview: During 2015, the Government of Kuwait continued to build and augment its capacity for counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE). In June, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) conducted its first successful attack in Kuwait by bombing the Imam Sadeq Mosque (one of the country's most prominent Shia mosques), killing 27 worshippers and injuring 227 others. Fifteen suspects of different nationalities received death and jail sentences in connection with the bombing. ISIL also sought to inspire sympathizers to support, finance, or

engage in conflicts outside of Kuwait. In response, the Government of Kuwait increased its emphasis on international counterterrorism cooperation and on internal CVE efforts, maintaining a robust counterterrorism relationship with the United States. Kuwait took several measures to improve the oversight and regulation of charitable fundraising, including monitoring transfers to international beneficiaries and regulating online donations. Kuwait joined the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, reflecting its contributions to several lines of effort of the counter-ISIL campaign.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Despite efforts to detect and disrupt terrorist activities, June saw the most violent terrorist attack in recent memory when a Saudi ISIL suicide bomber attacked the Imam Sadeq Mosque during Friday prayers in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, killing 27 individuals (18 Kuwaitis, three Iranians, two Indians, one Saudi, one Pakistani and one stateless Arab [*bidoon*]), and wounding 227. In August, Kuwait authorities disrupted a terrorist cell composed of 26 Kuwaitis (all Shia), who had reportedly hidden a large amount of weapons, ammunition, and explosives at a farm near the al-Abdali border crossing with Iraq. The public prosecutor issued a media gag order on the ongoing investigation and trial following media speculation about links to Hizballah and Iran.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Kuwaiti government lacked a clear legal framework for prosecuting terrorism-related crimes, often having to resort to other legal statutes to try suspected terrorists, which hampered enforcement efforts. In February, the parliament passed a law that ordered citizens to surrender all unlicensed weapons and explosives by June 22, penalizing would-be violators with fines and jail sentences. In April, it passed a law that prescribed compulsory military service for all Kuwaiti males reaching 18 years of age. In June, it passed a law that regulated installment and operation of security cameras and other surveillance devices in public areas. In July, it passed a law mandating collection of DNA samples from all residents, in order to facilitate comparison to samples collected from terrorist attack scenes.

Following the June bombing of the Imam Sadeq Mosque, the parliament passed a law that prescribed stiff penalties for counterterrorism-related cybercrimes.

In September, a criminal court sentenced to death eight of the 29 suspects accused of plotting the Imam Sadeq Mosque attack. It sentenced seven others to jail sentences of varying length and acquitted the remaining suspects. Those indicted included Kuwaiti, Pakistani, and Saudi nationals, in addition to several *bidoon*. This case remained in the appeals process at the end of 2015. In November, local media announced the conviction of five residents of Kuwait on terrorism finance charges. Later that month, an additional six individuals were arrested on charges of providing financial and material support to ISIL. The court of appeals in December upheld the conviction and sentencing of two Kuwaiti citizens for joining and financially supporting ISIL.

Law enforcement units were able to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents. Their effectiveness could be made greater by better interagency and inter-ministry information sharing. Kuwaiti command and control structures were often stove-piped. Kuwait's primary counterterrorism organizations, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Kuwait National Guard (KNG), were well-resourced, receptive to suggestions, and actively engaged in training opportunities. Under the Joint Combined Educational Training program, the Embassy's Office

of Military Cooperation engaged with local counterterrorism units for both training and bilateral exercises in an effort to match capabilities with resources. Because the MOI also includes the country's criminal investigative apparatus and border protection mission, it has broad latitude with respect to investigations and border security. The MOI is also generally considered the single point of contact for incident response, but some terrorist-related matters do fall under the prerogative of the Kuwait State Security Service, a semi-autonomous arm of the MOI.

The Government of Kuwait continued its programs to improve physical border security through the employment of biometric systems, aerial reconnaissance, and border sensors. The means by which ISIL carried out the Imam Sadeq Mosque attack – with the Saudi suicide bomber and his explosive device entering through the international airport and a land border crossing, respectively – highlighted deficiencies in aviation security and border control.

In March, the Government of Kuwait imposed travel bans on two foreign national residents previously designated by the United States for support of terrorism. The Kuwaiti government subsequently froze the individuals' assets in accordance with UNSCR 1373, but had not taken action in 2015 against a third individual (a Kuwaiti national), who was listed on the UN sanctions lists as a financier of al-Nusrah Front.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Kuwait is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. In recognition of the Kuwaiti government's efforts to address previously-identified counterterrorism finance deficiencies, MENAFATF in February removed Kuwait from the International Cooperation Review Group process, recognizing the jurisdiction as one that had accomplished all of the targets on its Action Plan; it was also noted for having the means and will to continue to sustain the reforms. A ministerial-level counterterrorism committee – consisting of 16 governmental bodies and chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – met regularly to execute Kuwait's AML/CFT obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) and domestic regulations.However, entities and individuals within Kuwait continue to remain a funding source for terrorist and extremist groups.

In June, the parliament passed a cybercrime law that criminalized online fundraising for terrorist purposes. The law closed a counterterrorism finance loophole that allowed online extremist fundraising and facilitation.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL) took several steps to regulate and monitor charitable fund-raising, and – in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – assure the legitimacy of foreign beneficiaries. In 2015, MOSAL detected 80 violations of illegal fundraising, leading to the dissolution of two licensed and a number of unlicensed charities.

New regulations required individuals and organizations to register and apply for permits. MOSAL curtailed fundraising via social media, with staff assigned to search for illegal online solicitations. In cooperation with the MOI, MOSAL took action against illegal fundraising by individuals, by unregistered groups, and in mosques during Ramadan.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Kuwait has a number of local counter-messaging campaigns – often focused on religion – that it supports, reportedly on radio, television, and billboards. Media reported that the Minister of Interior issued a November Executive Order transferring the Center for Counseling and Rehabilitation from its current location within Kuwait City's Central Prison to a new facility with an expanded faculty and a broadened mandate, in order to emulate the scope of the Muhammad bin Naif's Center for Counselling and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia.

International and Regional Cooperation: Kuwait cooperated regionally and internationally on counterterrorism issues, including in the Global Counterterrorism Forum. Kuwait is a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Kuwaiti officials issued statements encouraging enhanced cooperation among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab League states on counterterrorism issues, and the Kuwaiti government hosted international meetings on subjects ranging from countering extremist ideology to combating terrorism financing. Kuwait participated in the August U.S.-GCC Counterterrorism and Border Security Working Group meeting in Riyadh.

In addition to bilateral cooperation with the United States, Kuwaiti security officials also worked with other international counterparts to conduct missions and exchange information.

Kuwait was the sole GCC member state that did not ratify the Gulf Security Pact, which would enhance regional counterterrorism cooperation potential.

LEBANON

Overview: Lebanon grappled with significant terrorist threats in 2015, both internally and on its borders as a result of worsening spillover from Syria. Hizballah, which fully mobilized in support of the Asad regime, and to a lesser extent individual Lebanese who supported various opposition forces, made Lebanon a magnet for violent retribution. After nearly a year of relative internal calm, the November 12 Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) suicide bombings in Beirut's southern suburbs marked the capital's deadliest terrorist attack in more than a decade and were reminiscent of the wave of Sunni terrorist attacks against Shia population centers and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) targets in 2013-2014. Lebanon also faced a terrorist threat from hundreds of ISIL and al-Nusrah Front terrorists who operated along the porous, undemarcated eastern border with Syria and carried out guerrilla-like attacks against the LAF on a regular basis. The continued presence of these Syria-origin Sunni extremists in Lebanese territory underscored both the centrality of border security to Lebanon's stability and the importance of enabling the Lebanese government to exercise its full sovereignty, as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1701.

Despite the paralysis of the political decision-making apparatus, various institutions of the Lebanese state, including the LAF, Internal Security Forces (ISF), and Central Bank, continued to cooperate with international partners in combating terrorism and have scored some notable successes in the disruption of terrorist networks and in combating terrorist forces. The United States remained Lebanon's closest counterterrorism partner, and the bilateral relationship is robust and growing. U.S. assistance focused on strengthening Lebanon's security institutions so

they can better exert sovereign authority and maintain border security in accordance with UNSCR 1701, and counter terrorist threats.

Ongoing internal political deadlock prevented the election of a new Lebanese president and weakened state function. In the absence of a president, the 24-member cabinet, which includes members of Hizballah, is paralyzed in political deadlock and has not met regularly since mid-2015. Lebanon's enormous refugee crisis has also complicated efforts to maintain stability. A country of approximately four million, Lebanon hosted nearly 1.1 million registered refugees from Syria as of the end of 2015. Lebanese authorities were challenged not only by the significant burden the refugees placed on its financial and natural resources, infrastructure, and host communities, but also by fears of potential militant recruiting among the refugee population. ISIL and Nusrah Front's use of informal refugee settlements near the northeastern town of Aarsal in the Beqaa Valley further hardened Lebanese attitudes towards Syrian refugees.

Hizballah, with considerable support from Iran, remained the most capable terrorist group in Lebanon, enjoying popular support among many Lebanese Shia and allied Christians. Hizballah continued to operate as an armed militia beyond the control of the state and as a powerful political actor that can hobble or topple the government. Hizballah justified its stockpile of arms for its "resistance" to any potential conflict with Israel. The government did not take significant action to disarm Hizballah or eliminate its safe havens in Lebanese territory. Despite Lebanon's official dissociation policy regarding the Syrian conflict, Hizballah accelerated its military role in support of the Syrian regime in 2015 and has proved to be a necessary force in propping up the regime. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has had a presence in Lebanon since the early 1980s and coordinated closely with Hizballah on military operations and training. Hizballah engaged in terrorist activity against Israel on January 28 when it attacked an Israeli military convoy near the Shebaa Farms area, killing two Israeli soldiers and wounding several others. The attack was the most severe eruption of violence between Israel and Hizballah in the area since 2006.

Other designated terrorist groups, including Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command, Asbat al-Ansar, Fatah al-Islam, Fatah al-Intifada, Jund al-Sham, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, and several other splinter groups, continued to operate within Lebanon's borders, although primarily out of Lebanon's 12 Palestinian refugee camps. ISIL and Nusrah Front also had a limited, but growing presence in the camps. The LAF did not maintain a presence in the camps, but it conducted limited operations and patrols near the camps and across Lebanon to counter terrorist threats.

Lebanon is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and the Foreign Minister has attended several counter-ISIL Coalition ministerial meetings. The Lebanese security forces seek to limit the ISIL threat at home, including the flow of foreign terrorist fighters both to and from Syria, by working to secure the porous, ungoverned border with Syria and conducting counterterrorism operations within Lebanon. The LAF and other security services also were actively engaged in monitoring potential ISIL elements in Lebanon, disrupting their activities and networks, and arresting those suspected of plotting terrorist attacks. The government expanded its efforts to counter ISIL messaging, but these efforts were not coordinated among different government agencies. In accordance with UNSCR 2178, the Lebanese government increased security measures at airports and border crossings to prevent the flow of ISIL and

Nusrah Front fighters to Syria and Iraq. However, the Lebanese government has not taken significant action to prevent Hizballah from sending its fighters to Syria and Iraq.

2015 Terrorist Incidents:

- On January 10, two suicide bombers attacked a café in the Tripoli neighborhood of Jabal Mohsen, killing nine people and wounding more than 30. Al-Nusrah Front claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On January 28, Hizballah fired two laser-guided, anti-tank missiles from Lebanese territory at an Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) convoy near the Shebaa Farms area south of the Blue Line, killing two IDF soldiers and wounding several others.
- On November 5, at least five people were killed and several others wounded after a suicide bomber detonated his suicide vest at a religious center in Aarsal. Lebanese authorities believed that ISIL carried out the attack, which targeted a group of Syrian Sunni clerics with close ties to the Nusrah Front.
- On November 12, two suicide bombers attacked a crowded street in Burj al-Barajneh, a neighborhood closely associated with Hizballah in the southern suburbs of Beirut, killing at least 45 civilians and wounding nearly 250 more. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack, which was the deadliest in Beirut in more than a decade.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Lebanon does not have a comprehensive counterterrorism law, but several articles of Lebanon's criminal code (1943) are used to prosecute acts of terrorism. Implementation of these articles has at times been hindered by Lebanon's complex confessional political system, however, and also by Hizballah restricting access to attack sites that were within areas under its control. The cabinet did not consider legislative initiatives that could potentially threaten Hizballah's operations, as the presence of Hizballah and its political allies in the government make the requisite consensus on such actions impossible. State security agencies remained functional in combating non-Hizballah terrorism, but would benefit from stronger political support.

The LAF, ISF, Directorate of General Security (DGS), and Directorate of State Security (DGSS) are the primary agencies responsible for combating terrorism. Despite notable counterterrorism successes in 2015, the law enforcement capacity of these agencies was overstretched due to the magnitude of the country's terrorism-related threats. Although cooperation among the services was inconsistent, all services have taken steps to improve information sharing and are receptive to additional training to expand capacity. Lebanon has been a participant in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program since 2006; this assistance has focused on border security as well as building law enforcement's investigative and leadership capabilities. The Department of State has provided assistance to improve the capabilities of the ISF through a multi-year program that includes construction of training facilities and establishment of a secure radio communications system, provision of vehicles, protective gear, and other types of equipment, and a wide range of training and mentoring activities. The Department of State also provided corrections training to bolster the ISF's limited capacity to manage its overcrowded prisons. The ISF has worked to prevent terrorist recruitment and the direction of terrorist activities by prison inmates who, in many cases, have access to cell phones and the internet.

The LAF has primary responsibility for securing Lebanon's borders, but worked collaboratively with other agencies to prevent the infiltration of terrorists and illicit goods. The services have increased security measures at airports, border crossings, and ports to prevent the flow of ISIL

and Nusrah Front fighters to Syria and Iraq, with a special emphasis on detecting counterfeit passports. The DGS, under the Interior Ministry, controls immigration and passport services, and it uses an electronic database to collect biographic data for travelers at all points of entry. Lebanon collects and disseminates Passenger Name Records (PNR) on commercial flights, but does not collect advance passenger information (API).

The Lebanese security services disrupted multiple terrorist networks and made several high-profile arrests in 2015. On August 15, the DGS arrested Sheikh Ahmed al-Assir, a radical Salafist cleric who was one of Lebanon's most wanted fugitives since June 2013, when Assir and his supporters killed 18 soldiers during clashes with the LAF near Sidon. Information obtained during Assir's interrogation led to arrests of more than a dozen other suspected terrorists. In mid-November, the Lebanese security services unraveled terrorist networks in Beirut and Tripoli connected with ISIL's November 12 suicide attacks in Burj al-Barajneh. One ISF raid yielded 150 kilograms of explosives and three suicide vests.

On May 13, the Lebanese Military Court sentenced former Lebanese Information Minister Michel Samaha to four and a half years in prison for "transporting explosives from Syria to Lebanon in an attempt to assassinate Lebanese political and religious leaders" in 2012. Procedural errors and public outcry over the relatively light sentence prompted a retrial, which began in July but did not produce a new verdict by the end of 2015.

The United States maintains close ties with the Lebanese security services and could expect significant investigative support in a terrorism case affecting U.S. citizens or interests. Lebanese authorities maintained that amnesty for Lebanese involved in acts of violence during the 1975-90 civil wars prevented terrorism prosecutions of concern to the United States.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Lebanon is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body; and its financial intelligence unit, the Special Investigation Commission (SIC), is a member of the Egmont Group. It also participates in the Counter-ISIL Finance Group co-chaired by the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Italy. Lebanese government officials and financial leaders have also met repeatedly with the U.S. government regarding the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015, and said that they would fully comply with the new regulations.

Lebanon's Central Bank, the Banque du Liban (BdL), issued Intermediate Circular No. 393 on June 30, amending Basic Circular No. 69, strengthening anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) controls on money remitters. On November 13, Parliament endorsed three laws intended to strengthen Lebanon's AML/CFT regime, which were published in the Official Gazette on November 24. These included:

- Law No.44 amending AML/CFT Law 318/2001 to further widen categories of reporting entities and increase the list of predicate crimes; it also allows confiscation of assets and sharing of confiscated assets with concerned countries;
- Law No. 42 requiring the declaration of cross-border transportation of cash; and
- Law No. 43 on the exchange of tax information, which would authorize the Ministry of Finance to join bilateral and multilateral agreements to exchange information related to tax evasion and tax fraud.

In 2015, the ISF received two requests for assistance with terrorism cases from INTERPOL; the ISF investigated the two cases and forwarded them to the Public Prosecutor. The ISF did not receive any allegations of suspicious financial transactions that led to terrorism finance cases in 2015. The SIC is an independent legal entity empowered to investigate suspicious financial transactions and to freeze assets, reporting that it had received three cases in 2015 regarding individuals with alleged terrorism ties and alleged terrorism financing transactions. The SIC froze the individuals' financial assets (amounts undisclosed) in Lebanon's banking sector and forwarded the cases to the public prosecutor for further investigation.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Several government institutions have programs that seek to counter violent extremism (CVE), but there was no overall national strategy in place. The Foreign Minister attended the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in September 2015 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, and MFA representatives have attended U.S.-hosted working level meetings on counter-ISIL messaging. The LAF is developing a comprehensive counter-messaging strategy that amplifies moderate voices and uses TV spots, social media, billboards, and SMS texts to counter extremist narratives. There were no programs to rehabilitate and/or reintegrate terrorists into mainstream society.

International and Regional Cooperation: The LAF partnered with several nations on a bilateral basis to receive training programs that focused on strengthening its counterterrorism capabilities. Lebanon is a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab League, and attended Global Counterterrorism Forum meetings on counter-ISIL efforts. Lebanon continued to voice its commitment to fulfilling other relevant UNSCRs, including 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006), and 1701 (2006). The Special Tribunal for Lebanon, an international body investigating the 2005 assassination of former PM Rafiq Hariri, received Lebanon's annual contribution of approximately US $37.5 million on September 21.

LIBYA

Overview: In 2015, the continued conflict between the then internationally-recognized government in Tobruk and the Tripoli-based faction allowed violent extremist groups to expand their foothold in Libya. Although all sides in the conflict claimed to reject terrorism, security forces and armed groups affiliated with both sides were more focused on their opponents in the internal conflict than on combatting violent extremist groups. Libya's porous borders, vast uncontrolled weapons stockpiles, and critically weak law enforcement institutions continued to make it a permissive environment for terrorist groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Ansar al-Sharia, and other groups. There were reports of infighting between ISIL and other Libyan violent extremist groups and conservative militias, including the expulsion of ISIL from the eastern city of Darnah by a coalition of competing extremist groups.

As the internal conflict between the rival factions continued in 2015, terrorist groups were able to exploit the lack of effective state institutions to increase greatly their influence in Libya. ISIL expanded its control of the area around the coastal city of Sirte, which it initially seized in 2014.

ISIL imposed its strict form of sharia law and instituted public punishment and executions. Following an attempted uprising against ISIL in Sirte in August, ISIL reportedly crucified four men; according to media, others have been executed since then for failing to adhere to ISIL rules or for being "spies" or "sorcerers." Additionally, ISIL is believed to be responsible for a series of killings in Ajdabiya targeting military and religious leaders opposed to ISIL.

A coalition of conservative militia and some violent Islamist extremists remained in control of the eastern city of Darnah, which has lacked virtually any state presence since the 2011 revolution. ISIL, which had previously controlled the city, was expelled in June by the Shura Council of Mujahideen in Darnah, an umbrella organization consisting of conservative militias and Salafist groups opposed to ISIL, including the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah. In 2015, violent extremist groups in Darnah reportedly employed summary executions and public floggings to enforce their interpretation of sharia law, and carried out assassinations and beheadings of civil society activists, judges, and security officials.

Conflict in Benghazi continued between General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) and the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council, an umbrella organization of extremist groups and anti-Haftar militia. The LNA has been unsuccessful in its stated goal of removing violent extremist organizations from Benghazi.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The following list of terrorist incidents is designed to highlight major attacks believed to be perpetrated by violent extremist groups against western, diplomatic, Libyan government, and civil society targets. It is not exhaustive and does not encompass the numerous acts of violence perpetrated by the parties to the current political conflict, which have each accused their opponents of conducting kidnappings, assassinations, and attacks on civilian infrastructure such as airports and seaports. The list of incidents in Ajdabiya, Benghazi, Darnah, and Sirte should not be considered comprehensive. Frequently, there were no claims of responsibility for assassinations or other attacks.

- In January, ISIL declared the city of Sirte part of the group's caliphate and seized the local radio station, a hospital, and other government buildings.
- On January 27, gunmen attacked the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli, killing 10. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On February 15, a video published on social media depicted the beheading of 21 Coptic Christian migrant workers, all but one of them Egyptian. ISIL's "Tripoli Province" claimed responsibility for the killings.
- On February 22, two bombs exploded at the residence of the Iranian ambassador to Libya. The residence was unoccupied and no one was injured. ISIL claimed responsibility for the bombing.
- On April 13, a gunman opened fire outside the South Korean Embassy in Tripoli, killing two and wounding one. On the same day, a bomb exploded outside the Moroccan Embassy in Tripoli. There were no casualties.
- On April 19, a video published on social media depicted the execution by beheading and gunshot of approximately 30 Ethiopian Christians. ISIL claimed responsibility for the killings.
- On April 20, there was an explosion outside the Spanish Embassy in Tripoli; there were no casualties.

- On August 12, members of ISIL killed Sheikh Khalid Ben Rajah, a local imam in Sirte, after he refused to relinquish control of his mosque. An uprising against ISIL in Sirte resulted, which led to ISIL killing at least twenty members of the uprising and hanging some of their corpses from street lights.
- In late August, ISIL conducted multiple public beheadings and crucifixions in Sirte.
- On October 16, ISIL beheaded two Libyan men in Sirte accused of sorcery.
- On October 18, a video was published depicting the killing of a Christian man from South Sudan, for which ISIL claimed responsibility.
- On October 23, a political demonstration against the UN-led Political Dialogue was shelled; the attack killed 12 and injured 39. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On October 29, Salafist preacher Sheikh Suleiman Kabylie was killed when a car bomb exploded beneath his vehicle. He had been an outspoken critic of ISIL and had denounced terrorism on social media. ISIL claimed responsibility for his killing.
- On November 6, a Salafist preacher opposed to ISIL, Faraj al-Oraibi, was killed when exiting his mosque in Ajdabiya.
- On November 26, four men with Salafist ties were killed in Ajdabiya, purportedly for their perceived opposition to ISIL and Ansar al-Sharia. The Libyan Foreign Minister claimed on December 1 that ISIL had killed 37 people in Ajdabiya as of that date.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Libya lacks a comprehensive counterterrorism law, although the Libyan penal code criminalizes offenses prejudicial to state security, including terrorism, the promotion of terrorist acts, and the handling of money in support of such acts. In 2013, the General National Congress (GNC) – at that time Libya's official legislature – adopted laws outlining a plan to disband non-state militias and integrate them into state security forces; however, neither law has been implemented. Libya has ratified the AU's Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which requires states to criminalize terrorist acts under their national laws.

The Libyan government, in the midst of a protracted internal conflict, proved incapable of confronting the rapid expansion of terrorist groups in Libya. Neither the then internationally-recognized government in Tobruk nor the rival faction in Tripoli produced a strategy to combat the growing terrorist threat. Nor was there any new legislation passed to confront the growing threat of terrorism in Libya.

Even prior to the outbreak of large-scale violence in July 2014, Libyan law enforcement personnel lacked the capacity to detect, deter, respond to, or investigate terrorist incidents. There were no reported terrorism-related prosecutions in 2015. In many parts of Libya, security and law enforcement functions were provided by armed militias rather than state institutions. National police and security forces were fragmented, inadequately trained and equipped, and lacked clear reporting chains and coordination mechanisms. Security and law enforcement officials, including prosecutors and judges, have been targeted in kidnappings and assassinations, resulting in the continued suspension of court operations in Benghazi and Darnah. ISIL declared its own police presence in Sirte in December. Libya's military was similarly weak, with units often breaking down along local, tribal, or factional lines. Formal security structures were often overmatched by non-state armed groups. Counterterrorism operations conducted by Libyan Special Operations Forces have failed to significantly reduce the level of terrorist violence, bombings, assassinations, or kidnappings in Benghazi.

The Libyan government lacked a comprehensive border management strategy and was unable to secure the country's thousands of miles of land and maritime borders, enabling the illicit flow of goods, weapons, migrants, and foreign terrorist fighters that pose serious security challenges to the region. Libyan border security forces were generally poorly trained and underequipped, and frequently participated in illicit cross-border trade. Border security infrastructure damaged and looted during the 2011 revolution has not been repaired or replaced, and the ongoing conflict has affected border security infrastructure along Libya's border with Tunisia. The gunmen in the March 18 attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis and the June 26 attack on the Riu Imperial Marhaba Hotel in Sousse were Tunisian nationals, but reportedly trained in Libya before the attacks. Security at Libya's airports was minimal, with limited document screening and no utilization of Passenger Name Record systems or biometric technology. Libya also lacked the resources, manpower, and training to conduct sufficient maritime patrols to interdict or dissuade illicit maritime trafficking and irregular migration. According to Italian officials, more than 100,000 migrants arrived in Italy in 2015, many transiting through Libya. Existing legislation outlining the responsibilities of various government agencies in the area of border management was vague and often contradictory, resulting in ad hoc and poorly coordinated efforts.

Previous international border security efforts, particularly the EU Border Assistance Mission to Libya (EUBAM), remained on hold, with staff relocated to Tunisia and a considerable reduction in personnel. EUBAM remained in contact with Libyan border officials, primarily those from the Libyan Coast Guard and the Department for Combatting Illegal Migration.

Libya has historically expressed desire to cooperate in the investigation of terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and interests, including the September 2012 killing of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans at U.S. government facilities in Benghazi. However, Libyan support to these investigations has been limited given the overall weak capacity in Libya's law enforcement institutions and complications from the country's political conflict. In 2013, the Libyan Ministry of Justice signed a Declaration of Intent to facilitate law enforcement cooperation with the United States on investigations, including that of the 1988 Pan Am Flight 103 bombing.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Libya is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. There was little reliable data on Libya's 2015 anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing progress or efforts, and Libyan government and financial institutions generally lacked the ability to identify and interdict illicit financial flows. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Libyan government has not adopted a comprehensive strategy for countering violent extremism. Continuing online threats, kidnappings, and assassinations of activists who speak out against violent extremists contributed to a culture of intimidation and self-censorship.

International and Regional Cooperation: Since the outbreak of large-scale violence in July 2014, nearly all diplomatic missions in Libya withdrew from the country, including the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The political conflict and lack of an international

presence in Libya severely limited cooperation on counterterrorism activities. Previous bilateral programs, which sought to increase the capacity of Libya's law enforcement and defense institutions, have been on hold since 2014.

MOROCCO

Overview: Morocco has a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy that includes vigilant security measures, regional and international cooperation, and counter-radicalization policies. The government has treated counterterrorism as a top policy priority since the country experienced suicide bombing attacks in Casablanca in 2003, and that focus was reinforced by further attacks in 2007 and 2011. In 2015, Morocco's counterterrorism efforts mitigated the risk of terrorism, although the country continued to face threats, largely from numerous small, independent violent extremist cells. Those groups and individuals, referred to collectively as adherents of the so-called Salafiyya Jihadiyya ideology, remained isolated from one another, small in size, and limited in capabilities. Some claimed to be inspired by or affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

During the year, authorities reported the disruption of multiple groups with ties to international networks that included ISIL. Al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIL continued efforts to recruit Moroccans for combat in other countries, and there were reports of Moroccans attempting to join AQIM, ISIL, and other violent extremists in Libya, Iraq, and Syria. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) estimated that approximately 1,500 Moroccans have joined terrorist organizations since 2011, with 719 fighting alongside ISIL. The Moroccan government remained concerned about the potential return of veteran Moroccan foreign terrorist fighters from those conflict zones to conduct possible terrorist attacks at home. The government was also concerned about Moroccans becoming radicalized to violence during their stays in Western Europe. ISIL continued to call for attacks against the Moroccan monarchy and prominent Moroccan institutions and individuals.

Morocco is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and has made contributions and commitments to the effort. Morocco also participates in the Counter-ISIL Finance Group. The government was increasingly proactive in 2015 to both stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and to counter ISIL propaganda. According to local media, Moroccan security forces carried out 149 terrorism-related arrests between January and November, including an Azerbaijani and two Turkish nationals.

In June, the Government of Morocco enacted significant amendments to the criminal code to address the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. The provisions of the law – criminalizing joining, or attempting to join a terrorist group; receiving terrorist training;and terrorist recruiting; take a substantial step towards implementing Morocco's international obligations under UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Morocco enacted comprehensive counterterrorism legislation in 2003. In June 2015, amendments to address the threat of foreign terrorist fighters were published in the official gazette. The new legislation expands the definition of terrorist offenses to cover acts or attempts to join a terrorist group as well as involvement in recruitment and training activities. The new law also extends the jurisdiction of

the national courts to allow the prosecution of foreign nationals who commit terrorist crimes outside Morocco if they are present on Moroccan soil.

Moroccan law enforcement units aggressively targeted and effectively dismantled terrorist cells within the country by leveraging intelligence collection, police work, and collaboration with regional and international partners. The Morocco Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation (BCIJ) is the primary law enforcement agency responsible for counterterrorism. The BCIJ was established in 2015 as a central institution with the goal of bolstering security governance nationwide within a legal and transparent framework.Reporting to the General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance (DGST), the BCIJ operates under the supervision of the public prosecutor of the Court of Appeals. Penal Procedure code grants DGST agents the rank of judicial police officers, allowing them to conduct investigations, question suspects, and make arrests. The new Penal Procedure code also grants DGST officers the recourse to do electronic tracking and telephone surveillance upon receiving written consent from the Court of Appeals or a judge. The government has publicly committed itself not to use the struggle against terrorism to deprive individuals of their rights. It has emphasized adherence to human rights standards and the increased transparency of law enforcement procedures as part of its approach.

The General Directorate for National Security (DGSN) is the body primarily responsible for handling border inspections at established ports of entry such as Casablanca's Mohammed V Airport, where most border crossings occur. Law enforcement officials and private carriers work regularly with the United States to detect and deter individuals attempting to transit illegally. Moroccan government authorities worked directly with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Regional Carrier Liaison Group and the DHS Homeland Security Investigations Attaché office at the U.S. Consulate in Casablanca to address watchlisted or mala fide travelers. Moroccan government airport authorities have excellent capabilities in detecting fraudulent documents but lacked biometric screening capabilities.

Morocco continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, which provided the DGSN and the Royal Gendarmerie with training in investigating terrorist incidents, post-blast investigations, cyber forensics, crime scene forensics, critical incident management, and executive leadership. Morocco and the United States continued implementing an ATA trilateral agreement to partner in the development of counterterrorism capacity and cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel regions, and worked together to train law enforcement from a Sahelian partner country in Critical Incident Management skills.

Morocco also continued to partner with the United States to improve the police criminal investigation process through the development and implementation of chain of custody and evidence management procedures; forensic evidence collection and analysis, including DNA; and mentoring and training. Morocco participated in Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and Department of Justice programs to improve technical investigative training for police and prosecutors. DGSN, Moroccan Customs, and the Royal Gendarmerie were active partners and participants in DHS-sponsored training events on border security, financial investigation, and counter-proliferation topics. Finally, Moroccan government officials participated in several U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation-led courses to improve capacity in intelligence analysis, facial recognition, and leadership and management.

Morocco's counterterrorism efforts and cooperation with international partners led to numerous disruptions of alleged terrorist cells and prosecutions of associated individuals, including these cases:

- On March 22, the BCIJ announced it had dismantled a cell of 13 members who pledged allegiance to ISIL and were plotting to conduct attacks against Moroccan security forces, steal their arms, and use them in their operations. The BCIJ also seized firearms and a large amount of ammunition. The cell operated in multiple cities, including Tangier, Marrakech, and Laayoune.
- On May 19, the BCIJ dismantled a 10-member terrorist network involved in the recruitment of Moroccan fighters for ISIL through the creation of sleeper cells. BCIJ added that the group was receiving financial and logistical support from ISIL leaders and included experts in making explosives.
- On June 3, the BCIJ dismantled a terrorist cell composed of nine members operating in various cities, including Casablanca. The cell contained an alleged former ISIL member who was recruiting fighters for Iraq and Syria.
- On July 9, the BCIJ dismantled an eight-member terrorist cell involved in the recruitment and sending of Moroccan fighters to Syria and Iraq through agents in Turkey. Cell members pledged allegiance to ISIL and operated in Casablanca, Tangier, and Salé.
- In December, the BCIJ dismantled a nine-member cell, which it labeled the most dangerous ISIL-affiliated group arrested up until then. According to local media, the cell was close to carrying out a series of synchronized bombings in various cities with plans to acquire security forces' weapons and to kidnap prominent personalities.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Morocco is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, the Unit de Traitemant du Renseignement Financier (UTRF), is a member of the Egmont Group. Morocco continued to make progress in the counterterrorism finance domain in 2015. At the end of 2014, the parliament voted to support the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure, and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism.

Operationally, the human resource and logistical capacities of the UTRF have increased. During 2014,when the most recent data was available, UTRF received 305 suspicious transaction reports of suspected money laundering violations from Moroccan financial institutions and four were related to terrorism financing. The UTRF has signed memoranda of understanding facilitating information exchange with regional FIUs. The UTRF is also working to update current legislation to better implement UNSCR 1373 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. A procedure for these cases already exists, but this update will institute a formal mechanism. Finally, in alignment with the 2012 FATF Recommendations, the UTRF is preparing a national risk assessment intended to identify threats and vulnerabilities facing Morocco regarding money laundering and terrorism financing in order to plan and execute more effective counter measures.

Moroccan officials are having success in detecting terrorism financing. In November, a joint BNPJ and BCIJ operation arrested two Turkish nationals and a Moroccan who were involved in diverting national telephone operator's communication lines to sell stolen services to raise funds

for ISIL. The group had ties with ISIL operational leaders and intended to fund ISIL activities and facilitate the return of foreign terrorist fighters to Europe.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/vol2/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Morocco has a comprehensive strategy for countering violent extremism that prioritizes economic and human development goals in addition to tight control of the religious sphere and messaging. Morocco has accelerated its rollout of education and employment initiatives for youth – the population identified as most vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment to violence – and has also expanded the legal rights and political and social empowerment of women. To counter what the government perceives as the dangerous importation of violent Islamist extremist ideologies, Morocco has developed a national strategy to affirm and further institutionalize Morocco's widespread adherence to the Maliki-Ashari school of Sunni Islam.

In the past decade, Morocco has focused on upgrading mosques, promoting the teaching of relatively moderate Islam, and strengthening the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (MEIA). The MEIA has developed an educational curriculum for Morocco's nearly 50,000 imams in its version of relatively moderate Sunni Islam. The MEIA-affiliated Mohammedan League of Ulema produces scholarly research on the nation's Islamic values, ensures conformity in educational curricula, and conducts outreach to youth on religious and social topics. To counter the radicalization of Moroccans living abroad, the Moroccan Council of Ulema for Europe and the Minister Delegate for Moroccans Living Abroad also undertook similar programs to promote religious moderation in Moroccan expatriate communities in Europe. Throughout 2015, Morocco expanded its regional counter-radicalization efforts to include training imams from France, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, and Tunisia.

The Department of State has supported the Moroccan Penitentiary Administration's efforts to reform and modernize the management of its prison system, including increased focus on rehabilitation and successful reintegration into civilian life upon completion of a prisoner's sentence. The Department of State has assisted the Penitentiary Administration in creating and implementing a prisoner classification tool to ensure inmates are living within the lowest security environment required based on the threat they represent. This helps keep violent extremists segregated from the mainstream prison population, limiting their ability to influence and recruit other inmates. The improved prison management, rehabilitation efforts, and segregation of violent extremist inmates all serve to deter radicalization and recruitment of inmates. USAID's Favorable Opportunities to Reinforce Self-Advancement in Today's Youth project addressed youth marginalization in areas known for recruitment by extremist organizations, helping them stay in school, develop skills, and become active in the community.

International and Regional Cooperation: Morocco is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and a member of the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism. In 2015, Morocco continued its leadership role in the GCTF, serving as co-chair with the Netherlands of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group. In April, Morocco hosted the GCTF-inspired Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund board meeting to address countering violent extremism goals. Under the auspices of the GCTF, Morocco and the United

States co-lead the Border Security Initiative. In July, Morocco hosted the inaugural conference of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre-GCTF Border Security Initiative in Morocco. Morocco is a founding member of the GCTF-inspired Malta-based International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, and served on its governing board. The 30 members of the GCTF also agreed that Morocco would assume the GCTF co-chair role from Turkey in April 2016.

Morocco contributes air forces to the counter-ISIL campaign in Syria and Iraq. Morocco trains forces from friendly nations such as Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali. As a major non-NATO ally and a Mediterranean Dialogue (5+5) partner in the EU's Barcelona Process, Morocco participates in the 5+5 Defense Initiative, which brings together five European and five North African countries to address security issues in the Mediterranean. Morocco participated in multilateral training exercises such as the maritime-focused PHOENIX EXPRESS and the FLINTLOCK regional security operations exercises, and hosts the annual AFRICAN LION regional exercise as well as its own MAGHREB MANTLET disaster response exercise. These engagements have enhanced border security and improved capabilities to counter illicit traffic and terrorism.

Both Morocco and Algeria participate in 5+5, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, and the GCTF; however, political disagreement over the status of Western Sahara remained an impediment to bilateral and regional counterterrorism cooperation in 2015.

OMAN

Overview: Oman is an important regional counterterrorism partner that worked actively to prevent terrorists from conducting attacks within Oman and neighboring countries, or using the country for safe haven or to transport terrorists, weapons, and material. Omani officials engaged regularly with U.S. officials on the need to counter violent extremism and terrorism. The Government of Oman sought training and equipment from U.S. government and commercial entities and from other countries to support its efforts to control its land, air, and maritime borders. Oman used U.S. security assistance to improve its counterterrorism tactics, techniques, and procedures.

Oman remained a member of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and also participated in the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkthat took place on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September.

Throughout the year, Oman attended Counter-ISIL Campaign Planning Conferences hosted by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and Omani military representatives attended the Counter-ISIL Chief of Defense Conferences hosted by CENTCOM. The Omani government issued a series of official statements condemning ISIL terrorist attacks in 2015, most notably the immolation killing of a Jordanian Air Force pilot in February, and the mass beheadings of 21 Egyptians near Tripoli, Libya.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Counterterrorism investigations, crisis responses, and border security capabilities were limited by local capacity and a challenging operating environment due to Oman's long and remote borders with Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and its extensive coastline. There was, however, daily communication and coordination among

the many agencies with jurisdiction over counterterrorism. Roles and responsibilities between law enforcement and the armed forces are not clearly delineated; however, the Sultan's Special Forces and the Royal Oman Police Special Task Force are Oman's primary entities responsible for counterterrorism.

The Government of Oman recognizes the need to improve its capabilities and takes advantage of U.S. counterterrorism and law enforcement training and assistance. In 2015, the Royal Oman Police Coast Guard, the Directorate General of Customs, and the Royal Army of Oman participated in U.S. Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) programs designed to assist Omani personnel in enhancing interdiction capabilities at official ports of entry on land and at seaports, in green border areas, and along the maritime border. Oman participated in a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-wide Regional Workshop on the Development of Strategic Trade Controls hosted by the EU and the Department of State in August, with the goal of harmonizing customs procedures and the regulatory framework within the GCC.

Oman participated in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, which included training on maritime border security, cyber security, investigative information management, digital forensics, and critical incident management for Omani security officials representing a number of civilian agencies and the Royal Army of Oman. U.S. Army Central Command conducted a border security seminar in 2015 for Omani military units responsible for patrolling Oman's borders, and several other subject matter expert exchanges with the Royal Oman Police, Coast Guard, and Royal Oman Police-Special Task Force.

Omani authorities continued to make progress on construction of a fence along the border with Yemen to deter entry into Oman without inspection along the long and remote border.

The major deterrents to more effective law enforcement and border security are limited resources, nascent interagency coordination, and the need for continued training to develop advanced law enforcement skills. Oman's border with Yemen, which features extremely rugged, mountainous terrain, further challenges border security efforts.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Oman is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF). In April, Oman hosted the 21st meeting of the MENAFATF.Local media reported that in February, Oman signed a legal and judicial assistance agreement with the Government of India, aimed at improving cooperation on investigations, prosecutions, and counterterrorism efforts.

In January, Oman, represented by the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, began the second phase of a technical cooperation program with the International Monetary Fund, subsequent to an IMF delegation's visit to Oman.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Grand Mufti of Oman, Sheikh Ahmed al-Khalili, published an essay in October 2014, calling on all Muslims to reject extremism and promote tolerance – themes he again amplified in his popular and widely broadcast weekly television

program. In March, al-Khalili met with Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim al Shaikh, Chairman of the Shura Council of Saudi Arabia, to discuss the importance of discarding violence and fanaticism and promoting tolerance and presenting a tolerant picture of Islam. Additionally, the government continued to promote an advocacy campaign entitled "Islam in Oman" designed to encourage tolerant and inclusive Islamic practices. The project highlighted the commonalities between Islam's sects and between Islam and other religions. A Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs program titled "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence – Oman's Message of Islam" was part of the government's effort to enhance interfaith dialogue. The nature and scope of Oman's initiatives to address domestic radicalization and recruitment to violence are unknown, but it is suspected that Oman maintains tightly controlled and non-public CVE initiatives in this area.

International and Regional Cooperation: Oman participates in the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum, andtook part in the August U.S.-GCC Counterterrorism and Border Security Working group meeting in Riyadh. Oman regularly votes in favor of counterterrorism measures in the UNGA, the Arab League, the GCC, and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation.

QATAR

Overview: The United States and Qatar maintained a strong partnership in the fight against terrorism. Qatar is a partner in the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and has provided significant support in facilitating critical U.S. military operations in the region. Terrorist activity historically has been low in Qatar; restrictive immigration policies and security services capable of monitoring and disrupting extremist activities have kept the threat level low. U.S. agencies have an active and productive dialogue with their Qatari counterparts and work closely for the exchange and evaluation of terrorist-related information. The United States and Qatar collaborated to foster closer regional and international cooperation on counterterrorism, law enforcement, and rule of law activities.

In addition to hosting two U.S. military installations critical to Counter-ISIL Coalition efforts, Qatar offered to host a base to train-and-equip moderate Syrian opposition forces, and provided significant operational and logistical support for Coalition activities. Qatar's Cabinet welcomed the December announcement of a new military alliance of thirty-four Islamic states led by Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism in "all its forms and manifestations, whatever their sources and justifications."

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Qatari government's legislation enacted in 2004, 2010, and 2014 to address terrorism, terrorism financing, and related offenses, complements other criminal laws. The 2004 Law on Combating Terrorism sets forth broad provisions for defining and prosecuting terrorist-related activities in Qatar against the State, including prohibitions on providing information, training, weapons, financing, and material support to terrorists and terrorist organizations; and creating, directing, or using lawful entities, associations, or organizations to commit terrorist activities. The 2004 law also criminalizes collaboration with or joining organizations or groups located outside of Qatar that commit a terrorist crime, even if not against the State of Qatar, and outlaws obtaining military training from such organizations or groups abroad. The 2014 Cybercrime Prevention Law criminalizes terrorism-linked cyber offenses.

The State Security Bureau (also known as the Qatar State Security) maintained an aggressive posture toward monitoring internal extremist or terrorism-related activities. The internal security-focused Ministry of Interior was well positioned to respond to incidents with rapid reaction forces and trained internal security forces that routinely pursued and engaged in structured counterterrorism training and exercises. Both the State Security Bureau and the Ministry of Interior were responsive to the Emiri Diwan and Prime Minister level command and control structures, and efforts have been made to streamline interagency coordination and civil defense operations. The Office of Public Prosecution is tasked with prosecuting all crimes, including any related to terrorism, and plays a prosecutorial role in terrorism investigations. Oversight and management of industrial security is consolidated under the Ministry of Interior, with integrated responsibility for protecting the critical energy infrastructure, ports, and airport.

In 2015, Qatar requested to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, and continued to participate in and host multilateral Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) events. Also in 2015, Qatar hosted the UN Crime Congress and pledged specific funding to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to help address violent extremism and radicalization among youth and vulnerable populations. Qatar also maintains an interagency National Anti-Terrorism Committee (NATC) within the Ministry of Interior composed of representatives from more than 10 government ministries and official institutions. The NATC is tasked with formulating Qatar's counterterrorism policy, ensuring thorough and transparent interagency coordination within the government, fulfilling Qatar's obligations to combat terrorism under international conventions, and participating in international or UN conferences on terrorism.

Qatar maintained its own watchlist of suspected terrorists that it used to screen passengers on international flights. Qatar also conducted vetting and background checks on all applicants for work visas. The Qatari government uses biometric scans for arrivals at its Hamad International Airport. Qatar engages in information sharing between its state-owned airline and foreign governments, including collecting and disseminatingAdvance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Records on commercial flights, and has agreed to enhanced information-sharing agreements with the United States.

Overall, Qatar's security services workforce was reliant on manpower from third countries to fill rank-and-file law enforcement positions. This limitation applies across the board with all Qatari government institutions (except for the Qatar State Security and elite units of the Ministry of Interior's internal security force), and is commensurate with the demographics of the nation. Lack of capacity and to some extent the lack of advanced training of non-Qataris contributed to a lack of effectiveness in basic police operations. However, Qatar's reliance on technology has provided state-of-the-art electronic surveillance capacity, which enhanced Qatari security services' effectiveness in the detection and monitoring of terrorist suspects.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Qatar is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body; and its financial intelligence unit, the Qatar Financial Information Unit (QFIU), is a member of the Egmont Group. Qatar's Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Law of 2010 requiresQatar's Public Prosecutor to freeze the funds of individuals and organizations designated by the UN Security Council. The Qatar Central Bank worked with financial institutions to

confirm compliance with respect to UN-designated entities and individuals, including Qatari citizens.

The Qatar Central Bank has a counterterrorism financing and anti-money laundering department that monitors suspicious accounts and transactions. The QFIU monitors suspicious accounts and transactions and files suspicious transaction reports (STRs). Non-profit organizations are not obliged to file STRs, but based on the charities law that was passed in 2014, every charity project and overseas financial transfer by a charity must be approved by the Charities Commission, a government interagency body that monitors charitable giving to prevent misused donations and terrorism financing.

Qatar has restructured its National Anti-Terrorism Committee, housed in the Ministry of Interior, to more effectively counter terrorism and continues to formulate a new and comprehensive counterterrorism framework. As part of ongoing efforts to curb terrorism financing, the State of Qatar issued new charities and cybercrime prevention laws in 2014. In 2015, the Qatari government froze assets and imposed travel bans on Qatari citizens Sa'd al-Ka'bi and Abd al-Latif al-Kawari after they were designated as terrorist financiers on the UN 1267/1989/2253 al-Qa'ida Sanctions List in 2015. Despite these efforts, entities and individuals within Qatar continue to serve as a source of financial support for terrorist and violent extremist groups, particularly regional al-Qa'ida affiliates such as the Nusrah Front. Qatar has made efforts to prosecute significant terrorist financiers.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Qatar supports and has adopted a variety of initiatives to counter violent extremism (CVE). Qatar was instrumental in the 13th UN Crime Congress adoption of the "Doha Declaration," an unprecedented framework wherein the international community agreed to focus on education to prevent extremism and criminality for the next five years, leading up to the 14th UN Crime Congress in 2020. In May, during the 13th Crime Congress, Qatar announced a new education initiative for young people displaced by conflict in the Middle East. In November, Qatar signed a four-year US $49 million funding agreement with the UNODC to deliver projects related to implementing the Doha Declaration, including projects on countering violent extremism through prisoner rehabilitation and social integration programs, and youth education for justice.

Qatar promotes and funds foundations and social enterprises engaged in implementing Qatar's CVE strategies. Qatar brought the Research Center for Islam and Ethics to its flagship university as a means of fostering moderate readings of Islamic thought to help combat extremist interpretations on science, gender, education, politics and interfaith dialogue. In February, the Center sponsored a lecture titled "When Fiqh and Ethics Are Disconnected: ISIS as an Example." Another aspect of Qatar's CVE strategy is messaging to avert linking terrorism with religion. Qatar helped fund the social enterprise "Silatech," which held regional workshops for youth to promote job creation, entrepreneurship, and the participation and engagement of young people in economic and social development as a deterrent from violent extremism.

Throughout 2015, Qatari leaders made strong public statements on the importance of countering violent extremism and radicalization to violence by addressing prevention, dialogue, and trust to communities most affected by the conflicts in the region. In December, Qatar's Ambassador to the UN gave a speech calling for international support of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). Qatar highlighted this fund as the first global initiative aimed at enhancing skills, potential, and resources of both the public and private sectors to support local projects, such as education, vocational training, civic engagement, media, and defense of women's rights in an attempt to increase resilience against violent extremism.

International and Regional Cooperation: Qatar is an active participant in the UN, GCTF, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Arab League,in counterterrorism activities. Qatar participated in the August U.S.-GCC Counterterrorism and Border Security Working group meeting in Riyadh, and other regional meetings of interior ministries focused on counterterrorism cooperation. Qatar hosted the GCTF Coordinating Committee Meeting in May, and announced a US $5 million donation as a founding member of GCERF.

SAUDI ARABIA

Overview: During 2015, the Saudi Arabian government continued to build and augment its capacity to counter terrorism and violent extremist ideologies. In addition to confronting the threat from al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the Saudis faced lethal attacks from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and maintained a high-tempo of counterterrorism operations. Both AQAP and ISIL continued to encourage individual acts of terrorism within the Kingdom. The spate of ISIL attacks against Shia mosques, Saudi security forces, and Western targets in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states in 2015 underscored the threat posed to Saudi Arabia and the region by ISIL, and encouraged Saudi Arabia to work more closely with both Western and GCC partners to counter the ISIL threat.

Saudi Arabia continued to maintain a vigorous counterterrorism relationship with the United States, supported enhanced bilateral cooperation to ensure the safety of both U.S. and Saudi citizens within Saudi territories and abroad, and was an active participant in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. On December 14, the Saudi Arabian government announced a 34-state Islamic Counterterrorism Coalition to be headquartered in Riyadh that will focus on countering violent extremism and coordinating military efforts against all terrorist threats – including ISIL – in Muslim countries. Furthermore, the Saudi government remained attuned to the continuing threat from AQAP.

The Saudi government took a zero-tolerance stance on ISIL, condemning its activities and participating in coalition military action to defeat the group in Syria and Iraq. Its external military action against ISIL in Syria as a part of the U.S.-led coalition was complemented by an aggressive campaign by both official clerics and King Salman to discredit the group and condemn its activities as acts of terrorism. Saudi Arabia implemented UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2178 and 2199, and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime; expanded existing counterterrorism programs and rhetoric to address the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters; and leveraged terrorism finance provisions of its Law for Crimes of Terrorism and Terrorist Financing (CT Law) to counter the funding of violent extremist groups in Iraq and Syria.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: A number of attacks on both Saudi and Western targets occurred despite Saudi efforts to detect and disrupt terrorist activity. ISIL posed a persistent challenge to Saudi security services, claiming responsibility for or inspiring the most egregious incidents in the Kingdom during 2015. On January 30, an individual, possibly inspired by ISIL, attacked two U.S. defense contractors in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, killing one. Since May, ISIL conducted two suicide attacks against Shia mosques in the Eastern Province, a suicide attack on Saudi security personnel in a mosque in Abha, and a suicide attack against a Shia mosque in Najran. In mid-October, a gunman affiliated with ISIL killed five Shia worshippers at a prayer hall. In addition to targeting Westerners and Saudi Shia, terrorist groups have plotted and conducted successful attacks against Saudi security forces by focusing attacks on border outposts, police stations, and military facilities. In September, two Saudi youth coerced their cousin, a cadet in the Special Security Forces (SSF) Academy, to travel to the desert and recorded a video of his execution in an attempt to gain membership in ISIL. Additionally, in fall 2015, Saudi security forces in Riyadh discovered and interdicted an IED cell and arms cache, resulting in a brief gunfight with the would-be attackers. In all cases, the Saudi government worked closely with U.S. counterparts to clarify the circumstances regarding these attacks and responded quickly to ensure proper security measures were in place to better secure U.S. installations and interests.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Saudi Arabia enacted a new counterterrorism law containing 41 articles in 2014 that strengthened its existing counterterrorism provisions. In 2015,Saudi Arabia continued to disrupt terrorist activities in the Kingdom by tracking, arresting, and prosecuting terrorist suspects. The Saudi Ministry of Interior (MOI) General Investigations Directorate, also known as the Mabahith, is responsible for conducting counterterrorism investigations in the Kingdom and, upon its discretion, will cooperate with other elements of the Saudi government to further investigations into specific cases. Once the investigation is complete, the case is transferred to the Special Investigations and Public Prosecutions Office for the duration of the trial. The Saudi government continued its programs to improve physical border security through the employment of biometric systems, aerial reconnaissance, thermal imaging, and remote unattended sensors along its borders. Throughout 2015, Saudi Arabia faced a deteriorating security situation with its neighbors, Iraq and Yemen.

Neighborhood police units engaged and worked directly with community members in Saudi Arabia, encouraging citizens to provide tips and information about suspected terrorist activity. The government offered rewards for information on terrorists, and Saudi security services made several announcements throughout the year pertaining to the arrest of large numbers of ISIL and AQAP terrorists and supporters.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Saudi Arabia is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit (FIU), the Saudi Arabia FIU (SAFIU), is a member of the Egmont Group. The Saudi government affirmed its commitment to combatting terrorism financing in the Kingdom and sought to further establish itself as a leader in disrupting terrorism finance within the Gulf region. The MOI continued to provide specialized training programs for financial institutions, prosecutors, judges, customs and border officials, and other sectors of the government as part of its effort to enhance programs designed to counter terrorism financing.The

Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency has standing requirements for all financial institutions within the Kingdom's jurisdiction to implement all of the recent anti-money laundering and combatting the financing of terrorism recommendations issued by the FATF. Saudi Arabia earned observer status in the FATF in June 2015 and is in a process toward full membership in the organization.

For the first time, Saudi Arabia produced certified bank records in response to a mutual legal assistance request, based on reciprocity and increased cooperation on identification of foreign terrorist fighters traveling to Syria and Iraq.

Saudi Arabia, along with Italy and the United States, co-lead the Counter-ISIL Finance Group, which coordinates the Counter-ISIL Coalition's efforts to disrupt and dismantle ISIL's financial infrastructure. In 2015, Saudi Arabia increased its public designations of individuals and entities for violating the Kingdom's laws criminalizing terrorism financing and support. In April, Saudi Arabia and the United States took joint action to designate al-Furqan Foundation Welfare Trust, the successor entity to the Afghan Support Committee and Revival of Islamic Heritage Society branches in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In May and November, Saudi Arabia leveraged counterterrorism financing authorities to sanction 14 individuals and two entities for acting on behalf of or providing financial support to Hizballah.

Despite serious and effective efforts to counter the funding of terrorism originating within the Kingdom, some individuals and entities in Saudi Arabia continued to serve as sources of financial support for Sunni-based extremist groups, particularly regional al-Qa'ida affiliates such as the Nusrah Front. While the Kingdom has tightened banking and charity regulations, and stiffened penalties for financing terrorism, funds are allegedly collected in secret and illicitly transferred out of the country in cash, often via pilgrims performing Hajj and Umrah. In recent years the government has responded, and in 2015 it increased policing to counter this smuggling.Recent regional turmoil and a sophisticated use of social media have facilitated charities outside of Saudi Arabia with ties to violent extremists to solicit donations from Saudi donors.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see *the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: As part of the Kingdom's strategy to counter violent extremism, the government focused on increasing public awareness campaigns and conducting outreach, counter-radicalization, and rehabilitation programs. Some of these efforts involved seminars that refuted violent Islamist extremist interpretation and ideology. Public awareness campaigns were aimed at reinforcing the values of the state's Wahhabi interpretation of the Islamic faith and educating Saudi citizens about the dangers of violent extremism. Methods used included advertisements and programs on television, in schools and mosques, and at sporting events. The Saudi government expanded these programs to address the rising threat to youth from recruitment efforts from groups like ISIL and to dissuade its citizens from engaging as foreign terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq.

The MOI continued to operate its de-radicalization program (the Sakina Campaign for Dialogue), as well as its extensive rehabilitation program at the Mohammed bin Naif Counseling and Care Center.

The Department of State has long engaged the Saudi government about its educational system. During 2015, the Saudi government continued its ongoing program to modernize the educational curriculum, including textbooks, although this has not been completely implemented and some textbooks containing derogatory and intolerant references to Shia and non-Muslims remained in circulation.

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs continued to train and regulate imams, prohibiting them from incitement of violence, and continued to monitor mosques and religious education. Some privately-funded satellite television stations in the Kingdom continued to espouse sectarian hatred and intolerance.

International and Regional Cooperation: Saudi Arabia cooperated regionally and internationally on counterterrorism issues, including through its participation in the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). Saudi Arabia is also a member of the GCC. Saudi officials issued statements encouraging enhanced cooperation among GCC and Arab League states on counterterrorism issues, and the government hosted international counterterrorism conferences on subjects including, but not limited to, countering violent extremist ideology and countering terrorism financing.

Throughout the year, Saudi security professionals participated in joint programs around the world, including in Europe and the United States. The Saudi government participated in a U.S.-GCC Camp David summit, where it reaffirmed its commitment to countering terrorism. In addition to Saudi Arabia's bilateral cooperation with the United States, Saudi officials also worked with other international counterparts to conduct counterterrorism operations and exchange information. The growing threat from ISIL to both Saudi Arabia and other GCC member states encouraged greater dialogue about information sharing, coordination of counterterrorism efforts, and the importance of strategic cooperation against terrorist groups seeking influence in the region. In August, the Saudi government hosted the U.S.-GCC Counterterrorism and Border Security Working Group. Following deadly mosque attacks in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the Saudis committed to greater collaboration with GCC neighbors in an effort to better counterthe shared regional terrorist threat.

On December 14, Deputy Crown Prince and Minister of Defense Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced the formation of a 34-nation Islamic military coalition to fight terrorism and counter violent extremism. The joint statement from coalition members referred to the UN and Organization of the Islamic Conference charter to justify the coalition's formation. The coalition will be led by Saudi Arabia and headquartered in Riyadh. The coalition members' roles and responsibilities were not announced in 2015.

TUNISIA

Overview: The Tunisian government has expanded its counterterrorism efforts since 2013, and further increased these efforts in 2015 after three high-profile attacks in March, June, and November perpetrated by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-inspired attackers. Additionally, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)-aligned Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade continued small scale attacks against security personnel and, for the first time, against civilian targets. Tunisia reached out to the international community, particularly to the United States as

its prime security partner, to seek support in transforming its security apparatus into fully professional and competent counterterrorism forces. U.S. security support to Tunisia grew in 2015, but Tunisia needs more time and international support to complete the overhaul of its military and civilian security forces. The new government was seated in February and brought together four of the leading parliamentary blocs, including broadly secularist Nida Tounes and Islamist Nahda. The government has made counterterrorism a top priority.

The new government officially joined the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL at the UN General Assembly in September and announced that it would serve as a pilot country for the International Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Capacity-Building Mechanism (ICCM). Tunisia became a U.S. major non-NATO ally in 2015. Parliament passed a new counterterrorism law in July, which modernized the legislative framework for the prosecution and investigation of terrorism and implemented UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178. Domestically, a National Counterterrorism Strategy was reportedly at its final stages of development in December. The strategy takes a comprehensive approach to the fight against terrorism along four pillars: prevention, protection, follow-up, and response. The military and civilian security forces continued to make counterterrorism their first priority, leading to the dismantlement of several terrorist cells and the disruption of a number of plots.

Terrorism remained a serious challenge for Tunisia that included the potential for terrorist attacks and the influx of arms and violent extremists from neighboring countries. The government grappled to adapt to terrorist threats that morphed in nature during the year, and focused on terrorist groups, such as Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia (AAS-T) and AQIM. In 2015, AQIM continued its activities in the western mountainous regions of the country, where it attacked security forces and targeted civilians for the first time.

Continuing instability in Libya led to the expansion of violent extremist groups, including ISIL, requiring the Tunisian government to increase its focus on its border with Libya and to adapt to terrorist tactics that targeted foreign civilians and urban areas. The disproportionate numbers of Tunisians traveling to fight in Syria and Iraq – and the potential for the return of these fighters – was another cause for concern. The Tunisian Ministry of Interior asserted that 3,200 Tunisians have gone abroad to participate in violent extremist activities. Senior Tunisian government officials have said approximately 700 women have gone abroad to join extremists causes as well.

Tunisia has been active in countering terrorist threats. The government has put considerable efforts into stemming the flow of fighters to Syria and Iraq. Government numbers indicated that 700 returnees from Syria and Iraq are in prison or under house arrest.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Terrorist organizations, including ISIL, AQIM, and AAS-T, were active in Tunisia throughout the year. The list of incidents below highlights some of the most significant terrorist attacks.

- On February 17, four National Guard service members on patrol died in a terrorist attack in Boulaaba, close to Mount Chaambi. The terrorists fled with service members' weapons. AQIM-affiliated Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On March 18, two terrorists attacked the Bardo museum, killing 21 foreign tourists and a Tunisian security official, and injuring more than 40 civilians. The perpetrators and a

member of Tunisia's Antiterrorism Brigade (BAT) died in the response operations. ISIL-inspired attackers claimed responsibility for the attack. The perpetrators had been trained in Libya.

- On June 26, a lone terrorist opened fire on tourists at two resort hotels in Sousse. Thirty-nine tourists, mostly British, died in the attack. Tunisian security forces killed the terrorist, who was trained in Libya. ISIL-inspired individuals claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On November 24, a terrorist killed 12 Presidential Guard members in a suicide attack on their bus in downtown Tunis. ISIL claimed responsibility.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Parliament passed a new counterterrorism law in July, replacing the 2003 law as the primary legal framework for dealing with terrorism offenses. The law modernizes Tunisia's security legislation and strikes a better balance between the protection of human rights and fighting terrorism, and implements obligations under UNSCRs 2178 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. It also enjoys greater legitimacy compared to the 2003 law, which prosecutors were reluctant to invoke since the 2011 revolution, as many in Tunisian society believed the legislation was an instrument of political repression by the previous regime. Parliament approved the bill 174-0, with 10 abstentions.

The Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD) share responsibility for detecting, deterring, and preventing acts of terrorism in Tunisia. The military's role in counterterrorism has gradually increased. The MOD leads Tunisia's security efforts in "military exclusion zones" in mountainous areas close to the Algerian border, a buffer zone along portions of the border with Libya, and in the southern tip of the country.

The MOI is the lead counterterrorism agency in the rest of the country. In particular, BAT and the National Guard Special Unit – elite units under the Ministry's National Police and National Guard, respectively – take the lead for counterterrorism operations. The National Unit for the Investigation of Terrorist Crimes leads investigations and liaises with the judicial system on prosecutions. With assistance from the Department of State and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Counterterrorism Fusion Center became operational this year, acting as a clearinghouse for information for Tunisia's security services.

Security forces were generally more effective in 2015 compared to the previous year, particularly in their response to de-escalating the threat of urban protests. The government's counterterrorism efforts have intensified, with successes including weapons seizures, arrests, and operations against armed groups throughout the country. At the tactical level, MOI and MOD forces worked together in some locations, coordinating their efforts in Joint Task Forces established in the military exclusion zones. Tunisian security forces expanded their counterterrorism operations throughout the country. The Bardo and Sousse attacks, and especially the suicide attack on a Presidential Guard bus, were followed by hundreds of raids and arrests.

Tunisia has an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and maintains fingerprint records for identification cards, criminal records, and latent prints. Tunisia currently has only one AFIS system, and it is not known if the records can be shared with other government agencies via automated responses. Tunisia also maintains a DNA database and has expressed an

interest in becoming a Combined DNA Index System member. Tunisia does not currently share its biometric data with any countries. The Tunisian government has undertaken a sweeping overhaul of its civilian border security arrangements and plans to implement the reforms in phases starting in early 2016.

Continuing instability in Libya increasingly alarmed Tunisian authorities as a growing number of terrorist incidents were linked to violent extremists in Libya. Border security remained a priority in 2015, and Tunisian authorities collaborated with their Algerian counterparts to stem the flow of weapons and insurgents across their common borders and across their borders with Libya. Tunisia repeatedly publicly expressed satisfaction with its cooperation with Algeria. The Ministry of Defense took the lead in constructing a series of berms and trenches along more than 220 kilometers of the border with Libya in order to stem the flow of arms, terrorists, and contraband between the two countries. It has asked for and received support from Germany and the United States to install electronic surveillance equipment to augment the new barrier.

The year saw a significant number of arrests and raids by security forces. Then-Deputy Minister of Interior Rafik Chelly told the media October 27 that during the first 10 months of the year, 1,800 suspects had been brought to court on terrorism charges, 450 of whom were accused of recruiting Tunisian youth to join extremists in Syria and Iraq. The courts handed down a 36-year prison verdict against a Tunisian who had fought in Syria, the first verdict of its kind in Tunisia.

Other significant law enforcement actions and arrests related to counterterrorism included:

- On February 4, the police killed Kamel Gadhgadhi, alleged murderer of politician Chokri Belaid, and six other suspected terrorists in a house raid in a suburb of Tunis. Clashes between suspected terrorists and security forces lasted nearly 20 hours and resulted in the death of a National Guard member. The police and army seized weapons, ammunition, explosives, mobile phones, and military uniforms.
- On February 7, security forces arrested 32 violent extremist suspects presumably directly linked to the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade, some of whom were returning from conflict zones abroad. They were believed to be plotting terrorist attacks against security installations around the country, including on the Ministry of Interior headquarters in the capital.
- On March 28, eight members of Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade, including one of its key leaders, Lokman Abou Sakhr, died in an ambush as National Guard special operations forces attempted to apprehend them. Abou Sakhr was one of the most wanted terrorists in Tunisia.
- In the run up to the July 25 Republic Day celebrations, Ministry of Interior forces thwarted a planned terrorist attack in Bizerte.
- On November 17, authorities arrested a cell of 17 violent Islamist extremists and prevented a planned assault on hotels and security forces in the resort town of Sousse. The Ministry of Interior said some of the terrorists had been trained in Libya and Syria and were awaiting orders to carry out the assault. The authorities seized Kalashnikov rifles, explosives, and a bomb belt.

The Tunis Court of Appeals delivered on February 17 the final verdict in the case of the September 2012 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Tunis. It increased the sentences for 14 of the 20 convicted of complicity in the attack by lower courts and transformed all 20 sentences from suspended to firm sentences. Only six of the convicts, however, were in government custody.

Tunisia continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program. Ministry of Interior officials received ATA training in the areas of tactical crisis response, counterterrorism investigations, and command and control. Tactical units were granted specific tactical and enabling equipment. Department of State International Narcotics and Law Enforcement programs supported leadership development, police reform, prison reform, hostage rescue, crowd control management, and other training and support for the Ministries of Interior and Justice. They were also provided vehicles, body armor, computers, and other equipment to enhance internal and border security. Leadership development included travel for police and corrections professionals to the United States to meet U.S. law enforcement counterparts. The Tunisian Armed Forces consider counterterrorism and border security their principal mission and have successfully employed U.S.-funded patrol craft, vehicles, weapons, and training in border security and counterterrorism operations.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Tunisia is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, the Tunisian Financial Analysis Committee (CTAF), is a member of the Egmont Group. Tunisia's strict currency controls might have pushed some transnational money movements, such as remittances, to the informal sector, making them difficult to trace. Trade-based money laundering was also a concern. Throughout the region, invoice manipulation and customs fraud were often involved in the process of *hawala* financial reconciliations. The CTAF is headed by the Central Bank Governor and includes representatives from a range of other agencies. It has worked effectively over the last year to gather important regulatory information to improve its efforts to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. The penal code provides for the seizure of assets and property tied to narcotics trafficking and terrorist activities. Tunisia freezes and confiscates assets, but the timeframe for taking action varies depending on the case. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Tunisia made a concerted effort to improve socioeconomic conditions in the country through economic development and education programs to help prevent radicalization. The government also attempted to prevent the radicalization of Tunisians by minimizing their exposure to inflammatory rhetoric in mosques by replacing imams deemed extremist, although local populations in several cases resisted the changes. The National Counterterrorism Strategy reportedly expanded the fight against terrorism to all ministries, including those that focus on culture, education, media, and religious affairs, and assigned each ministry concrete actions to accomplish. The new counterterrorism law established the Counterterrorism Commission under the prime ministry, which includes representatives of all ministries and members of the judiciary. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the lead ministry for developing a counter extremist messaging capacity. The Ministry of Communications is also involved in developing the plan.

International and Regional Cooperation: Tunisia participates in multinational and regional efforts to counter terrorism, such as those at the UN, the Arab League, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and the AU. It is a founding member of the GCTF-inspired International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) and participated in numerous IIJ

trainings and workshops, which were focused on improving criminal justice actors' capacity to prevent and address terrorism-related crimes.

Tunisia is an active member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, a U.S. multi-year interagency regional program aimed at building the capacity of governments in the Maghreb and Sahel to confront the threats posed by violent extremists. Tunisia is also part of the Security Governance Initiative announced by President Obama in 2014. Tunisian authorities intensified their coordination on border security with Algerian counterparts over this past year, although cooperation with Libya was nearly impossible due to the absence of an effective Libyan central government. Algeria's cooperation with Tunisia on counterterrorism is particularly robust: an agreement between the two countries established military-to-military communications and a coordination committee to improve information sharing related to counterterrorism activities.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Overview: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) government continued to reinforce its firm counterterrorism stance through implementation of strict counterterrorism laws and a strong counterterrorism partnership with the United States. The UAE government strengthened its commitment to support the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), most notably through its growing counter-messaging role. The UAE government co-chaired the Coalition Communications Working Group along with the United States and the UK, and partnered with the U.S. government to establish the Sawab Center, an online counter-ISIL messaging hub. The UAE was also an active participant in the Conference of the Chiefs of Staff of Members of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and Terrorism held in Qatar in June, and in the U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Counterterrorism and Border Security Working Group which met in Riyadh in August as a follow-up to the U.S.-GCC Summit at Camp David held in May.

The UAE government security apparatus remained highly capable of monitoring and preventing terrorist activity within the UAE's borders. Throughout 2015, the UAE worked to improve border security and measures to counter the financing of terrorism. The pre-clearance facility for travelers boarding direct flights to the United States at the Abu Dhabi International Airport continued to operate and expand its services. A number of UAE-based think tanks and research institutions, including the Emirates Policy Center, the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Hedayah, and the TRENDS Institute, held conferences, seminars, and roundtables on confronting terrorism and violent extremism.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The UAE continued to implement the revised counterterrorism law (Federal law No.7) it passed in November 2014, as well as the existing cybercrime law, to prosecute terrorism-related crimes involving use of the internet to promote radical ideologies and finance terrorist activities. In July, the UAE adopted an anti-discrimination law that included provisions that complement and supplement the existing counterterrorism law. In addition to criminalizing all forms of discrimination based on religion, caste, creed, doctrine, race, color, or ethnic origin, the anti-discrimination law bans hate speech propagated through media outlets, and bans acts that promote religious hate and intolerance. The law also criminalizes the practice of referring to other religious groups or individuals as infidels or unbelievers ("kafir" in Arabic), though aspects of the law are overly broad and can be interpreted to criminalize atheism, peaceful critiques of Islam, and other forms of protected

religious speech and expression. Penalties for violating the law include jail terms ranging from six months to more than 10 years, as well as fines from US $13,000 to US $540,000.

The State Security Directorate in Abu Dhabi and Dubai State Security were the principal security services responsible for counterterrorism functions. These services demonstrated advanced capability in investigations, crisis response, and border security, and were trained and equipped to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents. The Federal Supreme Court, through its State Security Court, had sole jurisdiction for adjudicating national security and terrorism-related cases.

In June, the State Security Court convicted Ala'a Badr Abdullah al Hashimi of murdering an American kindergarten teacher in the Al Reem shopping center in Abu Dhabi in December 2014. Al Hashimi subsequently attempted to detonate a bomb outside the home of an American doctor. The Court sentenced al Hashimi to death, the first instance of capital punishment in accordance with the 2014 counterterrorism law. Al Hashimi was executed by firing squad on July 13.

According to official press reports, the State Security Court heard more than two dozen other alleged terrorism-related cases in 2015. In the Al Manara case, 41 individuals – 38 of whom are Emiratis – were charged with establishing a terrorist organization and embracing extremist ideology with the intent of carrying out terrorist activities in the UAE. As of late December, the case was still being heard by the court. A number of other Emiratis and non-citizen residents were charged with allegedly joining ISIL and al-Qa'ida-affiliated groups, including al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Nusrah Front, and using the internet to promote extremist ideology; in some of these cases individuals received prison sentences of up to 10 years. Several of these cases have been adjourned and are awaiting final verdicts.

The UAE also deported a number of noncitizens who allegedly planned to join ISIL, including four Sudanese medical students traveling to Syria via the UAE who were intercepted at Dubai International Airport. The counterterrorism law provided broad authority for prosecution of crimes that potentially jeopardized UAE security, including defamation or insulting the UAE's rulers or system of governance; this legislation has been used to restrict nonviolent speech and criticism of the government. In November, for example, the State Security Court convicted Kuwaiti citizen and former Member of Parliament, Mubarak al Duwailah, of insulting Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nayhan by criticizing the Crown Prince's stance on the Muslim Brotherhood,which the UAE designated as a terrorist organization. Al Duwailah was tried and sentenced to five years' imprisonment in absentia. Also in November, Emirati citizen Abdulla Saeed Al Dhanhani received a five-year prison term and a fine of US $270,000 after being convicted of insulting the UAE's leaders on social media, and for voicing support on Twitter and Instagram for the Muslim Brotherhood.

The State Security Court also heard cases involving individuals with alleged ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. Several of these involved allegations that individuals were "spreading rumors" that defamed the UAE and posed a threat to the security of the nation. In one such case, the court sentenced an Emirati to seven years in jail for joining al-Islah, a UAE-based organization affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. It was not clear if his charges were based on incitement to violence or nonviolent speech and political affiliation.

The UAE government continued to support DHS preclearance operations and expansion with increased flights and passengers from Abu Dhabi International Airport to the United States. Abu Dhabi Police's Criminal Investigations Divisions enhanced its information sharing with DHS in an effort to combat transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups. DHS Homeland Security Investigations provided ongoing mentoring and capacity-building training related to fraudulent documents and impostor detection to Abu Dhabi Police, Immigration, and Customs personnel, and airline personnel. The UAE employed a retina-screening system that fed traveler information into a central mainframe computer at the Ministry of Interior. The mainframe consolidated data pertaining to entry/exit, immigration, deportation, criminal activity, and corrections, and was accessible at all air, land, and sea ports. The UAE also collected Advanced Passenger Information at ports of entry (POEs). UAE POEs utilized an internal name-based watchlist system which was populated by local immigration, deportation, corrections, and security agencies to identify individuals who were prohibited from entering the country or were sought by UAE authorities. INTERPOL and GCC watchlists were presumably incorporated into the UAE's internal watchlist.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The UAE is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body, and chaired the Task Force's Training and Typologies Working Group. The UAE's financial intelligence unit, the Anti-Money Laundering and Suspicious Cases Unit (AML/SCU), is a member of the Egmont Group. The UAE also participated in the Counter-ISIL Finance Group chaired by Italy, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

The UAE is a regional and global financial and transportation hub, and terrorist organizations exploited the UAE to send and receive financial support. Operational capability constraints and political considerations sometimes prevented the UAE government from immediately freezing and confiscating terrorist assets absent multilateral assistance, but there were other instances of effective Emirati action to disrupt terrorist financing. Except for those specifically established for financial activities, which were well-regulated, the UAE's numerous free trade zones varied in their compliance with and supervision of anti-money laundering/counterterrorism financing (AML/CFT) international best practices. Exploitation by illicit actors of money transmitters including licensed exchange houses, *hawalas,* and trading firms acting as money transmitters, remained significant concerns. The UAE required licensing and registration of exchange houses and *hawalas*with the Central Bank.

Both the Governor of the Central Bank and the Public Prosecutor were able to freeze funds based on suspicion of terrorism financing. The Central Bank conducted AML training both locally and regionally, including in a MENAFATF assessors' training course in October aimed at training expert evaluators of AML/CFT regimes. Pursuant to the federal counterterrorism law, the UAE designated the AML/SCU as the sole national center concerned with receiving, analyzing, and forwarding suspicious transaction reports (STRs). STRs based on activity in financial free zones were previously reported to the AML/SCU through financial free zone regulators. The UAE also worked on enhancing the independence of the AML/SCU, publishing annual reports, and providing comprehensive statistics on the activities carried out by the unit.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The UAE government continued to support Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), which it hosts in Abu Dhabi. In June, Hedayah conducted a workshop bringing together CVE practitioners and former foreign terrorist fighters to discuss the foreign terrorist fighter threat and counter-messaging approaches to address it. Hedayah participated in the Madrid+10: Stop Violent Extremism conference in Spain in October, where it also organized a two-day workshop on the Role of Women in Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism. Hedayah hosted a follow-up International CVE Research Conference in December in coordination with Edith Cowan University and New York University Abu Dhabi Institute. In addition to supporting Hedayah, the UAE government in July partnered with the U.S. government to launch the Sawab Center in Abu Dhabi, a new social media platform focused on countering ISIL's radical narratives and online propaganda. The UAE was also host to the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies.

To prevent violent extremist preaching in UAE mosques, the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments provided guidelines for all Friday sermons and monitored mosques' compliance, excluding those in Dubai, which has its own system under the supervision of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities Department. Abroad, the General Authority continued providing training to cohorts of Afghan imams on preaching messages of non-violence and tolerance. During key periods of Muslim religious observance, especially the fasting month of Ramadan, the UAE government aired commercials on television warning Muslim citizens and residents to refrain from donating money at mosques, as the funds could unknowingly support terrorist causes. The UAE also worked to keep its education system free of violent extremist influences, emphasizing social tolerance. In November, the UAE government announced its plan to open in Al Ain a branch of Egypt's Al-Azhar University, a premier institution of Islamic learning, as a way to promote the teaching of moderate Islam in the Gulf region.

The Government of the UAE also received training on social media analysis to enhance its ability to combat ISIL's use of the internet to spread propaganda and increase recruitment.

International and Regional Cooperation: The UAE was a vocal and active participant in counterterrorism efforts at both the regional and international levels, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum, where it served as co-chair of the Countering Violent Extremism working group. It sent high-level delegations to a number of counterterrorism-related conferences, including the International Conference on Counter Extremism and Violence, the Conference of the Chiefs of Staff of Members of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and Terrorism, the 17th meeting of the Arab League's Counter-Terrorism Team of Experts, and a special session of the Arab Judicial Cooperation Network on Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime. It co-chaired with Germany the Working Group on Stabilization of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. It also co-chaired with the United States and UK the Working Group on Strategic Communications of the Global Coalition against ISIL. The UAE participated in the August U.S.-GCC Counterterrorism and Border Security Working group meeting in Riyadh.

In December the UAE government helped launch the International Supreme Council for Ifta, a group that seeks to review, correct, and amalgamate Islamic edicts, particularly those espoused by ISIL and other terrorist groups. The council includes 35 Islamic scholars/muftis from 35 Muslim countries. The UAE government routinely invited participation from GCC countries at

counterterrorism-related training sessions conducted by U.S. law enforcement agencies in the UAE.

YEMEN

Overview: Throughout 2015, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) exploited the political and security vacuum left by conflict between the Yemeni government and the Houthi-led opposition. On January 22, 2015, forces affiliated with the Houthi-led Ansar Allah seized the Presidential Palace and other government buildings in Sana'a, leading Vice President and Prime Minister (VP/PM) Khaled Bahah and his cabinet to resign, while the Houthis placed President Hadi under house arrest. On February 6, Ansar Allah illegally disbanded parliament and established the appointive Supreme Revolutionary Committee as the highest governing authority. On February 21, President Hadi escaped house arrest and fled Sana'a for Aden. On March 19, Houthi-led opposition forces attempted to seize the airport in Aden. On March 24, President Hadi requested Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) military intervention, invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter, and a Saudi-led coalition launched air operations against the Houthi rebellion; the president fled the country the following day, as Houthi-led forces took control of the Aden airport. The Government of Yemen subsequently remained outside Yemen until September 16, when VP/PM Bahah and most of his ministers reestablished themselves in Aden. However, an October 6 terrorist attack reportedly by ISIL's branch in Yemen on the Government of Yemen's operational headquarters, the Al-Qasr Hotel, once again drove the Government of Yemen outside the country temporarily. While the Yemeni government has since returned – the cabinet is now split between Riyadh and Aden – a large security vacuum persists, which both ISIL and AQAP have taken advantage of to strengthen their foothold and forces inside the country.

AQAP and ISIL-Yemen have also manipulated the conflict as part of a broader Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict. By emphasizing this sectarian divide based on Ansar-Allah's Shia religion and support from Iran, these groups have increased their support base and enabled ISIL-Yemen to gain a foothold in the country. ISIL-Yemen has targeted Zaydi Shia mosques in its attacks. While the exact composition of ISIL-Yemen is still unknown, its numbers are considerably smaller than AQAP's despite it having likely drawn members from some of the same disillusioned Yemeni AQAP members who previously supported ISIL in Iraq and Syria. Structurally, there are seven known *wilayat* (province) pro-ISIL groups operating in 10 of Yemen's provinces, including Sa'ada, Sana'a, al-Jawf, al-Bayda, Taiz, Ibb, Lahij, Aden, Shahwah, and Hadramawt. While ISIL in Yemen has demonstrated a violent operational pace, it has yet to occupy significant territory or challenge AQAP's status of Yemen's predominate Sunni Islamist terrorist group.

AQAP benefitted during 2015 from the conflict in Yemen by significantly expanding its presence in the southern and eastern governorates. Despite losing a number of senior leaders during 2015, the group was able to increase its recruiting and expand its safe haven in Yemen. It also insinuated itself among multiple factions on the ground, which has made it more difficult to counter. This tactic has allowed AQAP to continue to expand the territory it controlled during 2015 to Abyan, Taiz, and its largest safe haven in the port city of al-Mukalla. It also maintained a presence in Aden. In addition, there were no direct physical clashes reported between the two groups during 2015. Most disputes were confined to verbal or online attacks. However, this could change as the two groups continue to compete with one another.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: AQAP and ISIL terrorists carried out hundreds of attacks throughout Yemen. Methods included suicide bombers, vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs), ambushes, kidnappings, and targeted assassinations. The following list details only a small fraction of the incidents that occurred:

- On March 20, ISIL-Yemen detonated separate suicide vests at two Zaydi mosques in Sana'a, during Friday prayers. At one of the mosques, a suicide bomber entered the crowd of worshipers before detonating and the second bomber detonated as worshipers were fleeing. The blast killed 77 people and injured more than 120 others. On the same day, another suicide bomber attempted to detonate a suicide vest at a Zaydi mosque in Sa'ada City, Sa'ada.
- On April 2, AQAP attacked government and security facilities in al-Mukalla, Hadramawt, on Yemen's southern coast. Militants also attacked a prison and freed an estimated 270 inmates, including AQAP's former head of Abyan province, Khaled Batarfi.
- On April 16, AQAP-linked terrorists led by AQAP's former head of Abyan, Khaled Batarfi, and calling themselves the "Sons of Hadramawt," seized control of al Dhabah oil terminal, directly east of the port city al Mukalla in Hadramawt. The terrorists also seized Rayyan Airport, east of al-Mukalla.
- On October 6, ISIL-Yemen claimed to have detonated four suicide VBIEDs near Yemeni government and Saudi-led coalition sites in Aden.
- On October 14, AQAP terroristsseized a government complex in Zinjibar, a port city near Aden in southern Yemen that AQAP controlled throughout 2011 and into 2012. Suspected AQAP terrorists also attacked an intelligence building in al-Hudaydah, Yemen's Red Seaport.
- On December 6, ISIL-Yemen claimed responsibility for the attack that killed the Governor of Aden, Major General Jaafar Mohammed Saad, and threatened additional attacks on Yemeni government officials.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Yemen does not have comprehensive counterterrorism legislation and no progress was made in this regard as the Yemeni government remained outside Yemen for most of 2015. During this timeframe, the presence of AQAP and ISIL-Yemen increased. As the government reestablishes its foothold in Yemen, it will need to focus on counterterrorism as one of its highest priorities. Government of Yemen officials have expressed an interest in integrating militia, resistance, and other units under one security umbrella as these efforts unfold.

Draft counterterrorism legislation has been pending in the parliament since 2008. This legislation remained at a standstill, as the parliament has not met while the country has been subject to a civil conflict. Prior to the political instability in the capital, the draft was under review by the three parliamentary subcommittees responsible for counterterrorism law issues (Legal and Constitutional Affairs; Security and Defense; and Codification of Sharia Law). This law would facilitate the detention of suspects and include mandatory sentencing for a number of terrorism-related crimes.

Prior to March 2015, the National Security Agency and President's Office drafted a National Counterterrorism Strategy. This draft was reviewed by a Ministerial Committee. However, the

committee was unable to finalize its task due to the developments in the country. Therefore, Yemen's National Counterterrorism Strategy had not yet been officially adopted or implemented at the end of 2015. Another committee, at a more technical level worked to establish a Yemen Rehabilitation Center for Countering Extremism. However, the work of the committee stopped in early January 2015 before it began seeking donor funding.

Yemen adopted the Terrorist Interdiction Program's Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) in 2002 in an effort to secure borders and identify fraudulent travel documents. Yemen has the capability to conduct biographic and biometric screening at multiple land, sea, and air ports of entry.

In past years, the Yemeni government's Coast Guard forces played a critical role in interdictions of weapons and other illegal materials destined for Yemen-based terrorist groups, although Yemen's maritime borders remained extremely porous due to a lack of capacity. At present, Yemen's military, including the coast guard, has been degraded by the current conflict. AQAP's control of al-Mukallah and its expansion along the southern coast have made these areas highly vulnerable to maritime smuggling of weapons, materials, and goods used to finance AQAP and other terrorist activities.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Yemen is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Yemen did not participate in MENAFATF meetings in 2015. There is currently no information from its Financial Information Unit (FIU), which operates out of the CBY. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Throughout 2015, the Government of Yemen leadership has stressed the importance of countering terrorism and violent extremism as the country moves forward towards a peace deal. The Government of Yemen will need to focus on the details of such a plan once conditions allow.

International and Regional Cooperation: While in Riyadh, the Government of Yemen continued to cooperate with and be advised by the GCC, the United States, and other donor countries as it focused on working towards a peaceful solution to the conflict. Despite the challenges, the Government of Yemen remained an international partner as it worked to reestablish itself in Yemen.

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

South Asia remained a front-line region in the battle against terrorism. Although al-Qa'ida (AQ) in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been seriously degraded, AQ's global leadership continued to operate from remote locations in the region that the group has historically exploited for safe haven. International, Afghan, and Pakistani forces continued to contest AQ's presence in the region, and Pakistan's offensive in North Waziristan Agency further degraded the group's freedom to operate. Pressure on AQ's traditional safe havens has constrained the leadership's ability to communicate effectively with affiliate groups outside of South Asia.

Afghanistan, in particular, continued to experience aggressive and coordinated attacks by the Afghan Taliban, including the Haqqani Network (HQN), and other insurgent and terrorist groups. A number of these attacks were planned and launched from safe havens in Pakistan. Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) assumed full responsibility for security in Afghanistan in January 2015, and maintained control of the majority of districts in the country. The ANDSF and Coalition Forces, in partnership, took aggressive action against terrorist elements across Afghanistan.

While terrorist-related violence in Pakistan declined in 2015, the country continued to suffer significant terrorist attacks, particularly against vulnerable targets such as schools. The Pakistani military and security forces undertook operations against groups that conducted attacks within Pakistan such as Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Pakistan did not take substantial action against the Afghan Taliban or HQN, or substantially limit their ability to threaten U.S. interests in Afghanistan, although Pakistan supported efforts to bring both groups into an Afghan-led peace process. Pakistan has also not taken sufficient action against other externally-focused groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), which continued to operate, train, organize, and fundraise in Pakistan.

In January 2015, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) announced the establishment of its formal branch in Afghanistan and Pakistan, ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K). The group primarily comprises disenfranchised members of the Afghan Taliban and TTP. At year's end, the majority of the group's attacks were against Afghan government, Taliban, and civilian targets, although the group also claimed a small number of attacks in Pakistan's settled areas. Over the course of the year, ISIL-K gained a small foothold in eastern Nangarhar province in Afghanistan, but was significantly challenged by the Afghan government, Coalition Forces, and the Taliban, and had little support among the region's population.

India continued to experience terrorist attacks, including operations launched by Maoist insurgents and transnational groups based in Pakistan. Indian authorities continued to blame Pakistan for cross-border attacks in Kashmir and Jammu. In July, India experienced a terrorist attack in Gurdaspur, Punjab; the first in India's Punjab Province since the 1990s. Over the course of 2015, the Government of India sought to deepen counterterrorism cooperation with the United States. President Obama and Prime Minister Modi continued to prioritize counterterrorism cooperation during President Obama's visit to India in January and Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington in September. The Indian government closely monitored the domestic threat from ISIL and other terrorist organizations.

Bangladesh experienced a significant increase in terrorist attacks in 2015 compared to 2014. Transnational groups such as ISIL and AQ in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) have claimed several attacks targeting foreigners, religious minorities, police, secular bloggers, and publishers. The Government of Bangladesh has attributed these attacks to the political opposition and local terrorists.

In 2015, the threat from foreign terrorist fighters remained a concern for Central Asian leaders due to ISIL activities in the Middle East and the deteriorating security situation in neighboring Afghanistan after the drawdown of U.S. and Coalition Forces.

Overview: With the conclusion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission on December 31, 2014, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) assumed full responsibility for the security and defense of Afghanistan. The United Statesremained committed to sustained political, diplomatic, and economic engagement in Afghanistan and retained the capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan; however, the majority of these operations were carried out in conjunction with, or solely by, Afghan units. The United States also continued to support the professionalization and modernization ofthe ANDSF. The military component of U.S. assistance to the ANDSF transitioned to NATO's non-combat Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) on January 1, 2015. RSM focused on building the capabilities of the Afghan forces at the regional (Corps) level and above through its train, advise, and assist mission and USFOR-A retained U.S. counterterrorism functions, as outlined in the Security and Defense Cooperation Agreement between the Governments of Afghanistan and the United States, also known as the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA).

In 2015, the ANDSF faced a challenging first year of fighting without the support of internationally-led combat operations. ANDSF operations centered on the provinces of Kunduz, Badakhshan, Zabul,Ghazni, and Helmand. Taliban insurgents amassed in larger numbers and attacked multiple district centers throughout the country, particularly in the provinces of Nangarhar, Helmand, and Kunduz. Several districts remained contested at year's end although all major population centers and critical infrastructure remained under government control. The Haqqani Network (HQN), a semi-autonomousfaction of the Taliban, continued to plan and conduct high profile attacks and assassinations against U.S., Coalition, and Afghan interests, particularly in Kabul and other key government centers. While al-Qa'ida (AQ) has been severely degraded in the region, its regional affiliate, al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), continued to operate in Afghanistan. Notably, AQIS members were active at a large training camp in a remote area of Kandahar Province. On October 11, U.S. and Afghan forces conducted a coordinated joint operation that successfully destroyed the AQIS training camp and a related facility, and killed dozens of AQ-linked trainees.

President Ghani identified establishing a peace process as a top priority of his administration and pursued engagement with the Taliban. The Afghan government had its first direct meeting with the Taliban on July 7 in Murree, Pakistan; however, these talks were suspended shortly after the revelation in late July that Taliban leader Mullah Omar had died in 2013. On December 9, following meetings on the sidelines of the Heart of Asia summit, Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the United States committed to seeking the resumption of talks as soon as possible.

On January 26, 2015, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) publicly announced the establishment of an affiliate, ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K), in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since its inception, ISIL-K has been mostly active in the eastern parts of Afghanistan. By the end of 2015, the group had established a foothold in the southern districts of Nangarhar Province, where ISIL-K fighters had reportedly shut down schools. In 2015, the ANDSF conducted several successful operations against ISIL-K bases in southern Nangarhar. Repeated heavy fighting between the Taliban and ISIL-K was reported in the province as well.

In early December 2015, local media reported that a new ISIL-K radio station, "Voice of the Caliphate," began operating out of Nangarhar Province, making evening broadcasts in the Pashto

language via a mobile transmitter. The Afghan government shut down the radio station on December 23, taking action under the Afghan Law on Fighting Crimes Against Internal and External Threats. On December 26, however, local media reported that ISIL-K radio was back on the air after changing frequencies. At the close of the year, the Afghan government was considering a range of options to shut down the station's operations.

ISIL-K's Salafist ideology may resonate with fringe elements of terrorist groups in Afghanistan, but the majority of Afghanistan-based terrorists resisted fully aligning themselves with the group and the Taliban were overtly hostile to the ISIL affiliate. One exception was the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which publicly announced termination of its long-time alliance with the Taliban to align with ISIL-K.

Based on Afghan media commentary, it appears that the Afghan people have developed a deep disdain for ISIL-K's extreme violence. Some Afghans have responded to ISIL-K atrocities through grassroots, civilian-organized militias that have emerged to combat ISIL-K. At times, these militias have partnered with Afghan security forces.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: In 2015, Afghanistan remained an area of active hostilities, and various groups used terrorist tactics to pursue their goals. Methods used included suicide bombers, vehicle-born improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), ambushes, kidnappings, beheadings, and targeted assassinations.

Anti-government groups across Afghanistan aimed to expand their territorial influence, disrupt civil governance, and create a public perception of instability, as ISAF combat operations ended and Afghan forces assumed full responsibility for the security of their country. Attacks diverged from the historic seasonal pattern of higher activity in the spring and summer as terrorist groups – the Taliban in particular – conducted attacks on the ANDSF throughout the fall and early winter of 2015, especially in the less weather-affected southern province of Helmand. Attackers continued to use large VBIEDs and complex attacks involving multiple attackers laden with suicide vests working in teams. These incidents increasingly targeted ANDSF, Afghan government buildings, and soft foreign civilian targets, as the overall number of potential foreign military targets decreased due to a drawdown in the international military presence. Terrorist activity expanded from areas in the south and east of Afghanistan to areas in the north; Helmand and Kunduz were the main focus of attacks at the end of 2015. Helmand, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Ghazni, Kunar, and Kunduz represented the most violent provinces for ANDSF and civilians.

The following list details only a small fraction of the hundreds of incidents that occurred during 2015:

- On March 19, the Taliban carried out a suicide attack targeting and killing the provincial chief of police (PCoP) of Uruzgan Province. The suicide bomber was wearing a burqa and detonated his vest as he approached the PCoP on the streets of Kabul.
- On June 9, in an insider attack, five Afghan policemen were shot and killed by fellow policemen in southern Kandahar Province. The incident took place at a security check point in Khakriz District. The provincial governor's spokesperson confirmed the insider attack.
- On June 22, a Taliban suicide bomber and six gunmen attacked the Parliament building in Kabul as lawmakers met to consider the appointment of a new defense minister. A

Taliban fighter detonated a car loaded with explosives outside the Parliament gates, and six gunmen attempted to enter the building. One civilian was killed and approximately 30 civilians were wounded in the attack.

- On July 22, a suicide motorcyclist detonated his explosives in the middle of a market in the Alamar District of Faryab Province. Twenty people were killed in the attack, including an Afghan National Army soldier, and more than 30 people, including two ANDSF personnel, were injured.
- On August 7, terrorists launched three attacks in Kabul. In the first attack at 1:00 a.m., a massive VBIED in a truck driven by a suicide attacker detonated in the center of Kabul, killing 15 people and wounding more than 240 civilians. In the second attack, a Taliban suicide bomber killed 26 police cadets and wounded another 27 when he blew himself up outside the gates of a police academy. The bomber was dressed in police uniform and detonated his explosive vest after approaching a group of cadets who were standing outside the academy. In a separate Taliban attack, one RSM service member and eight Afghan contractors were killed.
- On August 8, at least 22 members of a reportedly pro-government militia were killed in an explosion in northern Kunduz Province.
- On August 10, ISIL-K released a video of the executions of 10 village elders in Nangarhar Province. ISIL-K forced the men to sit on IEDs and detonated them.
- On September 28, in a complex coordinated attack, Taliban insurgents captured Kunduz City, Afghanistan's sixth largest city. Following several days of fighting, the ANDSF recaptured the city. As a result of the attacks, an estimated 50 individuals were killed and 600 were injured.
- On December 8, a Taliban assault near Kandahar Airfield resulted in the deaths of 36 civilians and 15 Afghan soldiers. Another 35 were injured, including 21 ANDSF personnel and 14 civilians. During the attack, Taliban fighters temporarily occupied a neighborhood bazaar, school, and an apartment complex.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Afghan Attorney General's Office (AGO) investigates and prosecutes violations of the laws on Crimes against the Internal and External Security of the State (1976 and 1987), the Law on Combat Against Terrorist Offenses (2008), and the Law of Firearms, Ammunition, and Explosives (2005). The AGO also investigates and prosecutes violations of laws that prohibit membership in terrorist or insurgent groups, as well as laws that forbid violent acts committed against the state, hostage-taking, murder, and the use of explosives against military forces and state infrastructure. The Law on the Structure and Jurisdiction of the Attorney General's Office, enacted in October 2013, codified the structure and funding of the existing Anti-Terrorism Protection Directorate (ATPD) in the AGO. The ATPD permits the investigation and prosecution of terrorist and national security cases in accordance with internationally accepted methods and evidentiary rules.

The Justice Center in Parwan (JCIP),adjacent to Bagram Air Field, continued to adjudicate cases of individuals detained by Afghan security forces and accused of terrorism and other national security threat crimes. In July, the Office of the National Security Council issued a directive ordering any person detained on one of seven specified criteria be sent to the JCIP for prosecution. Those seven criteria include suspects captured on the field of battle; individuals accused of terrorist crimes; influential and prominent members of the Taliban; and commanders of terrorist groups. In September, President Ghani issued by presidential decree Annex 1 to the Afghan Criminal Procedure Code that expanded the AGO's authority to investigate and

prosecute terrorist crimes; prohibited persons sentenced for terrorist crimes from receiving a parole or pardon; and designated the JCIP as the country's counterterrorism court with nationwide jurisdiction. Its docket regularly includes cases against those implicated in terrorist attacks on U.S. military personnel and U.S. military and civilian installations in Afghanistan. Between January and October of 2015, the JCIP adjudicated 214 primary court cases (compared to 533 in 2014), and 451 appellate court cases (compared to 1,153 in 2014).

Because of its operational structure and the continuous support and assistance it received from the international community, the ANDSF demonstrated the capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations in 2015. The Afghan and U.S. governments investigated a variety of criminal acts, including kidnappings and conspiracies to commit terrorist acts. Occasionally, U.S. law enforcement bodies assisted the Ministry of Interior, the National Directorate of Security, and other Afghan authorities to take action to disrupt and dismantle terrorist operations and prosecute terrorist suspects. The ANDSF continued to receive train, advise, and assist (TAA) support from the international community in 2015. The Department of State continued to deliver Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) training to Afghan security forces in 2015, with a focus on building security force capacity to engage in effective tactical counterterrorism operations.

Afghanistan continued to process traveler arrivals and departures at major points of entry using the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES). In 2015, the PISCES program was expanded to new Points of Entry to meet Afghanistan's border security requirements. Moreover, Afghan Border Police (ABP) officers completed more in-depth training on developing and maintaining a national screening list and efforts were under way at year's end to leverage PISCES reporting capabilities for use in counterterrorism and criminal investigations.

Despite advances in capability, the ANDSF continued to face significant challenges in successfully securing the country's porous land borders, particularly those with Pakistan and Iran. The ABP, part of the policing wing of the ANDSF, numbers more than 23,000 officers and has the lead on border security. Its numbers and weaponry are insufficient to successfully execute its mission, particularly in the border areas where border police face difficult terrain, resupply, and coordination issues with the Afghan National Army, and heavily armed anti-government groups that attack them in force.

The Afghan government faces several significant obstacles to more effective law enforcement and border security. After decades of war and poor or fragmented governance in many rural areas, the ANDSF is working with international actors to build capacity. While Afghanistan has made progress since 2001, complex organizational structures, weak inter-ministerial coordination, rampant corruption, lack of territorial control (particularly in the border regions with Pakistan), and de facto safe havens for terrorist groups operating on its soil remained ongoing challenges.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Since April 2006, Afghanistan has been a member of the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Center of Afghanistan (FinTRACA), is a member of the Egmont Group. In June 2014, the FATF strongly warned Afghanistan to comply with the government's June 2012 commitment to implement an action plan agreed upon with FATF to address identified deficiencies by

October 2014, or run the risk of being placed on the list of "high-risk and non-cooperative jurisdictions." The FATF action plan outlined a number of areas that the government needed to address to bring Afghanistan into compliance with international standards, including enactment of amended anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) legislation. In 2014, the Afghan government took initial steps to address deficiencies in its AML/CFT regime, including publishing its since-enacted AML and CFT statutes. In March 2015, Afghanistan amended its AML and CFT laws to become more compliant with the FATF recommendations. Since June, Afghanistan has taken further steps towards improving its AML/CFT regime, which included issuing an appropriate regulation for the financial sector and cross-border declaration regulations for the physical transportation of cash and of negotiable instruments. However, questions persist regarding UNSCR implementation and the FATF has determined that certain strategic deficiencies remain and recommended that Afghanistanaddress its remaining deficiencies and continue the process of implementing its action plan.

Afghan officials indicated that because AQ, the Taliban, and terrorist organizations related to the Central Asian Republics transfer their assets from person to person or through informal banking systems, it is very difficult to track, freeze, and confiscate their assets. When transactions have come to the Afghan government's attention, either via FinTRACA or reports from the Afghan security agencies, the government has reportedly acted promptly not only to freeze but also to confiscate those assets.

Money Service Providers (MSP) in Afghanistan are required to register with and provide currency transaction reports to FinTRACA. These reports include monthly data on volumes and numbers of transactions, detailing whether transactions are inbound or outbound, foreign or domestic, and in local or foreign currency. Oversight is weak but improving, with the period between 2014 and April 2015 seeing an increase in the number of on-site inspections of money service providers; a total of 149 MSPs were fined approximately $51,724 for non-compliance during that time period. Capacity issues at the FIU due to personnel shortages and lack of training continued to hamper full oversight of this sector.

The amended CFT law considers non-profit organizations as legal entities and requires them to file suspicious transaction reports. The Afghan government distributed UN sanctions lists to financial institutions via secure e-mail.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Afghan government does not have a comprehensive formal national countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy, but has begun the process to develop one. The Office of the National Security Council has designated a team to take the lead in coordinating the government's CVE engagement. Various ministries and offices have CVE issues incorporated in their portfolios. The government continued to support activities designed to prevent radicalization, including through curricula development, messaging through registered mosques, and support of the Moderation Center of Afghanistan.

Through engagement with religious communities, Afghan government officials promoted religious moderation, encouraged tolerance, and condemned violence. There are approximately

120,000 mosques in Afghanistan, of which 3,700 are registered with the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA) and the Ministry of Education. Registration is not compulsory, and unregistered mosques, many of which have associated madrassas, operated independently of government oversight. Some religious leaders at unregistered mosques and madrassas promoted violent extremism. The National Ulema Council is a quasi-governmental body of religious scholars established by former President Karzai in 2002. Since taking office in September 2014, President Ghani has engaged actively on CVE efforts, requesting that the Ulema Council condemn insurgent attacks and issue a call for peace in mosques throughout the country.

In the second half of 2015, the Presidential Palace boosted efforts to coordinate messaging on security and other issues, including strategic messaging to weaken the appeal of violent extremism. During that period, the Presidential Palace was in the process of conducting a strategic review under the auspices of a strategic communications advisor to enhance the Afghan government's strategic communications efforts. Under the plan, the Government Media and Information Center (GMIC) would be used as the hub for proactive governmental messaging and communication within the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson. Government spokespersons regularly participated in coordination meetings at GMIC and exchanged views on how to defuse the negative rhetoric promoted by terrorist groups.

In media appearances, Afghan political leaders often emphasized the important role of the Ulema Council (religious leaders) in preaching peace and denouncing terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Taliban, ISIL, HQN, and others. The Council issued media statements to condemn violence by anti-government groups on only a few occasions.

In 2015, mainstream Afghan media continued to play the lead role in reflecting the public anger at and condemnation of terrorist attacks. Media played a major role in countering extremist messaging, which remains critical for the marginalization of these anti-government elements in the minds of the public. During the fall and subsequent recapture of Kunduz City in September, Afghanistan's two leading TV stations (Tolo News and 1TV) covered extrajudicial killings of civilians and other human rights abuses by the Taliban, including reporting that university students had been raped. The Taliban subsequently threatened to target Tolo News and 1TV after the public outcry against the atrocities. The Afghan government, however, at times criticized Afghan media as serving the interests of the Taliban and other terrorist and opposition groups by broadcasting their claims and statements. On the other hand, some of these media outlets and journalists were threatened by the Taliban for their pro-government coverage. Media outlets, such as Tolo, devoted considerable resources to public service messages calling for national unity, respect for human rights, and other themes related to countering violent extremism.

Afghan religious leaders, civil society members, and government officials attended conferences at the Hedayah Center (an international center headquartered in Abu Dhabi focused on countering violent extremism), the February 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, regional CVE summits, and UNGA side events where they participated in discussions about approaches to countering violent extremism. Afghan religious leaders received training on tolerance programming in the United Arab Emirates and scholars from other countries visited Afghanistan to speak on issues of tolerance and peace.

The High Peace Council oversees the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) program, which pays for and provides the institutional mechanism to implement the Afghan government's peace activities including the reintegration of former militants at the local level, provincial-level peace outreach, and Ulema engagement on countering violent extremism. The APRP maintained a field presence in 33 provinces. Individual fighters who join the program make the commitment to renounce violence and sever all ties with AQ, and to abide by the Constitution of Afghanistan. Since its inception in 2010, the APRP has successfully reintegrated more than 10,700 former combatants across Afghanistan.

International and Regional Cooperation: Afghanistan consistently emphasized the need to strengthen joint cooperation to fight terrorism and violent extremism in a variety of bilateral and multilateral fora. Notable among such meetings were the Heart of Asia/Istanbul Process, the UN Regional Center for Preventative Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Afghanistan shares the lead on the Counterterrorism Confidence Building Measures (CT-CBM) of the Istanbul Process, working closely with Turkey and the UAE. Under the CT-CBM framework, Afghanistan participated in a regional technical group meeting in Ankara, Turkey, to discuss CT-CBM implementation. In December, Afghanistan participated in a Heart of Asia Conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, and hosted the 31st Tripartite (United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) Counter-IED Working Group meeting in Kabul. In collaboration with Tajikistan and the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, Afghanistan organized a workshop entitled "Sharing of Experiences on Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia for Heart of Asia Countries" in May 2015. In August-September, the ABP participated in a "Border Security and Management for Countering Terrorism" Regional Workshop in Tajikistan.

BANGLADESH

Overview: The Government of Bangladesh has articulated a "zero-tolerance" policy towards terrorism and remained committed to counterterrorism cooperation. Bangladesh experienced a significant increase in violent extremist activity in 2015 compared to 2014. Notably, attacks in 2015 were claimed both in the names of al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), whereas in past years violent extremist activity was associated with local groups. Despite these claims, the Government of Bangladesh attributed recent extremist violence to the political opposition and local terrorists.

Terrorist organizations used social media to spread their radical ideologies and solicit followers from Bangladesh. An article titled "The Revival of Jihad in Bengal" appeared in the November 2015 edition of the ISIL online magazine *Dabiq*, outlining ISIL activities in Bangladesh and plans for future attacks. Bangladesh participated in the White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism in February and follow-on summits. It also joined the Saudi-led Islamic counterterrorism alliance announced in December.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: In 2015, Bangladesh experienced an increase in terrorist attacks against religious minorities and government installations and for the first time, transnational groups have claimed responsibility for these attacks.

AQIS claimed attacks on February 26, March 30, May 12, August 7, and October 31 that resulted in the murders of four bloggers and a publisher, including an American citizen. ISIL

also claimed nine attacks, including the murder of an Italian NGO worker (September 28): a Japanese aid worker (October 3), and an attack on an Italian priest (November 18). ISIL reportedly was behind an attack on a Shia Ashura procession (October 24) that killed one person and injured nearly 100; an attack on a police checkpoint (November 4) killing a police officer; and a December 25 suicide attack on an Ahmadiyya Muslim Community mosque. The attacker died in the December 25 attack and the press reported 10 to 12 injuries. The Government of Bangladesh insisted that ISIL did not have an operational presence in the country and attributed the ISIL-claimed attacks to domestic elements.

Additionally, there was an unclaimed December 18 attack using crude explosives at two mosques on a naval base in Chittagong (injuring between six and 25 according to press reports), as well as threats and small scale attacks against Christians, Hindus, and minority Muslim groups. In each of the terrorist incidents claimed by AQIS, attackers used machetes. The attacks claimed in the name of ISIL involved a variety of weapons: machetes, pistols, and crude explosives. In the case of the attack on the Ahmadiyya mosque, a suicide vest was used.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Bangladesh's criminal justice system continued to make progress in fully implementing the Antiterrorism Act of 2009 (ATA) as amended in 2012 and 2013. Although Bangladesh's ATA does not outlaw recruitment and travel in furtherance of terrorism, the broad language of the law provides several mechanisms by which Bangladesh can implement UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 (2014), related to addressing the foreign terrorist fighter threat. Government forces reportedly arrested numerous members of ISIL and of domestic terrorist groups, including suspected supporters of Jamaat ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT). On December 24, police arrested three suspected JMB terrorists in a raid, recovering crude explosive devices and a suicide vest.

Bangladesh cooperated with the United States to further strengthen control of its borders and land, sea, and air ports of entry. Bangladesh continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program and received counterterrorism training for law enforcement officers in such areas as crisis response, explosive ordnance disposal, and aviation security. Bangladesh also received Department of State-funded prosecutorial skills training and community oriented-policing training in targeted areas of the country. U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) continued security and stability training with a number of Bangladesh security forces – including the Bangladesh Coast Guard, Bangladesh Navy Special Warfare and Diving Salvage unit, and the Bangladesh Army 1st Para Commando Battalion. Although the Bangladesh military does not have a clear counterterrorism mandate, SOCPAC will continue to maintain strong partnerships with these forces to develop their special operations capabilities.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Bangladesh is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Bangladesh Bank (the central bank) and its financial intelligence unit/anti-money laundering section, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), lead the government's efforts to comply with international standards on countering the financing of terrorism. The BFIU is a member of the Egmont Group. The APG Mutual Evaluation Team conducted a country assessment in October 2015. In addition to signing 10 Memorandums of Understanding with financial intelligence unit counterparts in other countries, the BFIU has continued its effort to increase

capacity with various training programs for its own officials and of officials of other stakeholders.

The terrorism finance provisions of Bangladesh'santi-terrorism act (ATA) prohibit the provision, receipt, and collection of money, services, and material support where "there are reasonable grounds to believe that the same has been used or may be used for any purpose by a terrorist entity." The Act prohibits membership in and support of prohibited organizations, i.e., organizations engaged or involved in terrorist activities, including the organizations listed in the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. The ATA includes a broad provision authorizing mutual legal cooperation on terrorism matters with other nations and a comprehensive forfeiture provision for assets involved in terrorism activities. However, at year's end, successful implementation of existing laws remained a significant issue. From July 2014 to June 2015, charges were filed in 64 money laundering cases with one conviction recorded. A Banking Dialogue was held in London sponsored by the Department of Justice in the fall of 2015 for members of the Bangladesh Bank, BFIU, and senior local bank officials, and the Department of State continued to support technical training and mentorship for Bangladeshi investigators and prosecutors in handling counterterrorism finance and anti-money laundering cases. The Dialogue included discussion on counterterrorism finance and money laundering.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2015, Bangladesh formed the Community Support Mechanism (CSM) under the Global Fund for Community Engagement and Resilience (GCERF), a public-private global fund to support local, grassroots efforts to counter violent extremism. The CSM identified five local organizations to be potential recipients of GCERF funds, and submitted a national application to the GCERF Board of Directors which was approved with Independent Review Panel recommendations in December. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the National Committee on Militancy Resistance and Prevention worked with imams and religious scholars to build public awareness against terrorism. In 2015, the police began developing a plan to engage religious leaders in the fight against violent extremism by helping to counter terrorist propaganda with appropriate scripture-based messages.

International and Regional Cooperation: Bangladesh is active in several international fora. Bangladesh is party to various counterterrorism protocols under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and is bringing the country's counterterrorism efforts in line with the four pillars of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In 2015, the government demonstrated strong interest in cooperating with India on counterterrorism. It has signed memoranda of understanding with a number of countries to share evidence regarding criminal investigations, including investigations related to financial crimes and terrorism financing.

INDIA

Overview: Indian counterterrorism cooperation with the United States continued to increase in 2015. In January 2015, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi committed to deepening bilateral cooperation on the full spectrum of terrorism threats. Both leaders reaffirmed concerns over threats posed by groups such as al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

(ISIL), and called for the United States and India to work together to eliminate terrorist safe havens and infrastructure, disrupt terrorist networks and their financing, and stop cross-border movement of terrorists. They also noted the need for joint and concerted efforts to disrupt entities operating in South Asia, including LeT, Jaish-e-Mohammad, and the Haqqani Network, and called for Pakistan to bring perpetrators of the November 2008 Mumbai attack to justice.

In January 2015, the U.S. Department of Treasury and India's Ministry of Finance signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation against money laundering and terrorism financing via the U.S.-India anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) Dialogue. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security agreed with Indian counterparts to enhance cooperation in countering IED threats pursuant to a Joint Work Plan. Indian officials participated in the February White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), the June Central and South Asia Regional CVE Summit, and the September Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York. In June, U.S. and Indian police officials held a community policing consultation. The U.S.-India Megacity Policing Exchange continued to deepen collaboration on training and community policing between local and state law enforcement. In July, interagency officials participated in the inaugural U.S.-India Terrorist Designations Exchange, to strengthen cooperation on domestic terrorist designations, including implementation of UNSCR 1373 (2001), and on international designations pursuant to the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. In August, officials participating in the U.S-India Cyber Dialogue agreed to continue close cooperation on cyber security and information sharing.

The September U.S.-India Joint Declaration on Combatting Terrorism reaffirmed U.S. and Indian commitments to combat terrorism in all its forms and to uphold shared values of democracy, justice, and rule of law. The declaration condemned the July 27 terrorist attack in Gurdaspur, Punjab, and the August 5 attack in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir, described below. While India did not join the U.S.-led coalition against ISIL in 2015, the Joint Declaration recognized the serious threat posed by ISIL to global security and affirmed efforts to degrade and defeat this threat in accordance with the provisions of UNSCRs 2170, 2178, and 2199.

Indian officials emphasized that the government takes threats posed by ISIL seriously, even though media reported that less than 30 Indians have been recruited into the organization and less than 200 have considered joining. In some instances, clerics and family members supported de-radicalization efforts by government officials, althoughsympathy for ISIL appeared to increase online. On December 18, Prime Minister Modi attended a senior-level police conference on de-radicalization and countering ISIL propaganda.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The following representative incidents occurred:

- On January 10, CPI-Maoists in Chhattisgarh killed a constable and seriously injured three others.
- On June 4, tribal guerrillas in Manipur used rocket-propelled grenade IEDs to attack a military convoy headed for Imphal, killing twenty Indian soldiers and injuring 11.
- On July 27, three LeT terrorists in army fatigues fired on a bus and attacked a police station in Gurdaspur, Punjab, killing four police officers and three civilians, and injuring 15. Five bombs were found on the Amritsar-Pathankot railway linebridge, five

kilometers from the site of the attack, the first major strike in Punjab since Sikh militants were active there in the 1980s and 1990s.

- On August 5, two LeT terrorists attacked a Border Security Force (BSF) convoy in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir, killing two. One of the two attackers, both identified as Pakistani nationals, was captured alive and the other was killed. National Investigation Agency efforts led to the arrest of six additional LeT and Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists. The alleged planner behind the attack, Abdul Qasim, was subsequently killed during an October police encounter in Kashmir.
- In November, an Indian Army colonel was killed in a firefight with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In December 2014, India banned ISIL under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) (1967). During 2015, it also undertook efforts to implement UNSCRs 2178 and 2199, and sanctions under the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. India continued to address terrorism-related activities through existing statutes, including the UAPA, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Suppression of Terrorism Act (1993), and various state-level laws. The UAPA presumes the accused to be guilty if the prosecution can produce certain incriminating evidence indicating the possession of arms or explosives or the presence of fingerprints at a crime scene, regardless of whether criminal intent is demonstrated. State governments held persons without bail for extended periods before filing formal charges under the UAPA. Other state-level counterterrorism laws reduce evidentiary standards for certain charges and increase police powers to detain a person and his or her associates without charges and without bail for extended periods.

Since the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, India has sought to enhance its counterterrorism capabilities. Interagency coordination and information sharing remained challenging, and local police forces suffered from poor training and equipment. India launched initiatives to address some of these challenges, including through a Multi-Agency Centre for enhancing intelligence gathering and sharing.

Indian officials participated in U.S.-sponsored law enforcement and security training at the central government and state levels to enhance India's capabilities in critical incident management, infrastructure security, community-oriented policing, crime scene investigations, explosive ordnance detection and countermeasures, forensics, cyber security, mega city policing, and other areas. Indian police and security officials at both the state and federal levels received training under the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program in technical areas related to counterterrorism and law enforcement. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security, through the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Attaché office, and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, conducted training programs and exchanges with Indian law enforcement personnel.

On September 10, police in Assam killed two Dima Halam Daogah (DHD-A) militant leaders. On December 17, media reported that Indian officials identified former Uttar Pradesh resident Sanaul Haq (aka Maulana Asim Umar) as the head of al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Haq, who reportedly lives in Pakistan, had been appointed to his position by Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2014.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: In January 2015, the inaugural U.S.-India Anti-Money Laundering/Counterterrorism Finance (AML/CFT) dialogue was held. India is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and two FATF-style regional bodies, the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering. India's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND) is also a member of the Egmont Group. Indian officials monitored and regulated money transfers, required the collection of data for wire transfers, obliged non-profit organizations to file suspicious transaction reports, and regulated and monitored these entities to prevent misuse and terrorism financing.

Although the Government of India aligned its domestic AML/CFT laws with international standards by enacting amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in November 2012, the government has yet to implement the legislation effectively, especially with regard to criminal convictions. Law enforcement agencies typically open criminal investigations reactively and seldom initiate proactive analysis and long-term investigations. While the Indian government has taken action against certain hawala financing activities, prosecutions have generally focused on non-financial businesses that conduct hawala transactions as a secondary activity. Additionally, the government has not taken adequate steps to ensure all relevant industries are complying with AML/CFT regulations. The reporting of suspicious transaction Reports (STRs) relating specifically to terrorism financing increased significantly. From July 2014 to April 2015, FIU-IND received 76,149 STRs and disseminated 52,485 STRs to various intelligence and law enforcement authorities.

The degree of training and expertise in financial investigations involving transnational crime or terrorism-affiliated groups varied widely among the federal, state, and local levels and depends on the financial resources and individual policies of various jurisdictions. More than 300 personnel from various zonal/sub-zonal offices of India's Enforcement Directorate participated in training programs on financial investigation, money laundering, foreign exchange contraventions, effective prosecutions, and cybercrimes as part of an effort to build capacity. U.S. investigators have had limited success in coordinating the seizure of illicit proceeds with their Indian counterparts. While intelligence and investigative information supplied by U.S. law enforcement authorities led to numerous seizures of terrorism-related funds, a lack of follow-through on investigational leads has prevented a more comprehensive approach.

The Government of India took steps to increase financial inclusion through expanding access to the banking sector and issuing biometric-enabled universal identification numbers.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: During 2015, India's central government expanded its role in global efforts to counter radicalization and violent extremism. Indian officials participated in the February 2015 White House CVE Summit and in follow-on meetings. Mumbai participated in the Strong Cities Network, a forum to build sub-national resiliency against violent extremism.

In June, the Government of India appointed a Special Envoy for Counterterrorism and Extremism. India has taken steps to implement UNSCR 2178 related to foreign terrorist fighters and to advance efforts on CVE. In August, the Ministry of Home Affairs reportedly convened a

meeting to discuss steps for countering radicalization and recruitment with officials representing 12 states and union territories. The government implemented new initiatives to provide "quality and modern education" in madrassas. In addition, the government continued to operate programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate former terrorists and insurgents into mainstream society. These programs target disaffected sectors of Indian society that have been sources of separatism and violent insurgency.

Indian government officials have raised concerns over the use of social media and the internet to recruit, radicalize, and foment inter-religious tensions. In particular, officials expressed concern about the ability of ISIL to recruit online, following prominent incidents in which Indians were attracted to join or support the group.

International and Regional Cooperation: India is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and participated in GCTF and other UN forums on counterterrorism in 2015. In May 2015, India's National Investigative Agency (NIA) hosted a U.S.-sponsored regional dialogue predicated upon the GCTF Marrakech Memorandum on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, which focused on best practices for countering the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

In addition, India's counterterrorism cooperation with neighbors continued to develop. The October 2014 blasts in the Burdwan district of West Bengal generated counterterrorism cooperation between India and Bangladesh, including visits by Indian officials to Dhaka. During 2015, the Indian and Bangladeshi governments continued their cooperation under their bilateral Coordinated Border Management Plan to control illegal cross-border activities and announced the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the field of security and border management. Also during 2015, India and Nepal continued counterterrorism cooperation along their shared border. India is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

KAZAKHSTAN

Overview: The Government of Kazakhstan remained eager to increase counterterrorism cooperation with the United States, particularly in the areas of law enforcement and countering violent extremism (CVE). The Kazakhstani government is concerned about the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and by insecurity in Afghanistan. In June, Kazakhstan hosted a regional CVE conference in Astana and President Nursultan Nazarbayev spoke at the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York in September.

The Government of Kazakhstan views ISIL as a dangerous terrorist organization and appreciates Global Coalition to Counter ISIL efforts, but has not joined the Coalition. The Kazakhstani government does not have an official estimate of the number of Kazakhstanis that are fighting alongside ISIL. Media reports suggest that Kazakhstanis in Syria may fight with a host of armed groups, not just ISIL. Kazakhstani Security Council Secretary Nurlan Yermekbayev stated in July that 400 Kazakhstanis are fighting abroad, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan. National Security Committee (KNB) Chair Nurtai Abykaev publicly estimated in April that 350 Kazakhstanis are in Syria, but only 150 are fighting; the other 200 are family members.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Kazakhstan has a comprehensive counterterrorism legal framework which includes laws on countering extremism and terrorism, and relevant bylaws and chapters in the Criminal Code, Procedural Code, and the Law on National Security. It is illegal for Kazakhstani citizens to fight in foreign wars. The government has taken a two-pronged approach to the few returning ISIL fighters, pursuing a rehabilitation program while arresting and prosecuting others.

President Nazarbayev approved amendments to several laws on local policing aimed at creating a local police service more accountable to the local representative bodies and communities. Kazakhstani courts designated ISIL as a terrorist organization on October 15.

Kazakhstan's legal counterterrorism framework came under criticism in 2015 due to the arrest and prosecution of individuals and groups for committing offenses that would not be considered terrorism by international standards. For example, authorities arrested members of locally-banned religious groups, such as Tablighi Jamaat, which eschews violence.

The government's counterterrorism plan allows for enhanced domestic interagency cooperation, coordination, and information-sharing, but the extent to which this occurred in 2015 is unclear. In the past, law enforcement bodies were criticized for killing rather than capturing members of suspected terrorist groups, but during the years leading up to and including 2015, they showed a greater tendency to arrest, detain, and question these suspects. There are four special counterterrorism detachments under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and one under the KNB.

Law enforcement units demonstrated an increased capacity to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents, and Kazakhstani security forces continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program.

Kazakhstan's Border Guard Service (BGS) uses specialized passport control equipment at each passport control station, allowing officers to check for fraudulent documents. Every officer working at border crossing points must be a graduate of the BGS Academy's four-year program, where they study passport control using passport samples from around the world. BGS officers receive regular instructions and refresher training, including additional training by the Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program. Additionally, the Department of State provided behavioral profiling training to identify traffickers and terrorists and K-9 training for counterterrorism operations.

In recent years, Kazakhstan has strengthened security on its southern border by adding radar systems, inspection equipment and vehicles, and specialized mobile inspection groups. To combat nuclear smuggling, EXBS supported training programs for Central Asian border guard cadets on how to prevent nuclear trafficking and terrorism, and initiated construction on a border crossing training facility for the Border Guard Service Academy in June.

Kazakhstani courts delivered numerous sentences in 2015 for promotion of extremism and terrorism, terrorist activities in Syria, and recruitment and plotting terrorist acts. The Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) announced 280 cases involving extremism and terrorism in Kazakhstan in 2015. Most of those arrested were recruiters. Very few cases addressedintent to commit terrorist acts or depart for foreign conflict zones. In 2015, 71 people were convicted in

terrorism-related cases, 13 were charged with participating in foreign armed conflicts. Media reports on detainment or conviction on such charges appeared more frequently in 2015.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Kazakhstan belongs to the Eurasian Group; a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Kazakhstan's unregulated financial sector is relatively small. In 2015, Kazakhstan passed amendments to its laws on countering the financing of terrorism to comply with international standards. The amendments seek to ensure conformity with updated FATF money laundering requirements and the legal assessment made by the Eurasian Group for Countering Legalization of Criminal Proceeds and Terrorism Financing. With these amendments, Kazakhstan is now in compliance with more than half of the FATF requirements, and Parliament is working toward greater compliance. Despite these efforts, in November the Eurasian Group downgraded Kazakhstan to "enhanced monitoring procedures" for its non-compliance with criminalization of money laundering, requiring Kazakhstan to report biannually on its progress in improving procedures for anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Kazakhstan's countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts focused on preventing radicalization, with efforts to educate and provide alternatives to youth through social programs and economic opportunities. Building on the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremismin February, Kazakhstan hosted a regional CVE Summit in Astana in June, where regional and international officials and subject matter experts discussed regional CVEchallenges and opportunities for cooperation.

The Government of Kazakhstan focused its prevention efforts on detainment and prosecution of recruiters and proselytizers deemed by the government as sharing extremist ideas. Most convicted recruiters are placed in general regime penal colonies for three to six years. Human rights groups say the government exercises excessive vigilance in some cases. For example, one convict challenged his prison sentence claiming he was only discussing general religious topics online and sharing publicly available videos. The courts have blocked more than 700 websites for sharing extremist materials. In October, the website Vimeo was blocked by court order until the site removed videos that showed ISIL atrocities. Critics say Kazakhstan's anti-radicalization efforts are unnecessarily heavy-handed, and could actually encourage radicalization of members of otherwise peaceful religious groups.

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Culture and Sport conducted outreach to youth who studied abroad at religious schools suspected of indoctrinating youth in extremist ideology. Religious experts from the Committee for Religious Affairs reached out to at-risk youth via websites such as E-Islam, which was created to increase religious literacy and to counter radical ideas. Religious experts created groups on social networks such as Facebook and VKontakte, where they posted information and answered users'questions about religious extremism. Officials from the Committee for Religious Affairs provided training and awareness events for local imams, NGOs and media.

The government and NGOs continued rehabilitation and reintegration work with convicts and their relatives. The PGO claimed to have made progress in persuading convicted radicals to take less radical views.

International and Regional Cooperation: Kazakhstan participates in counterterrorism and CVE activities through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which has established a joint task force for preventing the propagation of terrorist and extremist ideas via the internet. Kazakhstan is a member of the Community of Independent States' (CIS) Anti-Terrorism Center that hosts a data bank of terrorist and extremist organizations banned in CIS that is made accessible to law enforcement and financial intelligence bodies of the member-states. The PGO cooperates with the OSCE on countering violent extremism and terrorism through joint workshops. Kazakhstan is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which has a limited counterterrorism role. From September 2015 to September 2016, Kazakhstan chaired the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure for coordination of joint antiterrorist exercises for its member states.

KYRGYZSTAN

Overview: In 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic's counterterrorism efforts focused on countering violent extremism (CVE), rooting out extremists, monitoring the flow of Kyrgyz national foreign terrorist fighters, and preventing those returning from conflicts abroad from engaging in terrorist activities. The State Committee for National Security (GKNB) and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) conducted several operations targeting individuals suspected of affiliation with banned religious groups or extremist recruitment activities. GKNB and MVD officials conducted two counterterrorism operations that resulted in the deaths of several suspected terrorists. In 2015, the MVD estimated that 400 Kyrgyz citizen fighters were in Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-controlled territory in Syria and Iraq, though the number could be higher. The government estimated that 70 percent of Kyrgyz citizens fighting in Iraq and Syria were ethnic Uzbeks. Kyrgyzstan restricts public information on national security issues, making it difficult to assess the efficacy of its counterterrorism operations and the wider extent of the threat.

The Kyrgyz Republic remained vulnerable to transnational threats, especially in southern areas. People and illicit goods continued to move relatively freely into and out of the country. The recession in Russia increased unemployment among Kyrgyz migrant laborers and had significant ripple effects on the Kyrgyz economy, potentially leaving the population more vulnerable to terrorist recruitment. The lack of opportunities for Kyrgyz youth also increased the vulnerability of young people. The MVD's Tenth Directorate, which is responsible for counterterrorism operations, reported that in 2015, ISIL recruiters expanded their search for recruits to include more women and children, individuals with higher education and with professional skills such as doctors and computer technicians, which remain in short supply in ISIL-controlled territory. The government is concerned about the potential for an influx of terrorist elements from Afghanistan via Tajikistan and for instability to spread into Central Asia.

In 2015, the United States continued its programming to train customs and border security agencies to help detect and deter terrorist threats and combat corruption within various police organizations. The Kyrgyz State Border Guards and Customs Service cooperated closely with the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program. In 2015, EXBS funded a portion of the construction of two Border Service Horse Stables for improved interdiction along

the border and additional interdiction and commodity identification training for Border and Customs Service officers.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Kyrgyz Republic has two primary laws that govern counterterrorism operations. The first law, the "Law on Countering Terroristic Acts" (last revised in 2005), defines terrorism and provides the MVD and GKNB the authority to identify terrorist threats and prevent attacks. The second law, the "Law on Countering Money Laundering," which was revised in 2006, addresses terrorism financing. Kyrgyz law criminalizes all activities in support of terrorism, extremism, and radicalization if the activities instigate a public security threat, recruit individuals, or include children. The GKNB leads the country's Counterterrorism Center, which is comprised of representatives at the deputy minister level of relevant government ministries.

In July, the Kyrgyz parliament introduced and approved amendments to its counterterrorism legislation that increased the penalty for convictions for recruitment, training, and participating in military operations abroad to up to 15 years with confiscation of property. According to the office of the Prosecutor General, these stricter penalties will help law enforcement by deterring both prospective terrorists and those who wish to return to Kyrgyzstan. The government delivered statements indicating the need to reform the judiciary and strengthen rule of law, but made no concrete progress in 2015 as the judicial system remained vulnerable to corruption and political bias.

At the request of law enforcement agencies, the Kyrgyz parliament passed legislation increasing the legal penalties for returning fighters from Syria and Iraq, in an effort to dissuade them from returning to the Kyrgyz Republic. According to the MVD, it arrested all of the 20 to 30 foreign terrorist fighters known to have returned to the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2015, Kyrgyz President Atambaev expressed support for proposed new legislation that would strip Kyrgyz foreign terrorist fighters of their citizenship.

Although the GKNB's Counterterrorism Center has demonstrated the ability to quickly react to bomb scares or other potential terrorist threats, it lacks specialized training and equipment. Interagency cooperation, coordination, and information sharing is sporadic. For example, the Prosecutor General's office receives the results of GKNB and MVD investigations, including information to use in its prosecutions, but it has no mechanism to seek additional information after the investigation is complete. Kyrgyz security services face capacity issues, are overly bureaucratic, and struggle with corruption. Law enforcement agencies continued to lack equipment, manpower, and funding to effectively detect and deter criminal and potential terrorist operations in remote and mountainous areas of the south.

The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program continued to offer assistance to Kyrgyz security forces during much of 2015, including training focused on border control.

The government does not maintain a terrorist screening watchlist. It also does not have biographic or biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry. Information sharing with other countries occurs rarely and usually only by request in the context of corruption or organized crime investigations. Information sharing and cooperation with counterterrorism officials in Turkey continued to increase in 2015, including information on the travel of Kyrgyz citizens to

Turkey. The government does not collect advance passenger records on commercial flights.

According to open source reporting, in 2015 there were numerous counterterrorism operations in the Kyrgyz Republic. Most were small operations that resulted in the arrests of suspected extremists due to their possession of extremist materials.

There were two major law enforcement operations targeting suspected terrorists in Bishkek. On July 16, a counterterrorism operation closed down streets in central Bishkek for more than five hours. By the end of the operation, GKNB reported that it had "liquidated" four suspects – Kazakh nationals – who had been radicalized in prison, become members of ISIL, and planned a terrorist attack on the main square in Bishkek during the mass prayer event marking the end of Ramadan. GKNB also reported that these suspects planned to attack the Russian military base in Kant. On December 10, the GKNB killed two suspected terrorists in an effort to arrest them. The two suspects reportedly had ties to a terrorist cell led by a violent extremist that died in the July 16 operation.

In November, two men attacked Kadyr Malikov, Director of the Religion, Law, and Politics Analytical Center. According to the GKNB, the suspects were supporters of ISIL and fled to Turkey after the attack. Both suspects were detained in Turkey pending extradition to the Kyrgyz Republic to face charges in connection with the attack.

Law enforcement claimed to have found extremist materials in the homes of all of the suspects. At year's end, the Kyrgyz government had released few additional details on the operations.

Impediments to more effective counterterrorism law enforcement activity included interagency rivalries, a lack of coordination between the GKNB and MVD, and budgetary constraints. Inefficient Soviet-era bureaucratic structures, corruption, low salaries, and frequent personnel turnover also hampered law enforcement efforts. Counterterrorism police units were still largely untested in real-life situations.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Kyrgyzstan belongs to the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Financial Intelligence Service of the Kyrgyz Republic is a member of the Egmont Group. In 2012, the government established a Commission on Combating the Financing of Terrorism; the Commission was largely inactive in 2015. The Kyrgyz Republic did not pursue any terrorism finance cases and did not identify or freeze any terrorist assets.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Kyrgyz Republic showed political support for CVE programs, but did not adopt any new strategies, policies, or initiatives in 2015. The government sent high-level representatives to the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, the regional CVE conference in Kazakhstan in June, and the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New Yorkon the margins of the UN

General Assembly in September, but did not implement new initiatives from the resulting action agendas in 2015.

The Ministry of Education took steps to develop a new curriculum for high school-aged students on moderate Islam and identifying terrorist recruitment tactics. The government also worked with the State Committee on Religious Affairs and Muslim leaders to develop a new national religious strategy to include counter-extremism measures. In 2015, the government cooperated with the OSCE and other international organizations and foreign governments to facilitate counter-extremism assistance programs. The government typically does not discourage or interfere with non-governmental programs that work with religious communities vulnerable to radicalization.

The GKNB continued its public awareness campaign in the Kyrgyz language press to discredit the efforts of ISIL recruiters. The Tenth Department of the MVD, together with local religious leaders in the southern provinces of Batken, Jalalabad, and Osh, conducted meetings with schoolchildren and their parents to explain the recruitment tactics of violent extremists and the legal consequences for foreign terrorist fighters from the Kyrgyz Republic if they choose to return.

International and Regional Cooperation: In 2015, the Kyrgyz government continued to seek training and technical assistance from international organizations and foreign governments to bolster its capacity to prevent terrorist attacks. During the reporting period, the Kyrgyz Republic participated in counterterrorism activities and studies organized by the OSCE, CIS Antiterrorism Center, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Antiterrorism Center, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). In 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic participated in three CSTO military exercises, which took place in Russia, Armenia, and on the Tajik border with Afghanistan. The exercises were aimed at strengthening the capacity of CSTO members to quickly deploy counterterrorism operations. The Kyrgyz Republic Special Forces are actively involved with the SCO's Regional Antiterrorism Center and, in 2015, participated in a joint two-day counterterrorism training operation. Terrorist threats were also a matter of frequent discussion in meetings of the CIS.

Beginning in 2010, the OSCE, through its Community Security Initiative (CSI), embedded an international police advisor with law enforcement agencies in each region of the Kyrgyz Republic. Along with community policing, the advisor trained local law enforcement officials on how to counter violent extremism and identify terrorist threats. The program concluded in December 2015. In November, the Counterterrorism Center agreed to a 2015 training plan developed through funding by the OSCE to increase its capacity to share information on terrorist threats between law enforcement agencies at all levels of government.

The OSCE facilitated cooperation between the GKNB and the National Police of Turkey, based on an agreement of cooperation signed in 2014, to provide training and study tours for special staff of the GKNB, MVD, and Kyrgyz Border Service on countering terrorism and extremism. Also, with the support of the OSCE and the National Police of Turkey, the GKNB held public hearings on counterterrorism and trained law enforcement in the provinces outside of Bishkek.

Throughout 2015, the Counterterrorism Center partnered with the UK-funded NGO Search for Common Ground to create community leadership groups in each region of the Kyrgyz Republic

to deter potential fighters from traveling to Syria. The groups were led by local religious leaders who are trained in methods to prevent violent extremism. Parliament worked with the OSCE to host public hearings in the southern cities of Osh and Jalalabad (from where many fighters originated) to increase local awareness of ISIL recruitment methods.

MALDIVES

Overview: Since 2010, concerns about a small number of local extremists, who support violence and are involved with transnational terrorist groups, have increased. Young Maldivians, especially those within the penal system and otherwise marginalized members of society, are at risk of becoming radicalized and some have already joined violent extremist groups. Media reports from January 2015 cited then Maldivian Police Service (MPS) Chief Hussein Waheed, who estimated that at least 50 Maldivians had opted to become foreign terrorist fighters, while the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party placed the figure as high as 200. Waheed's comments followed reports in early January of at least 13 Maldivians traveling abroad with the intent of becoming foreign terrorist fighters. In late January, four Maldivians reputed to be members of Male's Kuda Henveiru gang were arrested in Malaysia under suspicion of attempting to travel to Syria to fight with terrorist groups. The incident illustrated a pattern of Maldivian nationals having the intent of becoming foreign terrorist fighters transiting through third countries.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: President Yameen Abdul Gayoom signed a new "Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism Act" (PMLFT), which repealed the Anti-terrorism Act of 1990, on October 28. The PMLFT defined acts of terrorism and set forth penalties of between seven to 25 years imprisonment for those convicted of these acts or inciting others to do so. The Act's other provisions extended the state's writ to hold accountable those who may have perpetrated such acts outside Maldivian territory; called upon the president to publish a list of proscribed terrorist organizations or persons; granted the government permission to suspend certain constitutionally guaranteed rights for persons detained or arrested on suspicion of committing acts of terrorism; established legal procedures for handling terrorism-related cases; and granted permission for the issuance of a monitoring and control order by court order upon reasonable suspicion, which was defined as the Minister's belief based on logical or reasonable evidence or reasoning that one or many of the acts transpire or may occur. A monitoring and control order would permit the government to determine a suspect's place of residence; search him/her and his/her residence; disclose, inspect, and seize a suspect's assets; monitor his or her telecommunications; and impose a travel ban. As of the end of the year, President Yameen had not yet published the mandatory list of terrorist entities, as required by the legislation.

The government also used the PMLFT to arrest political opponents and restrict political and media activity unrelated to terrorism. The government's Human Rights Commission issued a statement on October 29 calling for the PMLFT to be reviewed due to its narrowing constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights.

The Maldivian Parliament (Majlis) passed a new penal code in April 2014, which was implemented in April 2015. Neither Maldivian law nor the penal code permitted restrictions on the travel of would-be foreign terrorist fighters or the detention of those who have been turned

back on suspicion that they were headed to a war zone, both of which were gaps the PMLFT was designed to address.

Maldives uses the Terrorist Interdiction Program's Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) to provide traveler screening and screening list capability.

Maldives continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, which provided training to the MPS, Maldivian Coast Guard, and port and border control officers. The Department of State also supported capacity building for Maldivian investigators and prosecutors, improving their understanding of techniques to handle counterterrorism cases. Training in all aspects of police work related to counterterrorism was also provided to officers by numerous other Western countries. The leadership of the MPS recognized the need for improvement and continuously sought assistance to bring its abilities up to international standards.

Responsibility for Maldivian counterterrorism efforts is divided among the MPS and National Defense Force (MNDF), the latter of which has Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard branches. Information sharing among the agencies is limited. In April, the MPS began randomly questioning Maldivian citizens traveling by air to Turkey as to their reasons for flying and planned dates of return. This effort represented the government's attempt to stem the number of citizens traveling to Iraq and Syria with the goal of joining violent extremist groups to fight.

Maldives participated in a regional conference (May 26-29) in New Delhi, co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT); the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and the Department of State in cooperation with the Government of India's National Investigation Agency. The program invited police, prosecutors, members of the judiciary and civil society to share expertise and experience on how best to address issues generated by foreign terrorist fighters including on the effectiveness of terrorism and border security legislation.

Personnel from the Financial Intelligence Unit, MNDF, MPS, and the Prosecutor General's Office participated in a series of trainings led by DOJ/OPDAT from May 31 to June 4. Topics included the effective investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases, terrorism financing, and money laundering.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Maldives is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Maldivian authorities believe funds were being raised in Maldives to support terrorism abroad, but lacked reliable information regarding amounts involved. The Maldivian Central Bank believes criminal proceeds mainly come from domestic sources, since a large percentage of suspicious transaction reports the Central Bank receives are connected to Maldivians. The Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) reported informal money transfer networks (*hawala*) are used to transfer funds between the islands, although the extent to which these systems are employed to launder money is unclear. While the new PMLFT legislation passed in October did not contain provisions specifically targeting terrorism financing, the Maldivian Prosecutor General's Office was confident it would enable police and prosecutors to better identify links between suspected extremists and their finance networks based upon the very wide investigatory powers authorized by the PMLFT.

The Maldivian government monitors banks, the insurance sector, money remittance institutions, and finance companies, and requires the collection of data for wire transfers. Financial institutions other than banks and intermediaries in the securities sector, however, are not subject to current anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) obligations. Insurance companies and intermediaries, finance companies, money remittance service providers, foreign exchange businesses, and credit card companies therefore operate outside the AML/CFT framework. The MMA had earlier established an FIU, which lacked the technical capacity to analyze vast amounts of new data flowing in on financial transactions. The FIU's director position was vacant as of June; it is operating under an interim director deputed by the MMA until a new one is appointed. For the period of October 2014 to April 2015, the FIU reported receiving six STRs, of which five were analyzed and closed. Insurance companies and intermediaries, finance companies, money remittance service providers, foreign exchange businesses, and credit card companies therefore operate outside the AML/CFT framework.

The Maldivian government implements relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, and monitors and regulates alternative remittance services, despite the fact that they lie outside the AML/CFT framework. The Maldivian government did not report any efforts to seize terrorist assets in 2015.

According to the Maldivian government, capacity building of relevant supervisory and regulatory authorities such as the MMA and the Capital Market Development Authority, the MMA's FIU, law enforcement authorities (the Anti-Corruption Commission, Department of Immigration and Emigration, Maldives Customs Service, and MPS), and the judiciary is needed to properly counter money laundering and terrorism financing.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Maldivian government continued to recognize that counter-radicalization efforts are a critical component to long-term success against violent extremism. Since 2011, the government has sought to counter the influence of extremist ideology by actively intervening in religious life. These interventions include mandating persons wanting to serve as mosque leaders (imams) to undergo a six-month state-approved training, as well as disseminating government-approved sermons, which the imams are required to use for Friday prayers. A government-sponsored Islamic university in the capital city of Male opened in the last quarter of 2015. The university's key objective will be to promote the academic study of religion and "moderate Islam" as a counterweight to extremist discourses and messaging. The Fiqh Academy, a group of religious scholars under the government's Ministry of Islamic Affairs, issued a *fatwa* on August 25 which proclaimed participation in foreign wars is not a religious obligation for all adult Muslims.

International and Regional Cooperation: Maldives is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and is a party of the SAARC regional convention on the suppression of terrorism. Topics discussed included security force capacity building and increasing cooperation in maritime domain awareness. The MNDF and Indian

military completed an annual joint training exercise in August and September designed to improve cooperation and inter-operability between the two countries' armed forces.

NEPAL

Overview: Nepal's open border with India and weak security controls at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport continued to underpin concerns that international terrorist groups could use Nepal as a transit and possible staging point.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Nepal lacks a law specifically criminalizing terrorism or material support to terrorist networks. In response to an act of terrorism, Nepali courts would prosecute the perpetrators on the basis of laws pertaining to murder or arson, for example. Most Nepali officials view Nepal as being at no or low risk for an international terrorist incident on Nepali soil. Accordingly, there is little impetus to introduce new laws.

While Nepal has specialized units to respond to terrorist incidents in the Nepal Police Special Bureau, law enforcement units have limited capacity to effectively detect, deter, and identify terrorist suspects. An open border with India and relatively weak airport security increased the risk that international terrorists could use Nepal as a transit or staging point.

Nepal had limited ability to process modern forms of evidence (e.g., cyber, DNA, explosives); however, law enforcement in Nepal has demonstrated interest in receiving outside technical assistance and training. Nepal cooperated with other South Asian countries in their requests to investigate terrorists, mainly through identification and tracking.

Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport lacked state of the art baggage screening technology and relies on physical pat-downs alone for passengers. There were weak controls for restricting access of airport employees throughout the facility, and initial and recurrent background checks on employees were not sufficiently rigorous.

Nepali police officers participated in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program; ATA assistance included courses focused on building the capacity of civilian security forces to secure the country's borders – including both land and air points of entry – from terrorist transit into and out of Nepal.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Nepal belongs to the Asia Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. While the Government of Nepal made progress in 2015 in constructing an anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime, additional work is required to develop expertise in financial crimes investigations, case management, interagency and departmental coordination, and border control. Government corruption, a large and open border with weak border enforcement, limited financial sector regulations, and a large informal economy continued to make the country vulnerable to money laundering and terrorism financing.

Nepal hosted the APG Typologies Meeting in November 2015, and Nepali judges, prosecutors, and officials from Nepal's financial intelligence unit (FIU-Nepal), which is a member of the Egmont Group, participated in regional counterterrorism conferences. FIU-Nepal and the

Department of Money Laundering Investigations lacked access to relevant data that would detect nefarious activity in informal money transfer systems such as hundi and hawala, which are illegal in Nepal.

Government and banking industry officials reported that the majority of remittances flow through formal banking channels, but a significant portion – 40 percent, according to one official estimate – moved through informal channels such as hundi and hawala. Additionally, the government has limited ability to determine whether the source of money ostensibly sent as remittances from abroad is licit or illicit. The open border with India and inadequate security screening made it difficult to detect smuggling of currency, gold, and counterfeit notes.

Nepali authorities announced plans to install computer systems to help law enforcement agencies share financial data, trace suspected terrorist assets, and freeze them. As of late 2015, however, the computer system was not functional and government agencies involved in countering financial crimes lacked the ability to electronically share information.

Nepal's Central Bank's FIU directives do not cover non-profit organizations, unless there is specific information that they are involved in money laundering and terrorism financing. The Parliament passed a statute that obligates banks and financial institutions to check the websites of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain such information.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

International and Regional Cooperation: Nepal is a signatory of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism.

PAKISTAN

Overview: Pakistan remained a critical counterterrorism partner in 2015. Numerous violent extremist groups, many of which target Pakistani civilians, officials, or members of other religious sects, operated in the country. In 2015, terrorists used both stationary and vehicle-borne remote-controlled IEDs (VBIEDs); suicide bombings; targeted assassinations; rocket-propelled grenades; and other combat tactics to attack individuals, schools, markets, government institutions, mosques, and other places of worship. Attacks by sectarian groups against minorities continued. Despite the government's massive security preparations, its interception of numerous planned attacks, and the prevention of attacks in major urban areas, thecommemorationof the Ashura holiday during the Islamic month of Muharram (October 2015) was marked by two major attacks that killed at least 30 people.

In November, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Agency (PEMRA) reportedly banned media coverage of U.S.- and UN-designated terrorist organizations such as Jamaat-u-Dawa (JuD) and the Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation (FiF), both of which are aliases of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), but the government did not otherwise constrain those groups' fundraising activities. Pakistan took steps to support political reconciliation between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban, but it did not take sufficient action to constrain the ability of the Taliban and the Haqqani Network (HQN) to threaten U.S. and Afghan interests in Afghanistan.

Pakistan officially designated the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as a terrorist organization on July 15. Senior military officials and provincial security forces publicly warned of scattered Pakistani terrorist allegiance to ISIL and its threat to Pakistani military targets. Law enforcement agencies arrested individuals suspected of participating in ISIL-allied attacks, disseminating ISIL propaganda, and having declared allegiance to ISIL. Pakistan did not join the multilateral Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, but Pakistani officials participated in a senior level meeting of the coalition in September.

Following the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) December 16, 2014 attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in which more than 150 children and staff were killed, the government formed a committee of political, military, and intelligence representatives to produce a 20-point, whole-of-government National Action Plan (NAP) against terrorism. The NAP is a mixture of judicial, law enforcement, military, and administrative goals that seek to punish established terrorists, eliminate support for terrorism, and promote the non-violent coexistence of the country's various religious sects, all to prevent future terrorist attacks on Pakistani soil. The NAP is not, in and of itself, legally binding; each component depends on existing, revised, or new legislation. The government did not formally articulate the metrics by which it measured the NAP's overall success. Most official assessments of its implementation reached the public via the media. These media reports most often followed closed door meetings of senior federal or provincial civilian and military leadership. The Minister of Interior briefed the Pakistani National Assembly on NAP implementation progress on December 17 and 18. The Minister cited a statistical reduction in terrorist attacks over 2015, but acknowledged that terrorism had not been completely eliminated from the country. Throughout 2015, the media frequently reported parliamentary criticism of the government's NAP implementation progress, as well as accusations of blame from within the federal government and the Pakistani military for implementation shortcomings. Also throughout 2015, the Pakistani military continued ground and air operations in North Waziristan and Khyber Agency to eliminate terrorist safe havens and recover illegal weapons caches. Paramilitary and civilian security force counterterrorism efforts included countering terrorism in urban areas and conducting preemptive raids to arrest suspected terrorists or interrupt terrorist plots, and confronting terrorists that attacked Pakistani civilians, law enforcement agencies, and military and paramilitary troops.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Terrorist attacks occurred in every month of 2015.A few representative examples include:

- On January 30, a suicide bomber attacked a Shia mosque in the northern Sindh district of Shikarpur. According to Dunya News, at least 61 people were killed and provincial government officials claimed that suspects arrested in the case were affiliated with the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi terrorist groups.
- On March 15, suicide bombers struck two churches in Lahore's majority-Christian Youhanabad neighborhood, killing 17 people according to government figures reported in the media. Following the attack, a mob killed two bystanders whom they believed to have been involved in the bombing.
- On April 16, private U.S. citizen Deborah Lobo was shot on her way to work in Karachi. According to unnamed authorities quoted in the media, authorities found ISIL leaflets at the attack scene.

- On May 13, eight gunmen attacked a bus traveling in Safoora Goth, Karachi. The shooting left at least 46 Ismaili Shia dead. Media reported that the attackers were allegedly ISIL adherents.
- Attacks against Hazaras in Quetta, Balochistan remained common. For example, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, five Hazaras were killed when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them on a Quetta street on June 7.
- On August 16, a suicide bomber killed 17 people, including Punjab provincial Home Secretary Shuja Khanzada in Attock (near Lahore), and injured at least 23 others. According to media, multiple violent sectarian groups claimed responsibility.
- On September 18, a group of armed terrorists entered Pakistan's Badaber Air Base (outside of Peshawar) and killed at least 29 civilians and military personnel, including an Army captain. Media reported that TTP claimed responsibility.
- On October 24, a suicide bomber killed approximately 22 people, and injured at least 40 more Shia Muslim worshippers commemorating the anniversary of the death of Imam Hussain during the Ashura period of the Islamic Month of Muharram in Jacobabad (Sindh). A second suicide bomber killed approximately 10 people, and injured 12 more, in an attack on a Shia mosque on October 22 in Bolan (Balochistan). Media reported that violent anti-Shia terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility for both attacks.
- On December 29, a vehicle-borne IED attack orchestrated by TTP splinter group Jamaat-ur-Ahrar killed at least 26 people and injured more than 50 at a federal government office in Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Pakistan continued to implement the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) of 1997, and other laws, which empowered the government to counter terrorism with enhanced law enforcement and prosecutorial powers. The country is in various stages of implementation of the National Counterterrorism Authority Act, the 2013 Investigation for Fair Trial Act, the 2014 amendments to the ATA, and the 2014 Protection of Pakistan Act (PPA). The PPA has a sunset clause of July 2016. The government continued to make use of reinforced counterterrorism legislation. However, the judiciary moved slowly in processing terrorism and other criminal cases, likely due in part to the overly broad definition of terrorism offenses listed in the ATA. The majority of courts face long backlogs. In addition, law enforcement personnel and judicial officers involved in terrorism cases can face threats and intimidation from terrorist groups. In some provinces, Anti-Terrorism Courts have introduced reforms to reduce the backlogs, including transferring "non-true" terrorism cases to the regular District and Sessions courts, freeing the courts to conduct continuous trials within the timeframe required by the ATA.

The PPA, passed in July of 2014, sought to create a specialized system for adjudicating terrorism cases by establishing a federally empowered infrastructure with special federal courts, prosecutors, police stations, and investigation teams for the enforcement of 20 specially-delineated categories of offenses. Human rights advocates and other legal experts criticized the PPA for provisions granting broad immunity to security forces in the use of lethal force, expanding the power of arrest without a warrant, and eliminating the presumption of innocence. The provisions of the PPA, including the creation of new judicial infrastructure, have been only sporadically implemented in 2015 and the Act is set to expire in July 2016.

In response to the December 2014 Army Public School attack, Pakistan promulgated new legislation in 2015 designed to enable the prompt prosecution and adjudication of terrorism offenses. In January, the Assembly passed the 21st Amendment of the Pakistani Constitution and amended the Pakistan Army Act to allow military courts to try civilians for "offenses relating to terrorism, waging of war or insurrection against Pakistan, and prevention of acts threatening the security of Pakistan by any terrorist group using the name of religion or a sect and members of such armed groups, wings, and militia." In February, the government issued a presidential ordinance that amended the Pakistan Army Act to allow military courts to hold in-camera trials of terrorism suspects and to conceal the names of court officials involved in those trials, as part of a move toward "faceless justice" for "the protection of witnesses, defending officers, and other persons concerned in court proceedings." The National Assembly subsequently passed a bill codifying this presidential ordinance in November. After a series of legal challenges, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the 21st Amendment in August. Both the 21st Amendment and the Amendment to the Pakistan Army Act contain sunset clauses, which provide for their expiration two years from the date of enactment.

At the federal level, Pakistan's law enforcement and national security structures need improvement. Although the various security agencies attempted to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents, the government's institutional framework is not conducive to interagency cooperation and coordination. There was only sporadic interagency information sharing, no comprehensive integrated database capability, and specialized law enforcement units lacked the technical equipment and training needed to implement the enhanced investigative powers provided in the 2012 Investigation for Fair Trial Act. Prosecutors have a limited role during the investigation phases of terrorism cases. Jurisdictional divisions among and between military and civilian security agencies continued to hamper effective investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases. Intimidation by terrorists against witnesses, police, victims, prosecutors, defense lawyers, and judges, as well as insufficient evidence gathering in investigations, contributed to the high acquittal rate in cases filed in the Anti-Terrorism Courts.

Devolution of law enforcement authority to the provincial level resulted in mixed assessments of law enforcement cooperation across the country. Counterterrorism operations were most often the result of varying degrees of cooperation between provincial Counterterrorism Departments (which reported to their respective Inspectors General for Police), assorted paramilitary entities (e.g., Frontier Corps, Rangers, Levies, etc.), the Pakistani military, and intelligence agencies. Some provinces demonstrated greater training, equipment, and interagency information sharing to find suspected terrorists, but needed improvement in their prosecution of suspected terrorists once apprehended. For others, the reverse applied. In Sindh, a "law-and-order" operation against terrorists and organized crime syndicates, carried out by the paramilitary Sindh Rangers and the civilian Sindh Police, continued throughout 2015. Many analysts attributed to that operation the significant reduction in violence over 2015 that the provincial capital has witnessed. Media reported allegations that operations focused disproportionately on certain political parties with a political rather than counterterrorism focus. The government denied those allegations. In December, the Sindh provincial government extended the mandate of the Sindh Rangers for 60 days, but the limits of their authority remain under discussion between the federal and provincial government.

Pakistan continued to work toward structural reforms on counterterrorism designed to centralize coordination and information sharing. The National Counterterrorism Authority (NACTA)

received new leadership in August. Its new National Coordinator was concurrently the Director General of the National Police Bureau at the end of 2015. In November, NACTA was reportedly allocated an operational budget with which to hire additional staff for the first time since the NAP called for the organization to be "strengthened and activated." The Intelligence Bureau has nationwide jurisdiction as a civilian agency, is empowered to coordinate with provincial and territorial counterterrorism units, and seemed to take a more active role in counterterrorism operations throughout 2015. The Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate has broad intelligence powers and fulfilled a *de facto* border security role along with tribal militias, provincial police, and the Frontier Corps. The Ministry of Interior has more than 10 law enforcement-related entities under its administration, though many of those agencies are under the operational control of the military.

Pakistan collected biometric information in national databases and screened travelers at border land crossings with its International Border Management Security System. The National Automated Database Registration Authority maintained a national biometric database of citizens, residents, and overseas Pakistanis, and is continually subject to upgrades. Pakistan's ability to detect and deter cross-border smuggling via air travel continued to pose a challenge, but also continued to improve as a result of regional and international training. The Federal Board of Revenue's Customs Service attempted to enforce anti-money laundering laws and foreign exchange regulations at all major airports with some coordination with the Airport Security Force and/or the Federal Investigation Agency. Pakistan's cross-border enforcement can be further improved through advanced passenger targeting strategies, improved scanning equipment, more effective officer accountability practices, additional staff, improved interagency coordination at the airports, and enforcement of existing legislation. Pakistan Customs' End Use Verification project facilitated the entry of dual-use chemicals for legitimate purposes, while also investigating and preventing the entry of chemicals intended for use in IEDs. In 2015, the U.S. government had little visibility into the results of the project, and was thus unable to gauge its effectiveness.

The military continued to conduct significant counterterrorism operations in North Waziristan and Khyber agencies in the tribal areas, and a combination of military, paramilitary, and civilian forces conducted operations in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab. Security forces intercepted large stockpiles of weapons and explosives, and discovered bomb-making facilities and sophisticated telecommunication networks. Pakistan continued to arrest terrorists and initiate prosecutions throughout 2015. However, the enhanced tools provided by the Investigation for Fair Trial Act of 2012 and the NACTA law were still in the process of being implemented by the government at year's end. These laws are designed to equip intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies, and prosecutors with the necessary legal tools to detect, disrupt, and dismantle terrorist activities and organizations. The U.S. government had limited visibility into the NACTA law's implementation.

Anti-Terrorism Courts had limited procedures for obtaining or admitting foreign evidence. The trial of seven suspects accused in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack was ongoing at year's end, with many witnesses for the prosecution remaining to be called by the court. Security concerns and procedural issues resulted in a slow pace of trial proceedings. In December 2014, the court granted bail to the lead defendant, alleged Mumbai attack planner and LeT operational commander Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi. Lakhvi was released from prison on bail in April 2015 and the Government of Pakistan reports he remained under house arrest at the end of 2015.

Pakistan's cooperation with the United States on information sharing and law enforcement continued. Law enforcement cooperation continued with respect to terrorist attacks and plots against U.S. personnel, and the Embassy and Consulates General in Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar. Pakistani law-enforcement officials pledged to assist in the apprehension of U.S. citizen fugitives in Pakistan, but practical implementation of this pledge has been lacking. Delays in obtaining Pakistani visas for training personnel were obstacles to counterterrorism assistance for security forces and prosecutors in 2015, though a limited number of visas of varying duration were eventually approved for some Department of State Antiterrorism Assistance program instructorsto facilitate delivery of a number of ATA courses. However, other agency trainings were required to take place in third countries due to non-issuances of visas.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Pakistan is an active member of the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. In February, FATF removed Pakistan from its anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism review process due to progress made addressing the strategic deficiencies that had been identified in 2010. Despite this action, Pakistan was required to provide a report in June detailing recent action to identify and freeze property of UN-listed entities as well as efforts to monitor the non-profit organization sector, money remitters, and cross-border activity. This report was submitted on time; FATF recommended further reporting to the APG. As the release from FATF monitoring indicated, Pakistan's criminalization of terrorist financing met international standards.

The NAP conveys the government's intention to cut the financial sources of terrorists and terrorist organizations. *Hundi/hawala* offenses under the pre-existing Foreign Exchange Regulation Act of 1947 were designated as predicate offences under the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) of 2010. In January 2015, the government lowered the threshold for currency transaction reports from US $25,000 to approximately US $20,000.

Despite military and police action against certain UN-designated organizations, throughout 2015 other UN-designated organizations continued to operate within Pakistan, employing economic resources under their control, and fundraising openly. The November PEMRA ban of electronic media coverage of domestically banned organizations and UN-designated organizations may reduce the public profiles of those organizations and reduce their ability to collect donations.

Money transfer systems persisted throughout much of Pakistan, especially along Pakistan's long border with Afghanistan, and may be abused by drug traffickers and terrorist financiers operating in the cross-border area.

While Pakistani authorities did report having frozen assets of UN-designated entities during 2015, the amount was unclear. The U.S. government was not informed of any successful terrorism financing prosecutions in 2015.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan, banks and reporting entities were under legal obligation to report suspicious transaction reports wherever there is suspicion that NGOs/non-profit organizations (NPOs)/charities may be abusing the financial system for the financing of terrorism or any other criminal activity. From July 2014 to May 2015, Pakistan reportedly

received 1919 Suspicious Transaction Reports, of which 855 were analyzed and 320 disseminated. The State Bank of Pakistan prescribed specific regulations for the opening of bank accounts by NGOs, non-profit organizations, and charities.

The Minister of Interior provided a list of 61 designated organizations in his December 18 brief to the Pakistani National Assembly, which various media outlets reported. Until that point, the government had only distributed updates to lists of individuals and groups designated pursuant to UNSCRs and domestic law via gazette notices ('statutory regulatory orders' and circulars). The sole use of that vehicle resulted in significant confusion and speculation among the public regarding which entities were and were not designated and/or under observation. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, banks were required to regularly access the Consolidated Lists from the pertinent UN website(s) to ensure compliance with sanctions regimes throughout 2015.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the military's Inter-Services Public Relations employed strategic communications strategies to build support for the military's counterterrorism initiatives. Reintegration of de-radicalized terrorists into society remained a priority for the government. Throughout 2015, the government operated a number of de-radicalization camps in different parts of the country. The camps reportedly offered corrective religious education, vocational training, counseling and therapy, and a discussion module that addressed social issues and included sessions with the students' families. A Pakistani NGO continued to administer the widely lauded Sabaoon Rehabilitation Center in Swat Valley, which was founded in partnership with the Pakistani military and focused on the de-radicalization of juvenile violent extremists.

In February 2015, Pakistan's Minister of Interior attended the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism. Pakistan remained actively engaged with the process and attended regional summits on CVE held in Sydney, Australia (June 11-12); Astana, Kazakhstan (June 29-30), and Algiers, Algeria (July 22-23) at the ambassadorial level. It participated in the Senior Officials' Check-in Meeting on CVE held in Rome on July 29. The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs represented Pakistan at the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism, which was hosted by President Obama and convened on the margins of the UNGA in September.

International and Regional Cooperation: Pakistan participated in counterterrorism efforts in both regional and international forums. Pakistan participated in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation meetings on counterterrorism and in other multilateral groups where counterterrorism cooperation was discussed, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (as an observer), and Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process.

As a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), Pakistan participated in GCTF meetings and supported GCTF initiatives. Pakistan participated in UNSC meetings on sanctions and counterterrorism and in a UN Counterterrorism Committee's Executive Directorate regional workshop for South Asian judges, prosecutors, and investigators in Thailand in October. Pakistan also attended the Special Meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on "Stemming

the Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters" held in Madrid, Spain in July. In collaboration with the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Government of Pakistan organized a Needs Assessment Conference on Youth Engagement, Skills Development, and Employment Facilitation in Pakistan on May 13-14.

SRI LANKA

Overview: The Sri Lankan government maintained a strong military presence in post-conflict areas and continued to voice concern about the possible reemergence of pro-Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) sympathizers, but the new, democratically-elected government of President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe emphasized its commitment to seek political reconciliation with the Tamil community, including through talks with the Tamil diaspora. The security services' focus on a possible LTTE resurgence affected the government's attention to emerging threats, such as reports of Sri Lankan foreign terrorist fighters joining the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Although the Sri Lankan government maintained a comprehensive counterterrorism stance, counterterrorism cooperation and training with the United States in 2015 was limited.

In July, Sri Lanka saw the first confirmation that Sri Lankans had joined ISIL when social media announced the death of Sharfaz Shuraih Muhsin, an ISIL fighter from Sri Lanka, after he was killed in coalition airstrikes in Syria. Thauqeer Ahmed Thajudeen – Muhsin's brother-in-law and fellow Sri Lankan national – was later identified as a member of ISIL in Syria. According to media reports quoting Turkish government sources, 10 members of Muhsin's family went to Iraq through Turkey. Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Karunasena Hettiarachchi said that although there were reports of Sri Lankans joining ISIL, there was no concrete evidence to suggest the group was operating in Sri Lanka.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Counterterrorism legislation in Sri Lanka has historically focused on eliminating the LTTE. In 2015, the Government of Sri Lanka continued to use the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), enacted in 1982 as a wartime measure, which gives security forces sweeping powers to search, arrest, and detain individuals. The new government pledged to end the broad application of the PTA even as civil society groups urged replacing it with a new act that more closely conforms to international standards. The new government also took steps to reduce the military's role in civil society and its control of land in security zones in the north and east. In November, the Government of Sri Lanka granted bail to a first tranche of LTTE-associated Tamil prisoners held under the PTA. The Government of Sri Lanka further announced rehabilitation programs for other long-held Tamil prisoners.

Sri Lanka's law enforcement capacity was robust, and its political leadership has launched a broad modernization effort. While such issues as the modernization of police computer systems were a work in progress, the leadership within the law enforcement community recognized the need for improvement and actively sought assistance to bring its abilities up to western standards.

Although U.S. counterterrorism assistance to Sri Lanka has generally been limited, the Sri Lankan government maintained its partnership with the U.S. Departments of State, Homeland Security, Defense, and Energy on securing its maritime border. The U.S. Coast Guard, under the Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program, continued

to train Sri Lankan Coast Guard and Navy personnel on border and export control matters, and the Government of Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with U.S. Customs and Border Protection through the Container Security Initiative, Megaports, and related initiatives.

In October, representatives from Sri Lankan law enforcement and judicial personnel attended the three-day Tenth Regional Workshop for Judges, Prosecutors, and Police Officers on Effectively Countering Terrorism in South Asia. The workshop was jointly hosted by the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and organized by the Global Center, with support from the Governments of Australia and the United States.

Border security remained a significant issue for the Sri Lankan government. In August, the Department of Immigration and Emigration, with the technical support of International Organization for Migration, and funding from the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection, launched an initiative to capture biometric data from all new passport applicants.

The Government of Sri Lanka continued to collaborate with the EU Immigration Department on an Advanced Passenger Information system, which transmits passenger information to Sri Lankan immigration officials upon arrival.

In November, Sri Lanka removed the ban on eight Tamil diaspora organizations and 267 individuals previously on the terrorism watchlist established by the Rajapaksa-led government, and criticized by civil society for being excessively broad in scope. The number of terrorist groups dropped from 16 to eight and individuals named as terrorists dropped from 424 to 157.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Sri Lanka belongs to the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Sri Lanka's financial intelligence unit is a member of the Egmont Group. Although it is neither an important regional financial center nor a preferred center for money laundering, Sri Lanka remained vulnerable to money laundering and terrorism finance. Key factors included a lack of transparent tender mechanisms in government projects, past experience with terrorism, tax evasion, and a large informal economy. Sri Lanka's risks also involve cross-border illicit flows because of its geographic location. As a major transshipment port, Sri Lanka receives 70 percent of all vessels sailing to and from South Asia.

Substantial cash assets amounting to $677,600 and land assets worth $533,000 relating to terrorists and terrorism financing have been frozen, while cash and non-cash assets amounting to $6.5 million have been confiscated under the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 (as amended).

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Sri Lanka continued to operate a one-year long rehabilitation program for former alleged LTTE combatants, participation in which was mandatory for a majority of the prisoners formerly held under the PTA who were released on bail. The former Rajapaksa government estimated it rehabilitated approximately 12,000 former LTTE cadres during its tenure, although the number of persons undergoing this program decreased

dramatically in the years leading up to and including 2015. Limited access by independent bodies to known rehabilitation camps prevented reliable evaluations of the government's efforts.

International and Regional Cooperation: Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with a number of donor countries, including the United States, to improve its land and maritime border security. These efforts also enhanced the government's capacity to interdict potential foreign terrorist fighters attempting to transit through the country. Government officials have expressed interest in increasing Sri Lanka's regional cooperation on counterterrorism. Sri Lanka is a signatory of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism.

Following 2014 anti-Muslim riots instigated by extremists in southern Sri Lanka, international donors have funded a number of reconciliation-focused programs, such as a program from July to October 2015 in the Kalutara, Galle, and Matara districts that promoted non-violence and reconciliation between Muslim, Sinhalese, and Tamil communities.

In September 2015, Sri Lanka military personnel participated in joint training exercises in India focused on improving military-to-military cooperation and inter-operability in counterterrorism operations. In November, Sri Lanka held the annual Galle Dialogue, which featured multilateral discussion by international security force representatives on issues of regional security in South Asia, including maritime security threats.

TAJIKISTAN

Overview: According to the Government of Tajikistan, 700 Tajiks had left the country to fight with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by the end of 2015. In addition, the government remained concerned that instability in neighboring Afghanistan would push violent extremist groups across the border into Tajikistan. In response, the Government of Tajikistan worked to strengthen its efforts to fight terrorism and radicalization, although its focus was almost entirely on law enforcement measures, with little attention given to countering violent extremism. Tajikistan sought to increase military and law enforcement capacity to conduct tactical operations through bilateral and multilateral assistance programs, including programs funded by the United States. The United States, Russia, Japan, and the EU also provided funding for border security programs.

Three major events in 2015 have further heightened the government's focus on the threat of terrorism within the country:

- In April, Gulmurod Halimov, the commander of the elite police unit OMON (Special Purpose Mobility Unit), defected to join the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).
- On September 4, a small group of militants led by former Deputy Minister of Defense Abduhalim Nazarzoda committed a series of attacks in and around Dushanbe that left nine police, including Special Forces officers, and 17 attackers dead. While the exact motivation for the attacks remains unclear, the government has charged those involved with terrorism.
- Finally, the Taliban's seizure of the city of Kunduz in northern Afghanistan in late September increased concern in Tajikistan of a possible spillover of fighters and refugees.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Tajik government prosecuted terrorists under the Laws on Combating Terrorism, Anti-Money Laundering, Currency Regulation, and Notary, and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan. Resource constraints, corruption, lack of training for law enforcement and border security officials, and general capacity issues continued to plague the Tajik government's ability to interdict possible terrorists. Tajik law enforcement bodies lacked sufficient interagency cooperation and information-sharing capabilities. Corruption in the judicial system and misuse of counterterrorism statutes to suppress political opposition generally hampered the effectiveness of the government's counterterrorism efforts.

Tajikistan continued to make progress in improving border security with bilateral and multilateral assistance, although effectively policing the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border remained a difficult task requiring more resources and capabilities than were available to the Tajik government. Within the region, the illicit trafficking of opiates transiting the Commonwealth of Independent States destined for the Russian Federation and Eastern Europe was the predominant funding mechanism for Afghan-based terrorist activity. Drug trafficking in the region is inextricably tied to terrorism, and drug proceeds enable this activity. Afghan Drug Trafficking Organizations and Organized Criminal Groups tied to violent extremist organizations frequently solicit the exchange of weapons, arms, or vehicles for drugs in lieu of currency-based remuneration.

The UN Office of Drugs and Crime, in conjunction with DEA and the Department of State, provided interdiction related training to Tajikistan (and Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) in support of the Border Liaison Office program. The U.S.Central Command Counter Narcotics Program continued to provide facilities, outposts, and material support (including ground-sensor interdiction technology) to the Tajik Border Guards under the State Committee for National Security. In 2015, the Department of State's Export Control and Border Security program routinely provided both training and material support to Tajikistan to improve border control, contraband interdiction, and counter-proliferation capabilities.

The International Organization for Migration and the OSCE, with U.S. funding, worked to improve travel document security in 2015. The OSCE also provided funding to link Tajikistan's existing passport data scanners at airports and land ports of entry to the INTERPOL database. In some instances, the Tajik government used INTERPOL Red Notices to seek the arrest of political opponents residing abroad. Tajikistan continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, and Tajik security forces received training related to border security practices and counterterrorism investigations.

On July 23, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that the Tajik government had prevented a series of terrorist attacks in the country planned by Tajik supporters of ISIL. According to their report, the attacks were planned to coincide with Ramadan celebrations in Tajikistan. Media reports stated that extremists were planning to attack more than 10 police stations in Dushanbe, Kulob, Fayzobod, and Gharm.

On December 5, the Khatlon regional court sentenced eight residents of the Shahrituz district of Khatlon to prison terms ranging from seven to 27 years after they displayed in public a black flag

similar to that of ISIL's. The defendants had been in contact with fighters from Syria via the internet and the government alleges that they were planning terrorist attacks in Tajikistan.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Tajikistan is a member of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. At its November plenary meeting, the EAG discussed financial items relating to ISIL, and urged member states to intensify their efforts to combat the financing of ISIL, as well as undertake rapid implementation of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions related to terrorism financing.
Tajikistan's financial intelligence unit, the Financial Monitoring Department, is a member of the Egmont Group. In November, Tajikistan also participated in the Joint EAG/Anti-Terrorist Center of the Commonwealth of Independent States Seminar on strengthening cooperation between financial intelligence units and law enforcement agencies in investigations related to combating the financing of terrorism.

Also in November, the National Bank of Tajikistan implemented a new order allowing clients to deposit foreign currencies in any amount without disclosing the money's source. While the Bank believed the measure will help to attract investment and prevent the black market exchange of currency, there is concern this decision will negatively affect law enforcement's ability to identify, target, and prosecute money laundering violations.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2015, the Tajik government worked to create a national strategy to counter violent extremism, but this strategy was not finalized by the end of 2015. In addition, some previous government measures designed to reduce the threat of violent extremism had a negative impact on religious and political freedoms. Authorities detained and, in some cases, reportedly tortured members of religious groups based on broad allegations of "religious extremism."

On May 9, the Ministry of Internal Affairs promised amnesty to Tajik militants returning to Tajikistan from Syria and Iraq. The announcement marked the first time the government declared an amnesty for returning foreign terrorist fighters. Authorities were keen to use this amnesty as a way to counter radical messaging. On May 7, Farrukh Sharifov, a former Tajik violent extremist recently returned from Syria and spoke to a large crowd in Khujand in a widely publicized event organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Sharifov condemned ISIL and described horrors he witnessed, including beheadings and sex slavery.

International and Regional Cooperation: Tajikistan is a member of the OSCE, where it focuses on border security issues, and is also a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). On April 21, the special force platoon and the rapid reaction unit of the Ministry of Defense of Tajikistan participated in a five-day joint military exercise for special force units of the SCO in Kyrgyzstan. On May 20, Tajikistan participated in a CSTO-organized exercise in which member countries practiced their response to the incursion of 700 Taliban fighters into Tajikistan. On

June 5, Tajik and Chinese special operations conducted joint counterterrorism drills at a mountain training center outside Dushanbe.

TURKMENISTAN

Overview: The Government of Turkmenistan continued efforts to improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to counter terrorism, ensure border security, and detect terrorist financing. Turkmenistan cooperated with international organizations and participated in training on anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), and strengthening border security. The government did not report any terrorist incidents, and authorities continued to maintain close surveillance of the population. Continued cooperation with international organizations to improve the quality of law enforcement, ensure respect for the rule of law, and raise living standards could further decrease the generally low potential for terrorist groups to operate in the country.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The country's legal system as it pertains to counterterrorism centers on the 2003 counterterrorism law that defines which crimes are considered terrorist in nature. This law is supplemented by articles 271-273 of the criminal code, which pertain to terrorist acts and terrorism financing and are used to prosecute terrorism-related offenses.

The Ministries of National Security, Internal Affairs, and Defense; State Border, Customs, and Migration Services; and the State Service for Protection of the Security of a Healthy Society executed theircounterterrorism functions and shared information through an interagency commission. The country's law enforcement capacity needs improvement, since law enforcement units do not proactively conduct investigations and have a poor record of accountability and respect for human rights. Prosecutors, however, do play a significant role in the investigation phase of a case, and specialized law enforcement units exist to conduct investigations. These units possess specialized equipment but usually only use the equipment for official ceremonies and demonstrations as opposed to daily operations. Turkmenistan participated in training programs sponsored by the U.S. government and international organizations. These included a program on terrorist negotiation and cybersecurity organized by the OSCE, a program on UN Security Council Resolution 1540 organized by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and U.S.-provided training on combating transnational threats such as narcotics smuggling and organized crime.

The State Border Service continued to operate frontier garrisons on Turkmenistan's borders with Iran and Afghanistan and managed eight radiation portal monitors along its borders donated by the U.S. Department of Energy through its Second Line of Defense program. The State Migration Service maintained a terrorist screening watchlist and possesses biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry.

There was significant political will in Turkmenistan to counter terrorism and ensure border security. Corruption, however, sometimes hampered effective law enforcement. Additionally, international cooperation with the government was often hampered by a bureaucracy that operated according to opaque rules and that frequently deemed public information to be "state secrets."

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Turkmenistan is a member of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. Government officials participated in OSCE training on combating money laundering and preventing the financing of terrorism. The Government of Turkmenistan continued to express interest in gaining admission to the Egmont Group. There were no reported prosecutions of terrorism financing cases during the year.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Turkmen government views conservative Islam with suspicion. Since the country's independence, mosques and Muslim clergy have been state-sponsored and financed. The level of government surveillance in Turkmenistan suggests that any extremist groups existing in Turkmenistan would be small, underground, and disparate.

Rather than create effective counter-messaging, the government sought to control the importation, publication, and dissemination of literature, especially that which is religious in nature.

International and Regional Cooperation: Turkmenistan supported regional and international efforts to fight terrorism. Law enforcement officials participated in OSCE and UNODC training on border security. Turkmenistan continued to participate in the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Center.

UZBEKISTAN

Overview: In 2015, the Government of Uzbekistan continued to rank countering terrorism within its borders as one of its top security priorities, together with counternarcotics. There were no reported significant terrorist incidents on Uzbek soil in 2015, which the government attributed to its success in ongoing efforts to counter terrorism. The government restricted information on internal matters, making it difficult to analyze the extent of the terrorist threat and the effectiveness of Uzbek law enforcement's efforts to counter it.

The government continued to express concern about the potential for a spillover effect of terrorism from Afghanistan and other Central Asian states, especially with the drawdown of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Uzbek officials expressed confidence that Uzbekistan could control its border with Afghanistan, but doubted its neighbors' ability to do so. The government was particularly concerned with the infiltration of violent extremists through Uzbekistan's long borders with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Uzbekistan shared U.S. interest in combating the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and ISIL-affiliated groups, but did not formally join the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. However, the government remained concerned about the recruitment of Uzbek fighters to fight in the Middle East and issued public statements condemning ISIL and its recruitment propaganda.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The overarching legislation governing terrorism-related investigations and prosecutions is the Law on Combating Terrorism, passed in 2000 and revised in 2004. The Law on Counteracting Legalization of Proceeds of Crimes and

Financing of Terrorism passed in 2004 prohibits money laundering and finance of terrorist activity. Legislation identifies the National Security Service (NSS), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the State Border Guards Committee (operating within the NSS command structure), the State Customs Committee, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Emergency Situations as the government entities responsible for countering and responding to terrorism. The NSS is the lead counterterrorism law enforcement agency, with primary responsibility for the coordination and supervision of interagency efforts.

In August, President Karimov signed a new law on citizenship, which authorized the stripping of citizenship for crimes "against peace and security," including terrorism. As a purported counterterrorism measure, Uzbekistan also passed legislation in 2015 banning the private use and ownership of drones, remote control planes, and other similar devices.

The government has also made declarative steps to reinforce rule of law within Uzbekistan, participating in several workshops with international experts on legal case management, with the goal of empowering judges and defense attorneys to act independently in trial proceedings. However, political influences continued to drive the legal decisions within the country.

The government used security concerns related to terrorism as a pretext for the detention of suspects, and potentially used it to prosecute religious activists and political dissidents. According to press reports, law enforcement authorities detained more than 500 people based on suspicion of terrorism in November and December. The government also blocked social media sites and networking platforms, such as Skype, to purportedly prevent the spread of terrorist messaging.

Uzbekistan does not publicly share any information regarding counterterrorism operations. Based on press reports and publicly available information, the government actively investigated and prosecuted terrorist suspects. However, a lack of reliable information made it difficult to differentiate between legitimate counterterrorism law enforcement actions and possible politically motivated arrests. Both the NSS and the MIA have dedicated counterterrorism units, with some specialized equipment. In 2015, the NSS held a series of counterterrorism exercises in Tashkent, Andijan, and Bukhara.

Uzbekistan began issuing biometric passports in 2011, with the goal of converting all passports to the new biometric version by December 2015. The goal was not met, however, and the deadline was extended to July 1, 2018. The biometric data includes a digital photo, fingerprints, and biographical data. The government also actively engaged with the Export Control and Related Border Security Program and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to enhance the investigative capabilities of customs and border patrol agents and upgrade screening equipment for incoming cargo. CENTCOM supported the ongoing construction of a border control post on the border with Tajikistan.

The Government of Uzbekistan did not report taking any specific actions to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, and 2199; however, the government voiced concerns over the return of foreign terrorist fighters and the recruitment of Uzbeks by ISIL and violent extremist groups operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to NSS estimates reported to the press, at year's end around 500 to 600 Uzbeks were fighting for ISIL. Enhanced security measures such as frequent document checks and house-to-house resident list checks sought to

identify potential foreign terrorist fighters transiting through or active in Uzbekistan. According to press reports, law enforcement mandated neighborhood committees to report on all citizens suspected to have left to join ISIL or other extremist groups.

The Government of Uzbekistan bans Islamic groups it broadly defines as extremist and criminalizes membership in such groups. We refer you to the Department of State's *Report to Congress onInternational Religious Freedom* (http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/) report for further information.

Below are known examples from 2015 in which law enforcement arrested and prosecuted suspects under charges of extremism or terrorism under Uzbekistan's laws.

- In August, the Kashkadaryo Regional Criminal Court jailed two Tajik nationals for six year terms for propagating Hizb ut-Tahrir materials. They were found to be carrying Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflets while traveling on the Moscow-Dushanbe train.
- In October, the Tashkent Regional Criminal Court sentenced Firdavs Salimov to nine years in prison for distributing ISIL leaflets.
- Also in October, the Kashkadaryo Regional Criminal Court sentenced two women, one to five years and one to seven years in prison, for spreading extremist ideology via social networks.
- In November, the Namangan Regional Criminal Court convicted four individuals of spreading materials promoting the Islamic Movement of Turkestan (formerly the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan).
- In December, Uzbekistan indicted Shurhid Mukhtarov, who is suspected to be fighting with ISIL in Syria, on terrorism charges.

There were no reported terrorist attacks against either U.S. citizens or U.S. interests in Uzbekistan in the last five years. In September, an individual who was suspected to be mentally ill threw homemade incendiary devices at the U.S. Embassy in two separate incidents. Uzbek law enforcement apprehended the suspect after the second incident and collected evidence from Embassy security. Initial reports from law enforcement indicated that the suspect will be charged with "hooliganism."

Both law enforcement and the judicial system in Uzbekistan are subject to political influence and corruption. The government's approach to stopping and preventing terrorism, such as detention of suspects without strong evidence and intensive document checks, may not be effective in detecting terrorism networks and might actually contribute to anti-government sentiment. Secrecy surrounding counterterrorism efforts and compartmentalized information sharing among law enforcement agencies likely also diminished Uzbekistan's capabilities to effectively counter terrorism.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Uzbekistan belongs to the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. Uzbekistan's financial intelligence unit is a member of the Egmont Group. The Prosecutor General's Office Department on Fighting Tax, Currency Crimes, and Legalization of Criminal Income with its dedicated Financial Investigative Unit (FIU) is the authority responsible for implementation of EAG agreements. In August 2014, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the FIU signed a memorandum of understanding that

established a legal foundation for training activities, joint investigations, and intelligence sharing.

According to Uzbekistan's presentation at the last EAG plenary meeting of 2015, law enforcement agencies and legislators were reviewing draft legislation that would reinforce procedures for combatting the financing of terrorism. The Uzbek government did not share further details on the proposed legislation. Uzbekistan did not report any efforts to seize terrorist assets in 2015.

Uzbekistan restricted non-profit organization activity and often conducted politically-motivated financial audits that led to the curtailment of the investigated organization's activities or full closing of the organization.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2015, local neighborhood committees initiated a campaign of outreach, speaking with residents about the dangers of ISIL and extremist ideology and interviewing those intending to travel abroad or with relatives who had recently gone abroad about possible terrorist ties. Law enforcement forces and city government also conducted house-to-house checks with the goal of identifying individuals who were not officially registered at the address and may present a threat.

Official government media continued to produce documentaries and media reports about the dangers of Islamist religious extremism and joining terrorist organizations. Public officials, including President Karimov, stressed the danger of extremism and characterized extremist ideology as a perversion of Islam in public speeches. The Committee on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers encouraged religious leaders to condemn extremist ideologies. Several imams traveled to Russia in October to consult with religious authorities there on approaches to countering extremism. Independent human rights groups estimated between 5,000 and 15,000 individuals remained in prison on charges related to religious extremism or membership in an illegal religious group.

In 2015, there were few known reintegration efforts under way in Uzbekistan as there was no significant population of returning foreign terrorist fighters. However, the government voiced concerns over the potential radicalization of Uzbek migrants who worked abroad in Russia and Kazakhstan. With the economic downturn in those countries, the government raised the question of the reintegration of returning migrants without undertaking any concrete steps to facilitate it.

International and Regional Cooperation: Uzbekistan is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which has a Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure headquartered in Tashkent. In July, Uzbekistan assumed the SCO presidency from Russia. The government also worked with multilateral organizations such as the OSCE and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on general security issues, including border control. Uzbek officials participated in a UNODC conference focused on improved information sharing among border control forces of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, and attended container control trainings. Within the framework of a UNODC project, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan opened two

border liaison offices on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border. Uzbekistan law enforcement officials also participated in OSCE conferences focused on counterterrorism and counterterrorism financing approaches, and the Department of State continued to seek opportunities to develop counterterrorism assistance partnerships with Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan prefers bilateral over multilateral cooperation in counterterrorism matters. Uzbek leadership has declaratively welcomed Russia's and others' support in fighting terrorism. In the October meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the participants agreed to set up a joint task force on countering terrorism in the region. Similarly, as announced during Prime Minister Modi's visit, Uzbekistan and India also plan to establish a joint working group on counterterrorism.

The countries in Latin America have porous borders, limitedlaw enforcement capability, and established smuggling routes. Transnational criminal organizations continued to pose a more significant threat to the region than terrorism, and most countries made efforts to investigate possible connections with terrorist organizations. Corruption, weak government institutions, insufficient interagency cooperation, weak or non-existent legislation, and a lack of resources remained the primary causes for the lack of significant progress on countering terrorism in some countries in the Western Hemisphere.

The primary terrorist threats in the Western Hemisphere come from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), which continued to commit the majority of terrorist attacks in the region. Peace negotiations between the FARC and the Government of Colombia continued throughout the year in Cuba. In 2015, the Colombian government continued exploratory peace talks with the ELN, although formal peace negotiations had not started by year's end, and the group continued its terrorist activities. Peru's Shining Path (SL) terrorist group remained active, but with reduced strength. SL's ability to conduct coordinated attacks and its membership both continued to decline with successful Peruvian military operations.

The Tri-Border Areas of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay remained an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, pirated goods, human smuggling, counterfeiting, and money laundering – all potential funding sources for terrorist organizations.

More than 100 individuals from South America and the Caribbean, some also taking family members, have left the region to fight with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). South America and the Caribbean also served as areas of financial and ideological support for ISIL and other terrorist groups in the Middle East and South Asia. In addition, Hizballah continued to maintain a presence in the region, with members, facilitators, and supporters engaging in activity in support of the organization. This included efforts to build Hizballah's infrastructure in South America and fundraising, both through licit and illicit means.

The United States collaborated with both Canada and Mexico to protect our shared borders through regular exchanges of intelligence and other information.

On December 17, 2014, the President announced sweeping changes to U.S. policy on Cuba, which included a review of the status of Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. On May 29, 2015, Cuba'sdesignation as a state sponsor of terrorism was rescinded.

ARGENTINA

Overview: Argentina maintained capabilities for confronting terrorism at the federal level, and directed efforts to address border security challenges along its remote northern and northeastern borders, which include the Tri-Border Area where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet, an area where terrorism financing occurs. Senior Argentine officials made statements condemning violence wrought by ISIL and urging action to alleviate humanitarian suffering in Syria and Iraq. It is possible small numbers of Argentine citizens may have sought to travel to Syria and

Iraq to join ISIL. U.S. law enforcement and security cooperation with Argentina focused on information sharing as well as some training funded by the Antiterrorism Assistance program.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Argentina's Antiterrorism Law of 2007, modified in 2011, serves as a supplement to the criminal code for the prosecution of terrorism cases. Multiple security agencies maintained specialized law enforcement units that have substantial capabilities to respond to terrorist incidents. One of those agencies underwent a wide-scale replacement of personnel and reorganization in the first part of the year that degraded its counterterrorism capabilities. The Argentine government's Security Ministry chaired meetings of the Internal Security Council to coordinate between federal and provincial security institutions. The outgoing administration took steps to implement the transition of the criminal justice system from an inquisitorial to an accusatorial model.

The investigation into the 1994 terrorist bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association community center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people encountered difficulties. Outgoing President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner defended a "truth commission" agreed on between Argentina and Iran in January 2013 against a prosecutor's legal filing claiming the president had in fact subverted the investigation. The prosecutor was discovered dead in his apartment in January, and his filing was later dismissed by a judge. The outgoing president maintained that the talks with Iran were intended to clarify Iran's alleged role in the bombing, for which several former Iranian cabinet-level officials have outstanding INTERPOL Red Notices. On December10, Mauricio Macri assumed the presidency of Argentina. The Macri administration issued a press release stating that the Argentine government was "firmly determined" to maintain INTERPOL Red Notices issued against the one Lebanese and five Iranian suspects in the case.

An Argentine court declared the agreement between Iran and Argentina unconstitutional in May 2014. As a superior court reviewed the decision in June, the outgoing government used a controversial new law to remove a judge from the panel and appoint a temporary judge in his place. The Argentine-Jewish community and the U.S. government expressed skepticism regarding the Argentina-Iran dialogue, and indeed it failed to advance the investigation. In December, the incoming Macri administration announced it would cease the executive's challenge of judicial decisions against the pact. The same month, the administration appointed a state secretary with Cabinet rank to carry forward the investigation of the 1994 attack.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Argentina is a member of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, Unidad de Informacion Financiera (UIF), is a member of the Egmont Group. During 2014, the last period for which data is available, the UIF identified seven possible instances of terrorism financing. Two were submitted to the Attorney General's Office, and the remaining five were under investigation. These cases involve the capture of 11 terrorist fugitives, all from the last military dictatorship, and eight resolutions to freeze assets. At the close of 2015, the Federal Prosecutor in charge of Economic Crimes identified a new potential terrorism-financing case regarding a Syrian national involved in a number of suspicious transactions in the Tri-Border Area (with Brazil and Paraguay). That case was proceeding through the justice system at year's end.

While the Government of Argentina has established the legal authorities and structures necessary to identify and pursue terrorism financing, results in the form of targets identified, assets seized,

and cases prosecuted have been minimal. In December, the new administration appointed a new head of the UIF and considered proposals to create a special counsel reporting directly to the government to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, establish an inter-agency anti-money laundering/counterterrorism financing task force, and develop a new national risk-based strategy founded on a revised national risk analysis. Such measures, if implemented effectively, could help the country move closer to international standards and improve program effectiveness.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

International and Regional Cooperation: Argentina participated in the OAS Inter-American Committee against Terrorism and the Southern Common Market Special Forum on Terrorism. Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay coordinated law enforcement efforts in the Tri-Border Area via their Trilateral Tri-Border Area Command.

BRAZIL

Overview: The Brazilian government continued to support counterterrorism activities, which included third-country technical assistance for controlling sensitive technologies, assessing and mitigating potential terrorist threats in advance of major events, and investigating fraudulent travel documents. Operationally, Brazilian security forces worked with U.S. officials to pursue investigative leads provided by United States and other intelligence services, law enforcement, and financial agencies regarding terrorist suspects.

The Brazilian Federal Police (DPF) – Brazil's lead counterterrorism agency – worked closely with the U.S. government and other nations' law enforcement entities to assess and mitigate potential terrorist threats, especially leading up to the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Cooperation was strong and continuous, particularly dealing with crisis management, emergency response, and planning exercises to build response capacity in case of a terrorist attack. The DPF Anti-Terrorism Division was created specifically to address threats of radicalization and to counter violent extremism.

Brazil continued to implement its 2013 policy on provision of humanitarian assistance for Syria, including the issuance of more refugee visas to Syrians than any other country in Latin America. President Dilma Rousseff strongly condemned the November 13 attacks in Paris, calling for "coordinated action" by the international community against ISIL. Some commentators contrasted this pronouncement with her 2014 U.N. General Assembly speech criticizing the approach in Iraq and Syria. Asked about the potential terrorist threat posed to the 2016 Summer Olympics, Rousseff reiterated that Brazil is an unlikely target but called for comprehensive counterterrorism legislation, then pending before Congress,to be passed quickly.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Brazil's 1980 National Security Law criminalizes "terrorist acts" but does not clearly define terrorism, which hinders prosecution of potential terrorists and other counterterrorism efforts. On February 24, Congress passed a bill (PLC 101/2015) that will criminalize both terrorism and terrorism financing. The bill has the President's support.

Brazil has three law enforcement agencies with counterterrorism responsibilities, ranging from the investigation of terrorism to interdiction and response. The lead counterterrorism agency, with responsibility for investigating any terrorist-related threats or groups, is the Brazilian Federal Police's Anti-Terrorism Division (DPF DAT). In addition, the state-level Military Police Departments, through their respective Police Special Operations Battalions (BOPE), and the state-level Civil Police Departments, through their respective Divisions of Special Operations (DOE), also work on counterterrorism issues. Brazil's Intelligence Agency (ABIN) also monitors terrorist threats.Coordination between civilian security and law enforcement agencies and the Brazilian military is hindered by inter-service rivalries; interagency cooperation and coordination would benefit from consolidated and automatic information sharing.

All of Brazil's law enforcement agencies with counterterrorism responsibilities have benefitted from U.S. capacity-building training. In 2015, the U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program delivered courses to security and law enforcement personnel covering topics such as Critical Incident Management, Airport Security Management, and Fraudulent Document Recognition – all with the goal of enhancing investigative capabilities, building border security capabilities, and supporting Brazil's efforts to prevent terrorist attacks at the 2016 Summer Olympics. Training courses had the added benefit of bringing together disparate agencies, which enhanced Brazilian interagency communication.

Brazilian authorities continued to work with other concerned nations – particularly the United States – in combating document fraud. Since 2009, multiple regional and international joint operations successfully disrupted a number of document vendors and facilitators, as well as related human-smuggling networks. The Department of State provided comprehensive and ongoing anti-fraud training to airline and border police units through its Investigations Program (ARSO-I). Since program inception in 2008, ARSO-Ihas trained thousands of airline personnel and Brazilian Immigration officials at virtually every international port of entry. In addition, since 2008 DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have trained Brazilian airline employees on identifying fraudulent documents.

The U.S.-Brazil Container Security Initiative (CSI) in Santos, which began in 2005, continued to operate throughout 2015. The CSI promotes secure containerized cargo – shipped to the United States – by co-locating DHS CBP personnel overseas with Brazilian customs administrators, to target, detect, and inspect high-risk cargo while facilitating the movement of legitimate trade. CBP's International Affairs and Field Operations Offices conduct joint workshops with Brazil to bolster supply chain security and port security. Similarly, the National Civil Aviation Agency, DPF, and Brazilian Customs (RFB) continued to work with DHS' Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to make modifications to Brazil's National Cargo Security Program (NCSP) to gain TSA recognition of commensurability for cargo security procedures, training, and operations at Brazil's international airports.

Brazil shares vast international borders with 10 different countries. Many of its borders – especially those with Argentina, Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela – are porous. Illegal immigration to Brazil is a growing problem, with Brazil often serving as a country-of-transit for final destination in the United States. Brazilian states maintain individual criminal records databases, and information sharing is unwieldy. Biometric information is not collected

from visitors. A 2013 law requires the collection of Passenger Name Record data, and it is being gradually implemented. Brazil does not maintain its own terrorist watchlist, though it collaborates with other nations.

In a high-profile December case, Rio de Janeiro's Civil Police unit uncovered a fraudulent document ring that had provided authentic Brazilian birth certificates to 70 Syrian nationals, at least 20 of whom subsequently obtained Brazilian passports. U.S. Mission Brazil is cooperating with the Brazilian authorities in its investigation.

The Brazilian Army continues to implement an Integrated Border Monitoring System to monitor the country's borders using a combination of soldiers, cameras, sensors, and satellites. The strategic initiative is underway in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul as a preliminary pilot project, with intention to cover the entire Brazilian border by 2021.

Pending comprehensive counterterrorism legislation is intended to help Brazil address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, through implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2170, 2178, 2199 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime.

In September 2015, the DPF's Operation Mendacity arrested members of a money laundering group accused of illegally moving more than $10 million in the last five years. Press reports state the group had social media ties to the Islamic State and were potentially financing terrorist activities.

The DPF and the justice system face resource constraints when enforcing immigration law and supervising airport security.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Brazil is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, a FATF-style regional body (FSRB). Its financial intelligence unit, the Council for Financial Activities Control (COAF), is a member of the Egmont Group. Brazil monitors domestic financial operations and uses the COAF to identify possible funding sources for terrorist groups.

On October 16, President Rousseff signed Law #13.170, which provides procedures for freezing assets relating to UNSCRs and for information provided through bilateral cooperation, closing a longstanding gap in Brazil's ability to confront terrorism financing. Legislation (PLC 101/2015) to criminalize terrorism financing in a manner consistent with international standards, established by the FATF, has passed Congress and awaited President Rousseff's signature at the end of 2015.

Through the COAF, which is a largely independent entity within the Finance Ministry, Brazil has implemented the UN1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime, but it has not reported any assets, accounts, or property in the names of persons or entities. The Government of Brazil has generally responded to U.S. efforts to identify and block terrorist-related funds.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

International and Regional Cooperation: Brazil participates in regional counterterrorism fora, including the OAS and its Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE); the Union of South American Nations (Unasul); and the working group on terrorism and sub-working group on financial issues in the Southern Common Market (Mercosul).

Brazil is working with a range of international law enforcement partners in its security plan for the 2016 Summer Olympics, through two Centers for International Police Cooperation (CCPI) that will be stood up for the event. In Brasilia, the CCPI will include three foreign law enforcement officials for each of the 55 invited countries.

The Brazilian government continued to invest in border and law enforcement infrastructure and has undertaken initiatives with its neighboring countries to control the flow of goods – legal and illegal – through the Tri-Border Area of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay.

CANADA

Overview: Canada played a significant role in international efforts to detect, disrupt, prevent, and punish acts of terrorism in 2015. Canada and the United States maintained a close, cooperative counterterrorism partnership, and worked together on key bilateral homeland security programs such as the Beyond the Border initiative and the Cross Border Crime Forum. Canada made major contributions to the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), and Canadian diplomacy supported global efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism, and promote the rule of law overseas. Canada implementedUN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2178 and2199; the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida (AQ) sanctions regime; monitored financial flows to counter terrorism financing; and implemented GCTF good practices on foreign terrorist fighters.

Traveling abroad to commit acts of terrorism is a violation of Canadian federal law. Current enforcement measures to prevent this include the denial of passport applications or the revocation of valid passports of Canadian citizens who are suspected of either traveling abroad or aspiring to travel abroad in order to commit acts of terrorism and also the maintenance of a watchlist of individuals (both citizens and non-citizen residents) flagged for potential involvement with extremist organizations.

Canada has made important contributions to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL in 2015, including the assignment of combat and surveillance aircrafts, an aerial tanker, support personnel to the region, as well as Canadian Special Forces advisers to advise and train the Peshmerga in Iraq. Canada has also provided significant humanitarian assistance to communities impacted by ISIL atrocities, and is a member of the Counter ISIL Finance Group.Although the new government has withdrawn its fighter aircraft from the counter-ISIL combat mission, it will increase its support to the Coalition in other ways. Canadian law enforcement and security services are additionally working to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Iraq and Syria.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Canada's legal system is well-suited to adjudicate counterterrorism cases. The legal framework includes significant penalties for committing terrorist acts, conspiring to commit terrorist acts, financing terrorism, and traveling abroad to engage in terrorism.

- In April, the government passed Bill C-44, Protection of Canada from Terrorists Act, which went into effect on April 23. The bill amends the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act to enable the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to investigate threats to the security of Canada more effectively; clarify the CSIS mandate; confirm CSIS authority to conduct investigations abroad and to obtain Federal Court warrants to carry out those investigations; protect the identity of CSIS human sources from disclosure; protect the identity of CSIS employees engaging in covert activities; and expedite implementation of citizenship revocation measures to strip citizenship from dual nationals convicted of terrorist offenses.

- Also in April, the government passed Bill C-32, Victims' Bill of Rights Act, to create statutory rights for victims of crime. These include: the ability to access information about the status of investigations, criminal proceedings, and reviews of offenders subject to the corrections process; the protection of victims from intimidation, retaliation, and identity disclosure; the enablement of victims' participation in the judicial process; and the provision of financial restitution to victims. Bill C-32 went into effect in July.

- In June, the government passed Bill C-51, Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, which amends the criminal code for offenses related to terrorism. The Bill enacts the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act, which authorizes federal government departments and institutions to share personal data of individuals in the context of activities related to national security; enacts the Secure Air Travel Act to establish a no-fly list of persons who may pose a threat to transportation security or who may travel by air for the purpose of committing a terrorism offense; authorizes air carriers to deny boarding to persons so listed; establishes rules for the collection, use and disclosure of information to administer and enforce the list; and provides recourse and appeal procedures for persons denied travel. Bill C-51 authorizes judges to issue peace bonds (orders from a criminal court that require a person to keep the peace and be on good behavior for a period of time), revoke passports, and prohibit personal travel in specified geographic areas in order to disrupt suspected terrorist activity. The bill creates the new offense of knowingly advocating or promoting the commission of terrorism, allows judges to order the seizure or deletion of terrorist propaganda, and provides enhanced protection for witnesses, particularly in the context of security or criminal intelligence. The bill expands CSIS authority to operate outside Canada (subject to judicial warrant) and creates new accountability and reporting requirements. Bill C-51 went into effect in August. The Trudeau government has pledged to modify Bill C-51 – in line with Liberal Party campaign promises and unsuccessful attempts to amend the original bill – that would more precisely define the government's expanded authority and introduce more safeguards against possible abuses of that authority.

- In June, the government also passed Bill S-4, Digital Privacy Act, which establishes rules for how private sector businesses collect, use, and disclose the personal information of

clients and permits internet service providers to share subscriber data with third parties and law enforcement.

Canada has advanced law enforcement capabilities. While Canadian law enforcement and homeland security entities share legally available terrorism-related information with the United States and other investigative counterparts in a timely, proactive fashion, the United States continues to engage with Canada on methods to facilitate the sharing of additional information that is not covered by our current agreements. Prosecutors work in close cooperation with specialized law enforcement units that maintain advanced investigative techniques, crisis response capabilities, and border security capacity. Canadian federal law enforcement entities such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have clearly demarcated counterterrorism missions and have effective working relationships with their provincial and municipal counterparts as well as with those elements of the Canadian Armed Forces that have counterterrorism roles.

Canada has an extensive border security network and uses travel document security technology, terrorist-screening watchlists, biographic and biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry, information sharing between host government entities and other countries, and collection of advance Passenger Name Record (PNR) information on commercial flights to safeguard its borders. Canada and the United States enjoy extensive border security collaboration under the auspices of the Beyond the Border initiative as well as within the framework of the Cross Border Crime Forum and other ongoing law enforcement exchanges. Canadian security forces are very capable and effectively patrol the country's land and maritime borders.

Significant law enforcement actions against terrorists and terrorist groups are as follows:

- On January 9, police charged Canadian citizens Carlos Larmond and Ashton Larmond with participating in the activity of a terrorist group and conspiracy to participate in terrorist activity. Police also charged Carlos Larmond with planning to leave the country to participate in terrorist activity.
- On January 23, authorities extradited Iraqi-born Canadian citizen Sayfildin (Sayf) Tahir Sharif (also known as Faruq Khalil Muhammad Isa) to the United States after the Canadian Supreme Court declined to hear his appeal. Sharif faces charges of conspiracy to murder Americans abroad, of aiding and abetting the murder of U.S. nationals abroad, and provision of material support to terrorist conduct.
- On February 3, police charged Awso Peshdary with participation in a terrorist group and facilitating terrorist activity by funding the travel of individuals for the purpose of terrorism. Peshdary is the first individual charged in Canada for terrorist recruitment.
- On April 20, police charged Sabrine Djermane and El Mahdi Jamali with building or possessing an explosive substance, facilitating terrorist activity, and attempting to leave the country for the purposes of participating in terrorist activity.
- On May 7, an Edmonton judge ordered that Omar Khadr (a Canadian citizen who pled guilty in 2010 before a United States military tribunal to various offenses, including murder in violation of the law of war and received an eight year sentence) be freed on bail. Khadr was repatriated to Canada from Guantanamo Bay in September 2012. Khadr continued to appeal his U.S. conviction.
- On June 2, a British Columbia court found Canadian citizens John Stewart Nuttall and Amanda Marie Korody guilty of conspiring to explode pressure-cooker explosive devices

among crowds on the grounds of the British Columbia Legislature in 2013. Police alleged the pair were self-radicalized and inspired by AQ ideology on the Internet, but acted independently with no support from outside the country. The court stayed registration of the convictions and sentencing pending the outcome of a judicial hearing of a claim of police entrapment and abuse of process. The hearing continued as of December.

- On June 11, police arrested Somali-born Ali Omar Ader upon his arrival in Canada for participation in the hostage-taking and confinement in Somalia of Canadian freelance journalist Amanda Lindhout in 2008.
- On July 13, police charged Jordanian-born Othman Hamdan with six counts of counselling acts of violence on behalf of a terrorist organization. Hamdan arrived in Canada from the United States in 2002 and obtained refugee status.
- In August, the Canada Border Services Agency began proceedings to deport Algerian national Mohamed Harkat after the Supreme Court accepted evidence in 2014 that he was an al-AQ sleeper agent and upheld an immigration security certificate against him. Harkat remained under supervision in the community, subject to conditions.
- On September 23, an Ontario court sentenced Chiheb Esseghaier, a Tunisian national, and Raed Jaser, a Palestinian national, to life in prison for conspiracy to commit murder and participation in a terrorist group for plotting to derail a VIA Rail passenger train between Toronto and New York City. They received additional sentences for lesser charges and will be eligible for parole after 10 years. Both have stated their intention to appeal the convictions.
- In September, authorities deported Pakistani nationals Jahanzeb Malik and Mohammed Aqeeq Ansari to Pakistan. Both men were permanent residents of Canada, but lost that status when the Immigration and Refugee Board ruled they had engaged in alleged terrorist activity in separate incidents and constituted a danger to public security. Malik allegedly had considered the United States Consulate in Toronto as a potential target.
- In September, the government revoked the citizenship of Zakaria Amar, a dual Canadian/Jordanian citizen serving a life sentence for planning terrorist attacks in Ontario in 2006 as part of the "Toronto 18" group.
- On December 17, a Montreal teenager was found guilty of committing a robbery in association with a terrorist organization and planning to leave Canada to participate in the activities of a terrorist group abroad. The teen had engaged in Twitter conversations with violent extremist sympathizer Martin Coutoure-Rouleau, who fatally rammed a Canadian Armed Forces official in October 2014.
- At various times throughout the year, police charged a number of individuals – including Farah Shirdon, Khadar Khalib, and John Maguire – in absentia with offenses related to participation in terrorism activity outside the country. Also during the year in a series of incidents, police issued peace bonds to individuals they suspected of planning to engage in terrorist activity or intending to leave the country for the purposes of terrorist activity.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Canada is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, and is a supporting nation of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force. Its financial intelligence unit, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), is a member of the Egmont Group. Canada is also an observer in the Council of Europe's Select Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America. Canada has rigorous detection and monitoring processes in place to identify

money laundering and terrorism financing activities. FINTRAC is responsible for detecting, preventing and deterring money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities. Canada implements UNSCR 1373 and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime; criminalizes terrorism financing in accordance with international standards; freezes and confiscates terrorist assets without delay; monitors and regulates money/value transfer and other remittance services; requires collection of data for wire transfers; obligates non-profits to file suspicious transaction reports and monitors them to prevent either misuse or terrorism financing; and routinely distributes UN sanctions lists to financial institutions.For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The RCMP National Security Community Outreach program promotes interaction and relationship-building with at-risk communities. The Department of Public Safety's Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security fosters dialogue on national security issues between the government and community leaders, including diaspora groups. Both of these initiatives are part of Canada's national Counterterrorism Strategy, which seeks specifically to reduce the risk of individuals succumbing to violent extremism and radicalization. All levels of government –federal, provincial, and municipal – continued to work with non-governmental partners and concerned communities to counter violent extremism through preventative programming and community outreach.

International and Regional Cooperation: Canada prioritizes collaboration with international partners to counter terrorism and regularly seeks opportunities to lead. Canada is a founding member of the GCTF and is active in numerous international fora dealing with counterterrorism, including the OSCE, the UN, the G-7, APEC, ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Commonwealth, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Maritime Organization, and the OAS. Canada makes major contributions to the GCTF and the GICNT, while Canadian diplomacy supports global efforts to prevent radicalization to violence, counter violent extremism, and promote the rule of law overseas. As part of the GCTF, Canada co-chairs the Sahel Capacity-Building Working Group with Algeria.

Global Affairs Canada maintains a Counterterrorism Capacity Building Program which provides training, funding, equipment, and technical and legal assistance to partner nations to enable them to prevent and respond to a broad spectrum of terrorist activity. Examples of activities supported by Canadian counterterrorism assistance include: border security; transportation security; legislative, regulatory and legal policy development; human rights training; law enforcement, security, military and intelligence training; chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear and explosives terrorism prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery; detection and prevention of terrorism financing; cyber security; and the protection of critical infrastructure.

COLOMBIA

Overview: In 2015, Colombia experienced overall decreased terrorist activity according to Defense Ministry statistics, due in large part to a unilateral ceasefire declared by Colombia's largest terrorist organization, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Although the government and the FARC reached tentative, partial agreements on land reform, political participation, drug trafficking, and victims' rights (including transitional justice), no overall

bilateral peace agreement had been concluded by the end of the year. The government continued exploratory talks with the other major terrorist organization in Colombia, the National Liberation Army (ELN), although formal peace negotiations had not started by year's end. U.S.-Colombian counterterrorism cooperation remained strong.

The Colombian government continued its military pressure against insurgents in 2015, although it gradually reduced military actions over the course of the year, including certain periods when it suspended aerial bombardments against FARC targets. That suspension remained in place at year's end. In response to the FARC observation of a unilateral ceasefire starting on December 20, 2014, President Santos announced on March 10 that the armed forces would refrain from bombing FARC guerrilla camps. However, following a FARC attack in Cauca department on April 15 that killed 11 soldiers and wounded 20 others, Santos ordered the military to resume aerial strikes against the FARC. The FARC lifted its self-imposed unilateral ceasefire on May 22 and initiated a wave of attacks against security forces and infrastructure for the next two months. The FARC then resumed its unilateral ceasefire on July 20, and it remained in place through the end of the year. On July 25, Santos again suspended aerial bombardments of FARC camps as a de-escalation measure. On September 23, the government and the FARC jointly announced their intention to sign a peace agreement by March 23, 2016. Meanwhile, Santos ordered the military to intensify strikes against the ELN in response to an October 26 ELN attack on a military foot patrol escorting election workers and ballots, which resulted in the death of 11 soldiers and one police officer and the capture of two soldiers (who were released several weeks later). In 2015, the number of members of Foreign Terrorist Organizations – including the FARC and ELN –killed in combat, captured, and demobilized, decreased compared to the previous year. In 2015, the number of civilian deaths from conflicts with guerilla organizations decreased compared to the previous year.

While Colombia has openly condemned ISIL and its objectives, Colombia is not a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The FARC and ELN focused on low-cost, high-impact asymmetric attacks, as they did in 2014. The most common forms of terrorist activity were the launching of mortars at police stations or the military, explosive devices placed near roads and paths, sniper attacks, roadblocks, and ambushes. In 2015, Colombian government statistics showed a decrease in attacks from 2014. Terrorist attacks on infrastructure – including oil pipelines and energy towers – also decreased in 2015 compared to 2014, according to Defense Ministry statistics. Security forces and government buildings were the most common terrorist targets, although civilian casualties also occurred throughout the year. Attacks were most common along the Venezuelan border in the departments of Arauca, Norte de Santander, and La Guajira; in the southwestern departments of Nariño and Cauca; and in the northwestern department of Antioquia. Among the terrorist attacks recorded in 2015, several were notable for their severity or significant press coverage:

- Throughout the year, the ELN continued to place bombs throughout the country, including in Bogota. From February 2 through March 12, the ELN planted IEDs around Bogota, two targeting the police and one targeting a political party headquarters. Police arrested the Bogota-based criminal gang members the ELN had contracted to plant the devices, who admitted that planning was underway for additional attacks against police targets. On July 2-3, ELN pamphlets were found at the scenes of IEDs and pamphlet

bomb explosions during evening rush hour at several locations in downtown Bogota, which caused minor injuries. Police arrested 15 ELN members/supporters, including two captured with bombs and pamphlets, although they were released by the court weeks later.

- Throughout the year, the ELN continued its kidnapping activities. Among others, the ELN kidnapped a Dutch citizen in Norte de Santander department in January (released in February), seized two hostages at a road checkpoint for ransom in Choco department on February 11, and kidnapped four geologists preparing to carry out studies on mining for the Colombian Geological Service in Norte de Santander department on February 24.
- Throughout May and June, FARC bombings of electricity towers and police stations in Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca, and Nariño departments left almost a million people without power for several days. These attacks includeda June 1 FARC attack on electrical infrastructure in the poverty-stricken city of Buenaventura on the Pacific coast that left approximately 400,000 Colombians without power, a June 2 FARC attack on electrical pylons in the southwestern city of Tumaco that left approximately 200,000 people without electricity, followed by another attack on Tumaco on June 20 affecting 260,000 people.
- On June 7, the FARC forced 19 oil tankers to dump their contents (estimated at 222,000 gallons of crude oil) on a roadway near Puerto Asis, Putumayo department, which caused a massive oil spill and a significant environmental hazard.
- Beginning June 8, FARC guerrillas conducted strikes against oil pipelines, hitting the Transandino Pipeline five times and bombing the Caño Limon-Covenas Pipeline on June 17 and July 1. Environment Minister Gabriel Vallejo characterized the spills caused by the Transandino attack as "the worst oil spill in Colombia in the last 10 years."
- On October 26 in Boyaca department, an ELN attack on a military foot patrol escorting election workers and ballots resulted in the death of 11 soldiers and one police officer and the capture of two soldiers. The captured soldiers were released on November 16.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases in Colombia is governed by Section 906 of Colombia's Criminal Code. The purpose of Section 906 is to develop an evidence-based system of justice where cases are tried before a judge based on testimonial, physical, or documentary evidence with a "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard of proof. Most terrorism cases are prosecuted under traditional legal statutes that are used for narcotics trafficking and organized crime, such as conspiracy and illegal possession of firearms authorized for exclusive use of the security forces. There are some specialized statutes that the Attorney General Office's specialized Counterterrorism Unit uses, such as "rebellion" under Section 467 of Colombia's Criminal Code, which criminalize "those who, through armed conflict, seek to overthrow the Constitutionally-enacted government of Colombia." Other specialized statutes in the Criminal Code covering terrorism and related crimes include Articles 144, 340, and 343 – which criminalize terrorism, acts of terrorism, and participation in a terrorist organization; terrorism financing is a crime under Article 345.

The Attorney General Office's specialized Counterterrorism Unit has prosecutors assigned at the national level in Bogota, and in regions of conflict throughout the country. The unit has developed a great deal of expertise in investigating and prosecuting acts of terrorism and insurgency with the Attorney General's own Technical Criminal Investigative Body, Colombia's National Police (CNP), and the country's military forces. The Attorney General's Office also has specialized prosecutors embedded with CNP anti-kidnapping and anti-extortion "GAULA"

units throughout the country to handle kidnapping-for-ransom and extortion cases in real-time. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) assisted the National Judicial Police Council – presided over by the Attorney General and including members of the CNP and other agencies with investigative authority – in establishing a Standards and Training Commission to develop minimum standards for investigators, forensic experts, and criminal analysts. Colombia also worked on securing international accreditation for its forensic laboratories.

The CNP has specialized counterterrorism units in the Intelligence, Anti-Kidnapping, and Judicial Police Directorates, all with advanced investigation techniques and crisis response capabilities. Law enforcement units display clear and effective command and control within each organization. These specialized law enforcement units are properly equipped and supported with relevant training. Counterterrorism missions are demarcated to a limited extent between law enforcement and military units. Colombia's contemporary military and law enforcement units have an improved record of accountability and respect for human rights. There is room for improvement in interagency cooperation and sharing of terrorism-related information. No single agency has jurisdiction over all terrorism-related investigations and post-incident response, sometimes resulting in poor information sharing and cooperation.

In 2015, Colombian authorities continued to operate military task forces to enhance coordination in combating terrorism. The CNP managed fusion centers to ensure all operational missions coordinate intelligence, investigations, and operations under the command of regional police commanders. Additionally, the National Police Intelligence Directorate continued to operate a 24-hour Citizen Security Center tasked with detecting, deterring, and responding to terrorist attacks, among other crimes.

Colombian border security remained an area of vulnerability. Law enforcement officers faced the challenge of working in areas with porous borders and difficult topography plagued by the presence of illegal armed groups and illicit drug cultivation and trafficking. The CNP lacked the manpower to enforce uniform policies for vehicle or passenger inspections at land border crossings. Biometric and biographic screening was conducted only at international airports. The Colombian government does not use advance Passenger Name Records. Of a total force of 180,000 officers, the CNP has only 1,500 officers assigned to Customs Enforcement (air, land, and seaports and borders) duties.

Colombia remained a key transit point for the smuggling of third-country nationals who may seek to enter the United States illegally. Porous borders with Ecuador and Venezuela facilitate the movements of third-country nationals through Colombia, and existing maritime narcotics smuggling routes facilitate their onward movement to Central America. While Colombian Immigration regularly detains third-country nationals who have entered the country illegally, the entity lacks both the personnel and enforcement authority to adequately respond to this threat, and the financial resources to repatriate citizens to their home countries via air. The Attorney General's Office is currently investigating corruption by airport officials suspected of letting criminals travel with forged documents. At the end of 2015, five Colombian Immigration officials were facing corruption charges.

Colombia continued cooperation and information sharing with the Panamanian National Border Service, while improved relations with neighboring Ecuador led to some increased cooperation on law enforcement issues. However, starting in August, Venezuela closed the majority of its

border with Colombia, deported more than 1,900 Colombians and deployed extra troops in the border region. In addition, more than 20,000 Colombians "self-deported" from Venezuela. Colombia and Venezuela have since agreed to improve coordinated security and law enforcement efforts, including expanding the Bi-National Joint Command and Control Center to include a Bi-National Center for Fighting Transnational Organized Crime, increasing troops along the border, and considering proposals for maritime and fluvial cooperation. However, the border closures remained in place at the end of the year.

Colombian authorities captured, killed, or arrested several high-profile perpetrators of terrorist acts in 2015:

- In January, the military captured Carlos Andres Bustos Cortez (alias *Richard*), the second in command of the FARC's Teofilo Forero mobile column in central-southwest Colombia, accused of engineering terrorist attacks against police stations, buses, shops, and electrical infrastructure.
- In March, the CNP worked with the Attorney General's Office and military to capture five members of a criminal organization the ELN had reportedly hired to place and detonate explosives in Bogota.
- On May 21, a Colombian military aerial bombardment targeting the FARC's 29th Front killed 26 FARC fighters in Cauca department, the biggest blow to the FARC in a single attack in several years.
- In October, Colombian authorities arrested Jairo Alirio Puerta Peña (alias *Omar* or *Cuñado*), a FARC member allegedly linked to massacres in Bojaya, Choco department in 2002 and Pueblo Bello, Antioquia department that left hundreds of civilians dead, as well as an attack on a helicopter that killed a number of soldiers in 2000.
- In December, Colombia's Supreme Court approved the extradition to the United States of FARC member Octavio Orrego (alias *Sebastián*) for kidnapping the three Americans in 2003 and killing another American five years later. President Santos denied the extradition, however, based on the ongoing peace negotiations with the FARC.

While kidnappings have declined in recent years, they remained a threat, especially in rural and insurgent-affected portions of Colombia. Organized extortion networks inhibited economic growth, displaced civilians, and subverted the rule of law where they were active, and the alleged failure of victims to accede to extortion demands was regularly cited as the cause for terrorist attacks. The CNP Anti-Kidnapping and Anti-Extortion Directorate have an international kidnapping unit to address kidnappings involving foreign nationals.

Law enforcement cooperation between Colombia and the United States remained strong. Evidence sharing and joint law enforcement operations occurred in a fluid and efficient manner.

Colombia continued to participate in the Department's Antiterrorism Assistance program. The program provided instruction and resources to assist Colombia in building advanced, self-sustaining CNP capabilities to secure borders from terrorist transit, to investigate terrorists and terrorist incidents, and to protect critical infrastructure. Colombia continued to establish itself as a regional provider of law enforcement and counterterrorism training, particularly with regard to anti-kidnapping efforts and dignitary protection.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Colombia is a member of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, a FATF-style regional body. Colombia stands out as a regional leader in the fight against terrorism financing, and has become a key part of a regional financial intelligence unit initiative aimed at strengthening information sharing among Latin American countries. Colombia's financial intelligence unit, Unidad de Informacion y Analisis Financiero, is a member of the Egmont Group, a global association of financial intelligence units. On April 15-16, more than 90 prosecutors and investigators from the Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Paraguay, and the United States met in Cartagena for the first U.S. Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) Regional Counterterrorism Workshop focused on safeguarding the financial system in Latin America from abuse by terrorist organizations, including Hizballah, FARC, and ELN. A second OPDAT Regional Counterterrorism Workshop focusing on Terrorism Financing in Free Trade Zones in Latin America took place in Panama City, Panama in late October, with participation from seven countries, including Colombia. On November 13, OPDAT hosted a one-day seminar on Terrorism Financing and Terrorism-Related Money Laundering in Barranquilla, attended by approximately 42 Colombian prosecutors and investigators.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Colombia employed a strong and modern multi-agency approach to countering radicalization to violence and violent extremism, with a focus on encouraging individual members and entire units of the FARC and ELN to demobilize and reintegrate into society. In 2015, the number of FARC and ELN members who demobilized decreased slightly. The demobilization and reintegration programs provide medical care, psychological counseling, education benefits, technical training, and job placement assistance for demobilized combatants. In order to receive benefits, demobilized combatants must check in monthly with program managers. Recidivism rates were estimated at between seven and 20 percent.

The Colombian armed forces and police employed a number of fixed and mobile radio transmitters to broadcast strategic messaging to individuals considering leaving the FARC or ELN. Such messaging was also seen in print, television, and alternative media. The Colombian military and police employed the same media forms to counter FARC and ELN recruitment efforts. Additionally, the Ministry of Defense organized highly publicized festivals and social events with celebrity participation to discourage the recruitment of vulnerable youth. Moreover, with international community support, the government's Inter-Institutional Committee for the Prevention of Recruitment of Children supported numerous recruitment prevention initiatives all over the country reaching more than 500,000 children at high risk. The Committee also worked with mayors to include prevention of recruitment activities in their development plans.

International and Regional Cooperation: Colombia is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and is actively involved in the UN, OAS and its Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, the Pacific Alliance, and the Union of South American Nations. The CNP operates an INTERPOL office of approximately 70 analysts, agents, and support staff. Colombia also led the creation of the American Police Community (Ameripol) in 2007, and

helped found the Latin American and Caribbean Community of Police Intelligence in 2005, whose Technical Secretariat is based in Bogota.

Colombia is becoming a leader in providing security training and assistance to other countries in the region. The CNP and military continued to operate schools that train security personnel from around the region. In 2015, Colombia conducted 118 security trainings for more than 2,864 non-Colombian individuals – a significant increase over 2014 – on citizen security, crime prevention and monitoring, military and police capacity building, anti-kidnapping, anti-extortion, hostage negotiation, and cybersecurity training. Colombia also provided judicial training to regional judges and prosecutors handling drug trafficking and terrorism cases, offered basic and advanced helicopter training to pilots from countries throughout Latin America, and maintained its elite *Lancero* and *Jungla* Special Forces courses open to students from other countries.

CUBA

Overview: The United States rescinded Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism on May 29, 2015. The governments agreed to establish a bilateral law enforcement dialogue with technical working groups that would address cooperation regarding various law enforcement matters including counterterrorism, counter-narcotics, human smuggling, border control, and financial crime issues in the wake of re-establishing diplomatic relations on July 20.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Cuban law specifically criminalizes terrorism. There is not a comprehensive counterterrorism framework, but the criminal code does address terrorism. Law enforcement and border security have a strong presence and effectively deter and respond to security threats. Cuban officials also have a strong search and rescue/disaster response capacity, which could prove particularly useful in responding to an attack. Cuban border security, screening, and tracking of travelers are strong.

The United States and Cuba held the first round of expanded law enforcement discussions in November. Senior law enforcement officials from across the interagency met with their Cuban counterparts to discuss a broad range of issues, including the recently approved information sharing protocol via INTERPOL and the creation of a number of technical working groups including a group that will address counterterrorism issues.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Cuba is a member of the Financial Action Task on Latin America (GAFILAT), a FATF-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, Dirección General de Investigación de Operaciones Financieras,is a member of the Egmont Group. Cuba's last mutual evaluation took place in late 2014.For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm*.

International and Regional Cooperation: Cuba is not an active member of the OAS, nor a member of NATO, or the OSCE.

MEXICO

Overview: Cooperation between the Mexican and U.S. governments on counterterrorism remained strong in 2015. In the wake of the Paris attacks, Mexican officials reaffirmed their commitment to counterterrorism measures. There are no known international terrorist organizations operating in Mexico, and there is no evidence that any terrorist group has targeted U.S. citizens in Mexican territory.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Mexico has a legal framework for the investigation and prosecution of terrorism and related crimes, including a special prosecutorial unit within the Office of the Attorney General dedicated to such investigations.

The Government of Mexico continued to work towards meeting its June 2016 deadline to transition from an inquisitorial to an accusatorial justice system. All of Mexico's 31 states and the Federal District have begun to transition to the accusatory criminal justice system. As of November 2015, eight states have transitioned to the new criminal justice system for crimes under federal jurisdiction and six have done so at the state level.

Mexican government agencies collaborated well with U.S. law enforcement agencies on legal action against persons who raise terrorism concerns. The Government of Mexico is receptive to counterterrorism training opportunities and equipment donations. Mexican officials have the investigative, operational, and tactical skills needed for counterterrorism work due in part to their frequent counter-narcotics operations.

In 2015, the U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) training program, and other U.S. counterterrorism efforts, trained Mexican Federal Police, the Attorney General's Office representatives, and Customs and Immigration officials, among other authorities.

Mexico's border security enforcement capabilities continued to be focused at the U.S.-Mexico border and have increased apprehensions of undocumented migrants along its southern border with Guatemala. Mexico's border enforcement efforts are shared among Federal Police, military authorities, and Customs and Immigration agencies, the latter of which has primary authority to interdict migrants. Corruption sometimes hinders the effectiveness of enforcement efforts. The National Institute of Migration adequately collects and disseminates passenger information for persons of interest and incorporates INTERPOL watchlists into their database.

Mexican security agencies track open-source reports claiming that terrorist training camps existed in Mexico, most recently in April 2015. In each instance, the media reports have been found to be unsubstantiated.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Mexico belongs to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Financial Action Task Force in Latin America, and is a supporting nation of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, a FATF-style regional body.Its Financial Intelligence Unit is a member of the Egmont Group. In 2014, Mexico passed several amendments to existing legislation to counter the financing of terrorism. The amendments criminalized terrorism financing, created an exception to rules governing the dissemination of third-party fiscal data to comply with new terrorism financing laws, and sanctioned the immediate freezing of terrorist accounts and the seizure of terrorist assets based on both Mexican and international intelligence. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International*

Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: Interior Secretary Miguel Angel Osorio Chong represented the Government of Mexico at The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremismin Washington, DC, in February. The Government of Mexico sent a representative to the July 2015 follow-on meeting in Rome.

International and Regional Cooperation: Mexico participates in the Organization of American States' Inter-American Committee against Terrorism. Additionally in 2015, the Government of Mexico expressed interest in hosting a Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism multilateral training exercise in 2016.

PANAMA

Overview: In recent years, the most direct terrorism threats to Panama have been posed by elements of the 57th and 34th Fronts of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which have long operated illegally in the Darién region of Panama. The 30th Front is also known to actively transport illicit narcotics. Panama's successes in combatting these groups in the region, as well as progress in the peace talks between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, have greatly reduced the threat posed by the FARC within Panamanian territory. Panama maintains close cooperation with its neighbors, particularly Colombia, in an effort to secure its borders.

Panama's Darién region remains a significant and growing pathway for human smuggling, which includes elements of counterterrorism significance. Representatives of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation work with Panamanian authorities to identify smuggled aliens, with a particular focus on those who raise terrorism concerns.

The Panama Canal Authority has been vigilant in its efforts to maintain a secure Canal and enjoys international support in this mission; however, the Panama Canal Authority remains at risk for the illicit transit and transshipment of strategically-controlled, dual-use goods and technologies, and military goods. More than 60 percent of Panama's container traffic is either bound for, or departing from, U.S. ports, and more than five percent of all global container traffic passes through the Panama Canal, making Panama a key country of geopolitical significance along a critical transit and trade route.

On February 5, the Ministry of Foreign Relations issued a statement expressing Panama's "rejection of the violent acts and the grave violations to human rights perpetrated by the IS [Islamic State] group" and announced its intention to "join the efforts of the international community to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations." In so doing, Panama became the first Latin American country to join the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Panama has been involved in the Coalition's Counter-Finance Working Group.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: During protests held on July 7, assailants threw a homemade bomb which caused second-degree burns on two individuals. The 10 individuals implicated in this attack, seven of whom are minors, have been charged with terrorism and other associated crimes and remained detained by Panamanian authorities at the end of 2015.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Acts of terrorism are criminalized within Title IX, Chapter 1 of the Panamanian criminal code. Individuals who attempt to disturb the public peace, cause panic, terror, or fear in the population, or a subset thereof, through the use of radioactive materials, weapons, fire, explosives, biological or toxic substances, or any other means of massive destruction or element with that potential, are subject to prison sentences ranging from 20 to 30 years. Panamanian law also sanctions any individual who knowingly finances, grants, hides, or transfers money, goods, or other financial resources for use in the commission of the above referenced crimes to a period of confinement ranging from 25 to 30 years in prison. Those who use the internet to recruit terrorists or to provide bomb-making instructions are subject to confinement of five to 10 years.

In order to improve the Government of Panama's capacity and capabilities with regards to counterterrorism, the Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT), the Department of Defense's Security Programs including the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), and the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program and Export Control and Border Security (EXBS) Programs, work in concert with Panamanian authorities. These efforts are supplemented by capacity building initiatives led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Defense, and Homeland Security Investigations which also enhance Panama's law enforcement capacity to respond to terrorism. However, Panamanian security services continue to compete for resources, diminishing the incentive for collaboration, lessening the likelihood that enforcement agencies will focus on maintaining skills and equipment. While recent joint operations between the services have been successful, the government remains in the development phase of fostering interagency cooperation. Strategic budgeting, including for operations and maintenance, as well as long-term training program development continue to be significant areas of need.

The Panamanian government has continued its efforts to exert sovereignty in the underserved Darién region through the use of its security forces, principally the National Border Service (SENAFRONT). SENAFRONT's successes over the previous years have degraded the capabilities of the FARC to such an extent that it no longer maintains a permanent presence in Panamanian territory. However, narco-trafficking organizations and Colombian-origin criminal gangs (known as the BACRIM) continued to cause instability within the province. The Government of Panama maintains counterterrorism units within SENAFRONT, the National Air-Naval Service (SENAN), the Panamanian National Police (PNP), and the Institutional Protection Service (SPI; which is responsible for the protection of Panamanian and foreign dignitaries, as well as critical infrastructure, such as the Panama Canal). However, interagency coordination, cooperation, and information sharing remained limited.

In 2013, Panamanian forces searched and detained the North Korean-flagged merchant vessel *Chong Chon Gang* for transiting the Canal with illicit cargo. The search of the vessel found arms and related materiel which violated UN Security Council Resolutions prohibiting transfer of such items to North Korea. In February 2014, North Korea paid a $693,333 fine to the Panama Canal Authority and the ship left Panama with most of the crewmembers. Panamanian authorities charged the Captain, First Officer, and Political Officer of the vessel with possession and trafficking of arms and explosives. These individuals were acquitted in June of 2014 and left the country, despite an appeal filed in July 2014. In May 2015, a Panamanian court of

appeals significantly revised the June 2014 trial court decision, finding both the Captain and the First Officer guilty of the crimes of possession and trafficking of arms and explosives and sentenced them to 12 years confinement, *in absentia*. The court upheld the acquittal of the Political Officer finding that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that he formed part of the "principal chain of command" of the vessel. This ruling has created an avenue for the definitive forfeiture of the military articles.

A key focus of counterterrorism efforts in Panama has been securing the borders as well as the airports and seaports throughout the country. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) continued to cooperate with Panamanian authorities at Tocumen International Airport and has been successful in utilizing the linkage between Panama's Advance Passenger Information (API) System and CBP targeting systems. Panama collects nearly 100 percent of API data and actively seeks more complete Passenger Name Record (PNR) data. CBP continues to work with Panamanian authorities to improve their capacity to capture and transmit all API and PNR data. Mobile security teams, including those operating under the CBP Joint Security Program, partner with host country law enforcement officers operating in Tocumen International Airport to identify air passengers linked to terrorism, narcotics, weapons, and currency smuggling, as well as to identify and intercept fugitives, persons associated with organized crime, and other travelers of interest.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Panama is a member of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT), and its financial intelligence unit, Unidad de Analisis Financiero, is a member of the Egmont Group. In 2015, Panama strengthened its legal framework, amended its criminal code, and passed a new anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism law in 2015 that brings designated non-financial businesses and professions and entities in the Colon Free Zone into the supervisory framework in order to more effectively counter potential terrorism financing vulnerabilities in these sectors.

In 2015, Panama passed Law 10 and Law 34, which amended the criminal code by adding predicate offenses that typify terrorism financing and money laundering. Panama passed Law 23 which allows the government to freeze, seize, and confiscate the instruments and proceeds of criminal enterprises, including terrorism financing. The implementing regulations allow for the assets to be frozen for persons or entities listed under UN sanctions regimes. Panama also passed Law 149, which reformed Article 116 of the Criminal Procedure Code which rescinded previous modifications to Article 116 and eliminated the statute of limitations in cases of terrorism.

Panama has yet to identify and freeze assets belonging to terrorists or sanctioned individuals and organizations; it has not prosecuted any terrorism financing cases. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The United States and Panama continued to work together to create opportunities for residents of the Darién region to deter local recruitment by the FARC, transnational criminal organizations, and narco-trafficking organizations. The Panama Office of Defense Cooperation maintains a robust program designed to develop and refine Panama's civil affairs and information operations capacity as part of the overall strategy to enhance

governability and state control in an underdeveloped and underserved region. These teams work with Panamanian officials to distribute medical supplies to local communities and provide key information about threats facing the populace. Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) programs also provide some local youth with vocational and technical training to better prepare them for the labor market and to provide viable alternatives to criminality and terrorism.

International and Regional Cooperation: Panama was the first Latin American nation to join the Global Coalition to CounterISIL. Panama is also an active participant in the United Nations and regional security initiatives such as the OAS-CICTE. Panama and Colombia maintain a bilateral commission that continues to meet on a yearly basis to address topics of mutual concern, including illicit migration, narco-trafficking, transnational criminal organizations, and elements of the FARC operating in the region surrounding their shared border.

PARAGUAY

Overview: In 2015, the Government of Paraguay continued to cooperate with the United States on counterterrorism matters, and the U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program contributed to building Paraguay's counterterrorism law enforcement capacity. Paraguay continued to face challenges of ineffective immigration, customs, and law enforcement controls along its porous borders, particularly the Tri-Border Area (TBA) with Argentina and Brazil. Illicit activities within the TBA remained potential funding sources for terrorist organizations, most notably Hizballah.

Since 2008, persons claiming to be part of the Paraguayan People's Army (EPP) – an internal criminal group dedicated to a socialist revolution in Paraguay – have been active in the northern departments of Concepcion and San Pedro. The group has been involved in violence designed to intimidate the population and government. The Government of Paraguay believes the EPP to be a small, decentralized group of 20 to 100 members. Additionally, the Armed Peasant Association (ACA), a splinter group of former EPP members reportedly expelled from the group over disciplinary issues in 2014, continued to operate in the Northern Departments as well. The ACA has a similar agenda and is currently believed to consist of six to eight members. Paraguayan authorities reported that most of the group's leadership was eliminated in a November 16 Paraguayan Joint Task Force operation. EPP/ACA activity consisted largely of isolated attacks on remote police and army posts, or against ranchers and peasants accused of collaborating with Paraguayan security services. Ranchers and ranch workers in northeastern Paraguay, including members of the Mennonite community, claimed the EPP frequently threatened both their livelihoods and personal security.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: The EPP and ACA conducted several high profile operations involving kidnapping, killings, and sabotage that received significant press coverage.

- In January, the EPP allegedly killed two long-time resident German nationals in Azotey, Concepcion Department.
- In February, the EPP allegedly attacked four police stations in Arroyito, Kuruzu de Hierro, and Yvy Yau, Concepcion Department.
- In March, the EPP allegedly killed three farmers in Tacuati, San Pedro Department.
- In July, the EPP allegedly killed five Paraguayan National Police (PNP) officers in Santa Rosa del Aguaray and Jaguarete Forest, San Pedro Department.

- In August, the EPP allegedly killed a ranch manager and kidnapped ranch employees in Tacuati, San Pedro Department.
- In August, the EPP claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of a Mennonite in Tacuati, San Pedro Department. He was believed to still be held by the EPP at year's end. Additionally, the EPP continues to hold police officer Edelio Morinigo, who was taken captive in April 2014.
- In August, the EPP allegedly destroyed a power line tower using an improvised explosive device (IED) in Tacuati, San Pedro Department.
- In September, the EPP claimed responsibility for killing two ranchers in Santa Rosa del Aguaray, San Pedro Department.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Paraguay pursued individuals suspected of terrorist crimes under laws passed in 2010 and 2011. The Paraguayan government continued to make use of a 2013 counterterrorism law that allows for the domestic deployment of the Paraguayan military to counter internal or external threats. Counterterrorism functions are handled by the Paraguayan National Police Secretariat for the Prevention and Investigation of Terrorism. Military forces and police officials continued to operate jointly in 2015 in the San Pedro, Concepcion, and Amambay departments, with limited success.

The Tri-Border region of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguaycontinued to serve as a suspected funding source for terrorist groups, as the minimal police and military presence along these borders allowed for a largely unregulated flow of people, contraband, and money. Paraguay's efforts to provide more effective law enforcement and border security were hampered by a lack of interagency cooperation and information sharing, as well as pervasive corruption within security, border control, and judicial institutions.

Paraguay continued to participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, which provided instruction and resources to assist Paraguay to build its capacity to secure borders and ports of entry to prevent the transit of terrorists and materiel.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Paraguay is a member of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, Secretaria de Prevención de Lavado de Dinero o Bienes, is a member of the Egmont Group. Paraguay has both counterterrorism financing legislation and the ability to freeze without delay and confiscate terrorist assets. There were no terrorism financing convictions or actions to freeze in 2015.

Paraguay requires the collection of data for wire transfers. Significant quantities of money are laundered through businesses or moved in cash. The Paraguayan government registers and has reporting requirements for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (including non-profits), and requires NGOs to set up internal monitoring and training regimes to guard against criminal or terrorism financing.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

International and Regional Cooperation: Paraguay collaborated with Argentina and Brazil on border protection initiatives, regional exchanges, and discussions on counterterrorism and law enforcement projects. In 2015, there were working-level meetings between the Paraguayan and Brazilian Federal/Civil Police to increase cooperation. At the second meeting in November, some officers cited investigative successes through the unprecedented sharing of leads and criminal intelligence between the two services. Paraguay served as the 2015 Chair of the Organization of American States' Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism.

PERU

Overview: The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso or SL) constitutes a localized and declining threat to Peru's internal security, and maintained a low profile in 2015. SL's membership numbers continued to dwindle, and by the end of 2015 it consisted of one single active faction, whose area of activity and influence was confined to the special military emergency zone known as the Apurimac, Ene, and Mantaro River Valley (VRAEM) – a remote and rugged region slightly larger than Switzerland which accounts for more than one-half of the cocaine produced in Peru. Within the VRAEM, SL has retreated to its stronghold in the Vizcatan area, approximately 500 square kilometers along the Mantaro River. To sustain itself, SL is involved in all logistical aspects of drug trafficking in its area of influence: it collects "revolutionary taxes" from those involved in the drug trade, and for a price, provides security and transports narcotics for drug trafficking organizations. SL continues to use Maoist ideology to justify its illegal activities.

SL has yet to recover from an August 2013 operation conducted by the Peruvian security forces that resulted in the deaths of two of the terrorist organization's top four commanders, Orlando Borda, aka "Comrade Alipio" and Martin Quispe Palomino, aka "Comrade Gabriel." Operations have severely weakened SL in the Upper Huallaga Valley, a former stronghold. As a result, after nearly 30 years, the government lifted the emergency zone in the Upper Huallaga Valley on June 27. President Humala also announced on December 8 that the government would soon lift the state of emergency in parts of the VRAEM. A decree published on December 11 stated that the Peruvian National Police (PNP) would regain authority over internal security from the military in the remaining VRAEM emergency zone while the military will continue to combat SL.

Estimates of SL's strength vary, but most experts and the Peruvian military assess SL to number 250-300 combatants of which 60-100 are hardcore fighters.

Security forces took limited actions to counter the SL during 2015, reflecting President Humala's strategy, announced in July 2013, of gaining control of territory in the VRAEM at the lowest cost in human lives. In two separate operations, security forces rescued 54 people, including 37 children. Some of those rescued are children of SL members and others the SL had captured more than 30 years ago. Security forces also captured two mid-level SL leaders who were active in the northern edge of the VRAEM in the La Convención province of Cuzco region.

The government did not initiate coca-eradication operations in the VRAEM, which many analysts argue is necessary in the long run to regain control over this area. Officials in the Government of Peru believed that eradicating in the VRAEM would create a serious social conflict that could provide a boost to SL.

SL founder and leader Abimael Guzman and key accomplices remained in prison serving life sentences for numerous crimes committed in the 1980s and 1990s. Two top SL leaders – Osman Morote and Margot Liendo – completed their 25-year sentences in June 2013, but were still in jail at the end of 2015. These individuals remain in prison pending trials for other crimes committed in the early 1980s, but according to the Minister of Interior could be released soon. Most SL leaders were convicted of crimes long before new legislation allowing for life sentences was approved and should start leaving prison in 2017. Peter Cárdenas, a former top commander of the now defunct Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), was released from prison on September 22 after serving his full 25-year sentence. American Lori Berenson, who was convicted on terrorism charges in Peru for collaborating with the MRTA, finished serving her 20-year sentence on December 1; she was expelled from Peru and returned to the United States on December 3.

In October 2014, Peruvian police arrested Muhammad Ghaleb Hamdar, a 28-year old Lebanese citizen suspected of links to Hizballah. According to reports, there were residue and traces of explosives in Hamdar's apartment. A Peruvian judge rejected Hamdar's bail request on November 17; he remained in pretrial detention at year's end. The police also arrested Hamdar's wife, dual U.S.-Peruvian national Carmen Carrion McKay, on November 26. She was charged with violating the "collaborating with terrorism" statute and placed in preventative custody, which may be imposed for up to 18 months in Peru for terrorism, espionage, and other cases, where the charged offense meets a minimum threshold and the individual poses a demonstrable flight risk. The charge carries a minimum sentence of 20 years, if she is found guilty.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: According to Peruvian government statistics, the SL committed 13 terrorist acts in 2015, in comparison to 20 terrorist acts recorded in 2014 and 49 acts in 2013. Over the course of the year, SL attacks were limited to small, mostly harassing attacks that resulted in few casualties. In 2015, SL attacks and operations resulted in the deaths of two soldiers and three civilians. Seven members of the security forces were wounded in action. In 2014, two soldiers were killed compared to three in 2013 and 19 in 2012. Incidents included the following:

- On March 21, an alleged SL column shot and killed two people, a former community president and a justice of the peace in Huancamayo, a remote community in Junín region's Santo Domingo de Acobamba district.
- In early August, SL attacked a counterterrorism base in Junín region, killing one soldier.
- On September 2, SL fighters wounded five soldiers in a clash in Ayacucho region, Huanta province. Security forces claimed two SL fighters were killed although no bodies were found.
- On October 24, approximately 30 SL members targeted and blew up a telecommunication tower in Tintay Puncu district in Huancavelica region's Tayacaja province.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Over the past three decades, Peru has promulgated a variety of laws specifically designed to counter terrorism. These measures receive broad public support. The government published legislative decree 1233 on September 26, 2015, adding the crime of "conspiracy to commit terror" to existing legislation. This legislation could apply to "anyone who conspires to promote, benefit, or facilitate terror" and carries a maximum 20-year prison sentence. Peru's congress also approved Law 30353 on

October 29, 2015, which prohibits convicted felons who have not paid the fines levied against them as part of their sentences from running for public office. Imprisoned MRTA and SL terrorist leaders owe millions of dollars to the state for damages.

Peru has steadily improved its ability to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents in the 22 years since the police captured the SL's founder and chief ideologue, Abimael Guzmán.

The most significant Peruvian government actions against SL this year included:

- The police captured and arrested Neymar Maldonado on June 17. Maldonado was considered to be one of the successors to "Comrade Artemio," the former SL leader in the Huallaga valley. The police also captured a large cache of weapons and documents in the operation.
- On July 7, the police captured alleged SL unit leader Ever Cabanillas Chuquilín, aka "Cajacho," who operated in the Huallaga valley.
- On July 27, the military and police conducted a joint operation in Satipo province in Junín region that freed 39 people (26 children and 13 adults), who were held at an SL base. Security forces freed 15 more people in a second operation. Some of the adults had been under SL control for 30 years.
- Peruvian security forces captured SL leader Alexander Alarcón Soto, aka "Comrade Renán," on August 8 and his lieutenant Dionicio Ramos Limaquipe, aka "Comrade Yuri," on August 9. Renán and Yuri commanded one of the SL's principal units operating in the Cuzco region of the VRAEM. Renán took command of this unit in August 2013 after Peruvian security forces killed Comrade Alipio and Comrade Gabriel. Renan is believed to have been involved in various high-profile kidnappings and attacks against the police/military, including one in 2012 that left eight soldiers and four police dead.

On border security, immigration authorities collected no biometrics information from visitors. Citizens of neighboring countries were allowed to travel to Peru by land using only national identification cards. There was no visa requirement for citizens of most countries from Western, Central, and Eastern Europe, as well as Mexico. Peruvian immigration used a database called "Movimiento Migratorio" at 18 points of entry to track entries and exits of travelers. The database also connects to the PNP's database to flag outstanding arrest warrants. The Government of Peru announced that it would issue biometric passports in 2016 for all Peruvian citizens.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Under Decree Law 25475, Peru criminalizes any form of collaboration with terrorists, including economic collaboration. Peru is a member of the regional Financial Action Task Force of Latin America. Peru's Financial Intelligence Unit is also a member of the Egmont Group.

In 2015, the Government of Peru continued to make progress in implementing its national plan to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. Most notably, Peru tightened controls on money changing entities and introduced measures to ensure timely reporting of bank information by financial institutions. In 2015, Peru did not prosecute any terrorism financing cases and/or identify frozen terrorist assets of sanctioned organizations.

SL's ability to sustain itself and finance its terrorist and other criminal actions depends on profits from drug trafficking activities. The PNP lacks specific intelligence on the amounts of terrorism financing derived from narcotics trafficking and the methods used to move those payments to SL. It is understood that SL narcotics proceeds enter the VRAEM as bulk, physical dollars from neighboring countries via the same aircraft used to transport cocaine out of the region (commonly known as the "air bridge"). Experts estimated that SL has returned at least $170 million back into the VRAEM to launder into local currency to fund its operations. To address this issue, the PNP is forming a 15-person specialized unit that will focus on investigating SL financing.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Peru publicly stressed the importance of heavily investing in the VRAEM as a means of breaking the symbiotic relationship that has existed for years between the VRAEM's residents and SL. Since 2007, the Peruvian government has provided the equivalent of approximately $6 billion to districts and regions in the VRAEM to pave roads, provide basic health and education services, and establish a greater state presence. In November, the Minister of Agriculture announced the government would spend $18 million on alternative development in the VRAEM in 2016.

International and Regional Cooperation: Peru's Foreign Ministry energetically and publicly condemned terrorist attacks around the world in 2015. Peru actively participated in the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February and the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York in September. Peru participates in counterterrorism activities in international and regional organizations, including the UN, OAS, and UNASUR.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Overview: Trinidad and Tobago took steps to address the challenge of foreign terrorist fighters by forming a National Counterterrorism Working Group, chaired by the Trinidad and Tobago Chief of Defense Staff. The working group drafted a strategy to take into account international and domestic commitments in countering terrorism and the specific nature of the terrorist threat to Trinidad and Tobago, identifying the priorities, principles, and key assumptions.

Elections on September 7 resulted in a new Prime Minister and a new government that appears to be focused on national security, particularly in the areas of crime and counterterrorism. The government continued to cooperate with the United States on security matters, including participation in the U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program that addresses counterterrorism training for police, and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative program that focuses on training and the professionalization of the police and military forces in order to ensure citizen security.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Trinidad and Tobago is reviewing its legislation to address foreign terrorist fighters and their possible return, an area not addressed in the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Act. The Counterterrorism Working Group, which includes both

defense force and law enforcement officials, is still in its initial stages. Its proposed counterterrorism strategy was not approved by the country's Cabinet in 2015, and police or military units that have a counterterrorism mission had not been identified.

Trinidad and Tobago, with the assistance of certain police units and government sections, continued to identify and monitor persons that raise terrorism concerns and maintained a list of nationals who traveled to Syria or Iraq to fight with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). More than 70 nationals of Trinidad and Tobago are believed be fighting with ISIL in Syria. There was limited interagency cooperation and coordination, and limited information-sharing due to allegations of corruption amongst different agencies. Prosecutors are consulted on an ad hoc basis with regard to criminal cases.

Biographic and biometric screening capabilities are limited at certain ports of entry. Trinidad and Tobago collects advance passenger information and disseminates this information to other countries accordingly.

The defense force is responsible for the security of the coastline spanning the two islands and assists law enforcement in combating transnational crime. Both the defense and police forces are limited in human and material resources to meet strategic security challenges.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Trinidad and Tobago is a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The United States is concerned about serious deficiencies inTrinidad and Tobago's anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) framework highlighted in its fourthround mutual evaluation. As a result of the evaluation, the Attorney General is looking to correct Trinidad and Tobago's legislative deficiencies.

Trinidad and Tobago's AML/CFT regime is not able to quantify the extent to which fraud and public corruption contribute to money laundering. The country requires the collection of Know Your Customer-data for banks and wire transfers, and requires various entities to report suspicious transactions. However, non-profit organizations are not obligated to file suspicious transaction reports.

STRs reviewed by the Trinidad and Tobago Financial Intelligence Unit and Customs and Excise Division officials confirm that trade-based money laundering occurs, though no indications tied these activities directly to terrorism financing.

In December 2015, the Trinidad and Tobago Attorney General, under the country's 2005 Anti-Terrorism Act, froze the assets of Trinbagonian national Kareem Ibrahim. In 2011, Ibrahim was convicted in a United States federal court of conspiring to commit a terrorist attack at the John F. Kennedy Airport. This was the first time that Trinidad and Tobago invoked any portion of its 2005 Anti-Terrorism Act.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

International and Regional Cooperation: In November 2015, the Prime Minister attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting where he and other leaders addressed terrorism and security issues and the growing concern over ISIL.

VENEZUELA

Overview: In May, for the tenth consecutive year, the U.S. Department of State determined, pursuant to section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act, that Venezuela was not cooperating fully with U.S. antiterrorism efforts.

The International Development Bank, a subsidiary of the Development and Export Bank of Iran, continued to operate in Venezuela despite its designation in 2008 by the U.S. Treasury Department under E.O. 13382 ("Blocking Property of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferators and their Supporters").

There were credible reports that Venezuela maintained a permissive environment that allowed for support of activities that benefited known terrorist groups. Individuals linked to the FARC, National Liberation Army, and Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) were present in Venezuela, as well as Hizballah supporters and sympathizers.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Venezuelan criminal code and additional Venezuelan laws explicitly criminalize terrorism and dictate procedures for prosecuting individuals engaged in terrorist activity. The government routinely levies accusations of "terrorism" against its political opponents. Following a wave of anti-government protests early in 2014, the Venezuelan government introduced a series of counterterrorism laws likely intended to suppress future public demonstrations.

Venezuelan military and civilian agencies perform counterterrorism functions. Within the Venezuelan armed forces, the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence and the Command Actions Group of the National Guard have primary counterterrorism duty. The Bolivarian National Intelligence Service and the Division of Counterterrorism Investigations in the Bureau of Scientific, Penal, and Criminal Investigative Corps within the Ministry of Interior, Justice, and Peace have primary civilian counterterrorism responsibilities. The degree of interagency cooperation and information sharing among agencies is unknown due to a lack of government transparency.

Border security at ports of entry is vulnerable and susceptible to corruption. The Venezuelan government routinely did not perform biographic or biometric screening at ports of entry or exit. There was no automated system to collect advance Passenger Name Records on commercial flights or to cross-check flight manifests with passenger disembarkation data.

In August, Venezuelan authorities closed multiple border crossings between Colombia and the western states of Tachira and Zulia as part of the "states of exception" declaration seeking to curb smuggling and paramilitary activity in the border region.

Venezuela did not respond to a request from the Spanish government to extradite former ETA member José Ignacio de Juana Chaos, wanted in Spain since 2010 for the alleged killing of 25 people in acts of terrorism.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Venezuela is a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission Anti-Money Laundering Group. Its financial intelligence unit, Unidad Nacional de Inteligencia Financiera, is a member of the Egmont Group. In 2014, the CFATF determined that Venezuela had made sufficient progress on the recommendations in Venezuela's FATF action plan to warrant moving the country fromthe standard follow-up process once every six months to periodic review once every two years. CFATF noted Venezuela still needed to improve its compliance with several recommendations as well as its implementation of various anti-money laundering/counterterrorism financing (AML/CFT) laws and regulations. Venezuela's existing AML/CFT legal and regulatory framework criminalizes the financing of terrorism. There was no publicly available information regarding the confiscation of terrorist assets. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

International and Regional Cooperation: Venezuela participated as an official observer in ongoing peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC. Venezuelan and Colombian foreign ministers met several times throughout the year to address the reduction of smuggling of illegal goods, narcotics trafficking, and the activity of illegally armed groups.

Chapter 3
State Sponsors of Terrorism

To designate a country as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, the Secretary of State must determine that the government of such country has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism. Once a country is designated, it remains a State Sponsor of Terrorism until the designation is rescinded in accordance with statutory criteria. A wide range of sanctions are imposed as a result of a State Sponsor of Terrorism designation, including:

- A ban on arms-related exports and sales;
- Controls over exports of dual-use items, requiring 30-day Congressional notification for goods or services that could significantly enhance the terrorist-list country's military capability or ability to support terrorism;
- Prohibitions on economic assistance; and
- Imposition of miscellaneous financial and other restrictions.

State Sponsor of Terrorism designations can be rescinded pursuant to two alternative paths.

One path requires that the President submit a report to Congress before the proposed rescission would take effect certifying that:

- There has been a fundamental change in the leadership and policies of the government of the country concerned,
- The government is not supporting acts of international terrorism, and
- The government has provided assurances that it will not support acts of international terrorism in the future.

The other path requires that the President submit a report to Congress, at least 45 days before the proposed rescission would take effect, justifying the rescission and certifying that:

- The government concerned has not provided any support for international terrorism during the preceding six-month period, and
- The government concerned has provided assurances that that it will not support acts of international terrorism in the future.

This report provides a snapshot of events during 2015 relevant to countries designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism; it does not constitute a new announcement regarding such designations. More information on State Sponsor of Terrorism designations may be found at http://www.state.gov/j/ct/c14151.htm.

IRAN

Designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism in 1984, Iran continued its terrorist-related activity in 2015, including support for Hizballah, Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza, and various groups in Iraq and throughout the Middle East. In 2015, Iran increased its assistance to Iraqi Shia terrorist groups, including Kata'ib Hizballah (KH), which is a U.S. designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, as part of an effort to fight the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq and bolster the Asad regime in Syria. Iran used the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) to implement foreign policy goals, provide cover for intelligence operations, and create instability in the Middle East. The IRGC-QF is Iran's primary mechanism for cultivating and supporting terrorists abroad.

Iran views the Asad regime in Syria as a crucial ally, a pillar in its "resistance" front together with sub-national groups aligned with Iran, and a key link to Hizballah, Iran's primary beneficiary and terrorist partner. In addition to its ongoing support for Hizballah in Syria, Iran continued to provide arms, financing, training, and the facilitation of primarily Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani Shia fighters to support the Asad regime's brutal crackdown that has resulted in the deaths of more than 250,000 people in Syria. Iran more openly acknowledged the deaths of Iranian personnel in Syria in 2015, including several senior commanders, and increased Iranian troop levels, while continuing to claim publicly that Iranian forces had only deployed in an advisory role.

In Iraq, Iranian combat forces employed rockets, artillery, and drones against ISIL. Iran also increased its arming and funding of Iraqi Shia terrorist groups in an effort to reverse ISIL gains in Iraq. Many of these groups, such as KH, have exacerbated sectarian tensions in Iraq and have committed serious human rights abuses against primarily Sunni civilians. The IRGC-QF, in concert with Hizballah, provided training outside of Iraq, as well as advisors inside Iraq for Shia militants in the construction and use of advanced weaponry. Similar to Hizballah fighters, many of these trained Shia militants have used these skills to fight for the Asad regime in Syria or against ISIL in Iraq.

Iran has also provided weapons, funding, and training to Shia militants in Bahrain. In 2015, the Government of Bahrain raided, interdicted, and rounded up numerous Iran-sponsored weapons caches, arms transfers, and militants. This includes the Bahraini government's discovery of a bomb-making facility with 1.5 tons of high-grade explosives in September.

Iran has historically provided weapons, training, and funding to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups, including Palestine Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. These Palestinian terrorist groups have been behind a number of deaths from attacks originating in Gaza and the West Bank. Although Hamas's ties to Tehran have been strained due to the Syrian civil war, both sides took steps in 2015 to repair relations. Iran continued to declare its vocal support for Palestinian terrorist groups and its hostility to Israel in 2015. Supreme National Security Council Secretary Admiral Ali Shamkhani sought to frame a series of individual Palestinian attacks on Israeli security forces in the West Bank as a new "Intifada" in a speech on November 25.

Since the end of the 2006 Israeli-Hizballah conflict in 2006, Iran has also assisted in rearming Hizballah, in direct violation of UNSCR 1701. Iran has provided hundreds of millions of dollars

in support of Hizballah in Lebanon and has trained thousands of its fighters at camps in Iran. These trained fighters have used these skills in direct support of the Asad regime in Syria and, to a lesser extent, in support of operations against ISIL in Iraq. They have also carried out isolated attacks along the Lebanese border with Israel.

Iran remained unwilling to bring to justice senior al-Qa'ida (AQ) members it continued to detain and refused to publicly identify the members in its custody. Iran previously allowed AQ facilitators to operate a core facilitation pipeline through Iran since at least 2009, enabling AQ to move funds and fighters to South Asia and Syria.

SUDAN

Sudan was designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism in 1993 due to concerns about support to international terrorist groups to include the Abu Nidal Organization, Palestine Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Hizballah.

In the mid-1990s, Sudan served as a meeting place, safe haven, and training hub for international terrorist groups, such as al-Qa'ida. Usama bin Laden was provided safe haven in Sudan for five years until he was expelled by the Sudanese government in 1996. Sudan's support to al-Qa'ida has ceased but elements of al-Qa'ida and ISIL-linked terrorist groups remained active in Sudan in 2015. The United States and Sudan worked cooperatively in countering the threat posed by al-Qa'ida and ISIL in 2015, which included their use of transit and facilitation routes within the country.

In 2014, members of Hamas were allowed to raise funds, travel, and live in Sudan. However, in 2015 the use of Sudan by Palestinian designated terrorist groups appeared to have declined. The last known shipment was the Israeli-interdicted KLOS-C in 2014.

In June 2010, four Sudanese men sentenced to death for the killing of two U.S. Embassy staff members on January 1, 2008, escaped from Khartoum's maximum security Kober prison. That same month of the escape, Sudanese authorities confirmed that they recaptured one of the four convicts, and a second escapee was reported killed in Somalia in May 2011. The recaptured murderer is being held in Kober Prison, and, as of December 2015, appeals of his pending death sentence were still ongoing. The whereabouts of the other two convicts were unknown at year's end, although one is rumored to have been killed in Somalia in November 2015.

SYRIA

Designated in 1979 as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, the Asad regime continued its political support to a variety of terrorist groups affecting the stability of the region, even amid significant internal unrest. The regime continued to provide political and weapons support to Hizballah and continued to allow Iran to rearm the terrorist organization. The Asad regime's relationship with Hizballah and Iran grew stronger in 2015 as the conflict in Syria continued. President Bashar al-Asad remained a staunch defender of Iran's policies, while Iran has exhibited equally energetic support for Syrian regime efforts to defeat the Syrian opposition. Statements supporting terrorist groups, particularly Hizballah, were often in Syrian government speeches and press statements.

Over the past decade, the Syrian government has played an important role in the growth of terrorist networks in Syria through the Asad regime's permissive attitude towards al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups' foreign fighter facilitation efforts during the Iraq conflict. Syria has served for years as a hub for foreign terrorist fighters; the Syrian government's awareness and encouragement for many years of violent extremists' transit through Syria to enter Iraq, for the purpose of fighting Coalition troops, is well documented. Those very networks were among the violent extremist elements, including ISIL, which terrorized the Syrian and Iraqi population in 2015 and – in addition to other terrorist organizations within Syria – continued to attract thousands of foreign terrorist fighters to Syria in 2015. This environment has also allowed ISIL to plot or encourage external attacks in Libya, France, Lebanon, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United States.

As part of a broader strategy during the year, the regime portrayed Syria itself as a victim of terrorism, characterizing all of the internal armed opponents as "terrorists."

The Asad regime's policies generateconcern regarding terrorism financing. Industry experts reported that 60 percent of all business transactions are conducted in cash and that nearly 80 percent of all Syrians do not use formal banking services. Despite Syrian legislation that required money changers to be licensed by the end of 2007, many continued to operate illegally in Syria's vast black market, estimated to be as large as Syria's formal economy. Regional *hawala* networks (an informal value transfer system among money brokers operating outside traditional financial systems) remained intertwined with smuggling and trade-based money laundering, and were facilitated by notoriously corrupt customs and immigration officials. This raised concerns that some members of the Syrian government and the business elite were complicit in terrorist finance schemes conducted through these institutions.

The United States cannot certify that Syria is in compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The United States assesses that Syria has used chemical weapons systematically and repeatedly against the Syrian people every year since acceding the Convention, and is therefore in violation of its obligations under Article I of the CWC. In addition, the United States assesses that Syria did not declare all the elements of its chemical weapons program, required by Article III of the CWC and that Syria may retain chemical weapons as defined by the CWC. The process of verifying the accuracy and completeness of the Syrian declaration and the resolution of these matters is ongoing.

CHAPTER 4

The Global Challenge of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, or Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism

Preventing the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons has been a top U.S. national security priority for decades. The past decade has seen a growing recognition that we must also be vigilant in preventing terrorist groups from obtaining the means and methods to acquire, develop, and/or deploy CBRN weapons. Thus, our strategic counterterrorism posture is strengthened by counter and nonproliferation programs that aim to reduce or eliminate CBRN material produced and stored by states; restrict the diversion of materials and expertise for illicit use; and prevent the trafficking of CBRN weapons and related material. While efforts to secure CBRN material across the globe have been largely successful, the illicit trafficking of these materials persists.

CBRN materials and expertise remained a terrorist threat as demonstrated by terrorists' stated intent to acquire, develop, and use these materials; the nature of injury and damage these weapons can inflict; the ease with which information on these topics now flows; and the dual-use nature of many relevant technologies and material. As evidence of this challenge, we believe that ISIL is responsible for several small-scale sulfur mustard attacks in Iraq and Syria, including the sulfur mustard attack in Marea on August 21, 2015. Given the well-understood ISIL interest and intent in CBRN capabilities, the United States has been working proactively to disrupt and deny ISIL's (and other non-state actors') CBRN capabilities.

A number of international partnerships have either the explicit or the implicit purpose of countering the CBRN threat from terrorists and other non-state actors. Organizations and initiatives concerned with chemical and biological weapons use international conventions and regulations to reduce or eliminate stockpiles of material; regulate the acquisition of dual-use technology and regulate trade of specific goods; mandate that states parties enact national implementing legislation, including penal legislation; and provide assistance against the use or threat of use. International nuclear and radiological initiatives and programs focus on promoting peaceful uses of nuclear material and technology, safeguarding materials and expertise against diversion, and countering the smuggling of radioactive and nuclear material. The United States routinely provides technical and financial assistance and training to partner nations to help strengthen their abilities to adequately protect and secure CBRN-applicable expertise, technologies, and material. U.S. participation within and contribution to these groups, is vital to ensuring our continued safety from the CBRN threat.

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI): Launched in 2003, the PSI has increased international capability to address the challenges associated with stopping the trafficking of WMD, WMD-related components, and their means of delivery. The PSI remains an important tool in the global effort to combat CBRN material transfers to both state and non-state actors of proliferation concern. As of December 31, 2015, 105 states had endorsed the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles, by which states commit to take specific actions, consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks, to support efforts to halt the trafficking of WMD and related materials.

The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT): The GICNT, which is co-chaired by the United States and Russia, is an international partnership of 86 nations and five official observers dedicated to strengthening individual and collective capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to a nuclear terrorist event. Partners engage in multilateral activities and exercises designed to share best practices and lessons learned on a wide range of nuclear security and terrorism issues. By the end of 2015, partners had conducted more than 75 multilateral activities and nine senior-level plenary meetings in support of these nuclear security goals. In 2015, there were nine multilateral activities to promote the sharing of best practices on the topics of nuclear forensics, nuclear detection, and emergency preparedness and response.

Nuclear Trafficking Response Group (NTRG): The NTRG is an interagency group focused on coordinating the U.S. government response to incidents of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials, including radiation alarms that occur in foreign countries. Elements of the NTRG work with foreign governments to secure smuggled nuclear material, prosecute those involved, and develop information on smuggling-related threats, including potential links between smugglers and terrorists. The U.S. Department of State chairs the NTRG, which includes representatives from the U.S. government's nonproliferation, law enforcement, and intelligence communities.

Counter Nuclear Smuggling Program (CNSP): Securing dangerous radioactive and nuclear materials in illegal circulation before they reach the hands of terrorists or other malicious actors is critical to U.S. national security and that of U.S. allies. Using CNSP funds, the U.S. Department of State conducts outreach and programmatic activities with key governments to enhance their counter nuclear smuggling capabilities. Bilateral "Joint Action Plan" agreements developed and implemented with 13 partner governments identify strategies to improve the partners' abilities to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear and radiological smuggling attempts. As part of these agreements, the United States commits to seek U.S. and foreign donor assistance to address needs outside the capacity of the partner nation. In 2015, more than US $75 million in foreign donations had enabled implementation of Joint Action Plan-identified actions.

Through workshops and engagement activities, the U.S. Department of State uses CNSP funds to facilitate the integration of law enforcement, intelligence, and technical capabilities to counter nuclear smuggling. More broadly, CNSP programmatic support has enabled more than 20 partner nations to address goals that include enhancing nuclear smuggling response procedures, improving nuclear forensics capabilities, and enabling the successful prosecution of smugglers, while helping partners build cross-border and regional cooperation to counter nuclear smuggling.

Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program: Through the EXBS Program, the U.S. Department of State leads the interagency effort to strengthen adherence to nonproliferation norms by helping to build effective national strategic trade control and border security systems in countries that produce or supply strategic items as well as in key transit and transshipment hubs. EXBS works in 67 partner countries to improve national capabilities to regulate trade in sensitive items and prevent irresponsible transfers that may contribute to proliferation; detect and interdict illicit trafficking in proliferation-sensitive items at and between ports of entry by targeting high-risk shipments; investigate and prosecute violations of strategic trade control laws and regulations; and build and sustain a community of policymakers and technical experts committed to meeting international nonproliferation obligations and implementing effective strategic trade controls.

In 2015, the EXBS Program oversaw more than 300 bilateral, regional, and international activities, involving more than 55 countries to promote the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of comprehensive strategic trade controls. These activities improve the capability of partner countries to prevent the transfers of dual-use items and conventional weapons that contribute to proliferation, terrorism, or regional instability. EXBS was also actively involved in efforts to combat WMD smuggling through enhanced border security, and in 2015, provided 52 countries with state-of-the-art detection, inspection, and interdiction equipment and training to enhance the ability to detect, deter, and interdict illicit smuggling of radioactive and nuclear materials, WMD components, and other weapons-related items at air, land, sea, and rail borders.

EXBS works with and complements DoD's International Counter-Proliferation Program and Cooperative Threat Reduction Program; DHS's Container Security Initiative, the Department of Energy's International Nonproliferation Export Control Program (INECP), the Nuclear Smuggling, Detection, and Deterrence (NSDD) Program (formerly the Second Line of Defense Program); and the State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance Program and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement assistance programs, as well as other international donor assistance programs. The EXBS Program fulfills important U.S. and international commitments helping partner countries fulfill their international obligations and commitments, including those related to UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) and adherence to the guidelines of multilateral export control regimes.

Nuclear Smuggling Detection and Deterrence (NSDD): The U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, Nuclear Smuggling Detection and Deterrence Program (formerly known as Second Line of Defense) collaborates with partner countries to provide radiation detection systems, associated training, and sustainability assistance to enhance their capacity to deter, detect, and interdict illicit trafficking of special nuclear and other radioactive materials out of regulatory control. NSDD Program assistance to partner countries' national nuclear detection architecture is commensurate with regional threat and country-specific infrastructure and, accordingly, can include deployments of fixed, mobile, and hand-held radiation detection technologies at land border crossings, airports, seaports, and tactical interior locations. NSDD coordinates its capacity-building activities with other international nuclear security assistance entities such as the European Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Global Threat Reduction (GTR): GTR program activities aim to prevent terrorists from acquiring CBRN expertise, materials, and technology, focusing primarily in countries where there is a high threat of CBRN proliferation or WMD terrorism. By engaging scientists, technicians, and engineers with CBRN expertise and securing related material and infrastructure, GTR seeks to deny terrorist access to the knowledge, materials, and technologies that could be used in a CBRN attack against the U.S. homeland and assets abroad. In 2015, GTR was actively engaged in countries and regions at high risk of proliferation and terrorism, adapting as necessary to meet emerging CBRN threats.

Biological Weapons Convention Inter-Sessional Work Program (BWC): The December 2011 BWC Review Conference adopted a program of work aimed at strengthening international capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to the proliferation or use of biological weapons, whether by state or non-state actors. In 2015, the United States continued efforts in this forum to

acquire better information about BWC states' implementing measures and enhance such measures, in order to promote criminalizing and deterring malicious use of biological agents; promote sustainable, effective approaches to laboratory biosecurity; raise international awareness of the need for appropriate, balanced oversight of dual-use life science research with significant potential for harm; and identify and address impediments to international coordination and response in the event of a bioterrorism attack or a significant disease outbreak of unknown origin.

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Sub-Working Group (SWG) on Non-State Actors: The SWG on Non-State Actors (NSAs) was established in October 2015, under the OPCW's Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T), with the aim of stimulating discussion and generating specific recommendations that the Technical Secretariat and/or States Parties could implement to address the threat posed by NSAs. The SWG focuses on three issues concerning NSAs and chemical terrorism:

1. Prevention (e.g., chemical security;
2. Response (e.g., CWC Article X assistance and protection and investigations of alleged use); and
3. Legal accountability of NSAs in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention and/or other international law.

The United States supports the SWG and has provided subject-matter expert briefings at several meetings to date. The SWG and the OEWG-T are important fora for addressing the non-state actor challenge.

Chapter 5
Terrorist Safe Havens (Update to 7120 Report)

Terrorist safe havens described in this report include ungoverned, under-governed, or ill-governed physical areas where terrorists are able to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, transit, and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will, or both.

As defined by section 2656f(d) of Title 22 of the U.S. Code, the term "terrorist sanctuary" or "sanctuary" excludes the territory of a country the government of which is subject to a determination under section 2405(j)(1)(A) of the Appendix to Title 50; section 2371(a) of Title 22; or section 2780(d) of Title 22– the state sponsors of terrorism. Accordingly, information regarding Iran, Sudan, and Syria can be found in Chapter 3, State Sponsors of Terrorism.

TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS

AFRICA

Somalia. In 2015, terrorists used many primarily rural sections of south-central Somalia as safe havens. Terrorists continued to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, and operate with relative ease in these areas due to inadequate security, justice, and governance capacity at all levels.

Al-Shabaab's capacity to rebound from counterterrorism operations is due in large part to its ability to maintain control of large swaths of rural areas and routes in parts of Somalia. In 2015, al-Shabaab lost a number of safe havens in south-central Somalia, many of which provided access to funds and other resources the group extorted from local communities. Despite the success of coordinated African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) operations that drove al-Shabaab from former strongholds in Baardheere and Dinsoor, the terrorist organization managed to establish new safe havens from where it planned and launched attacks against government officials, AMISOM bases, and soft targets in Kenya and other parts of the region. The Federal Government of Somalia and its regional administrations lacked the capacity and resources to fill security voids left in the wake of AMISOM's operations with civilian law enforcement. These gaps allowed al-Shabaab to retain the freedom of movement necessary to establish new safe havens and re-infiltrate areas that AMISOM cleared but could not hold.

As seen in previous years, al-Shabaab used smaller towns in the Jubba River Valley such as Jilib and Saakow as bases for its operations. These areas allowed the group's operatives to continue exploiting the porous border regions between Kenya and Somalia and launch deadly cross-border attacks. Kenya suffered one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in its history when in April, al-Shabaab operatives assaulted the Garissa University College using light arms and suicide vests and killed more than 145 Kenyans, most of whom were students. Al-Shabaab also used villages along major coastal routes in southern Somalia, namely Kunyo Barow and Tortoroow, to facilitate access to areas just outside of major population centers in Mogadishu and Kismaayo. These and other routes throughout southern Somalia serve as lifelines for al-Shabaab as low-level fighters established illegal checkpoints to collect taxes and tolls from locals. Although the group continued to generate funds from the illicit trade of charcoal and other commodities, al-

Shabaab leveraged tax collection to compensate for declining revenues after losing access to the port in Baraawe in 2014.

The Federal Government of Somalia remained committed to regional counterterrorism efforts that aim to eliminate al-Shabaab's access to safe haven in Somalia. Though progress on this front was uneven in 2015, these efforts provided the Somali government with enough space and time to focus on the federalism process and advance its political objectives.

According to independent sources and NGOs engaged in demining activities on the ground, there was little cause for concern for the presence of WMD in Somalia.

The Trans-Sahara. There are ungoverned, under-governed, and ill-governed areas of Mali thatterrorist groups have used to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, and operate in relative security, despite Malian authorities willingness and responsiveness as counterterrorism partners, a UN peacekeeping mission, and French forces in the region. The Malian government has reestablished its political presence in the cities of Timbuktu and Gao, with some local government officials returning to their posts in 2015. The military, in conjunction with the French and UN forces, worked to eliminate terrorist safe havens in Mali.

The Malian government does not support or facilitate the flow of foreign terrorist fighters through its territory, but the lack of government control across large portions of its territory and porous borders makes preventing the flow very difficult.

The Malian government does not support or facilitate the proliferation or trafficking of WMD in and through its territory.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Sulu/Sulawesi Seas Littoral. The number of islands in the Sulawesi Sea and the Sulu Archipelago make it a difficult region to secure. Cooperation by all states bordering this region remained strong with U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Although Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines have improved efforts to control their shared maritime boundaries – including through U.S.-funded efforts to enhance domain awareness in the waters south and southwest of Mindanao – the expanse remained difficult to control. Surveillance improved but remained partial at best, and traditional smuggling and piracy groups have provided an effective cover for terrorist activities, including the movement of personnel, equipment, and funds. Kidnappings for ransom remained an ongoing threat.

Southeast Asia is vulnerable to exploitation by illicit traffickers and proliferators given the high volume of global trade transiting the region as well as the existence of smuggling and proliferation networks. Weak strategic trade controls, legal and regulatory frameworks, inadequate maritime law enforcement and security capabilities, and emerging and re-emerging infectious disease and burgeoning bioscience capacity, make Southeast Asia an area of concern for WMD proliferation and transit. Other than Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines, strategic trade control laws that include controls over dual-use and end-use or "catch-all" controls are lacking in Southeast Asia. Assisting these countries to develop strong laws that meet international standards and effective targeting and risk management systems are major goals of the Export Control and Related Border Security program over the next few years.

The Southern Philippines. The geographical composition of the Philippines, spread out over 7,100 islands, makes it difficult for the central government to maintain a presence in all areas. Counterterrorism operations, however, have been successful at isolating the geographic influence and constraining the activities of transnational terrorist groups. Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Jemaah Islamiya (JI), Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and other militant groups were present in areas on Mindanao, and especially across the islands of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi. The New People's Army (NPA) maintained a presence across the Philippines, particularly in rural and mountainous areas. Continued pressure from Philippine security forces made it difficult, however, for terrorists to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, and operate outside their base locations.

The Philippines and the United States have strong counterterrorism cooperation. In 2015, the United States continued to work with the Government of the Philippines to monitor and investigate groups engaged in or supporting terrorist activities in the Philippines. The Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, under Operation Enduring Freedom, was concluded in June 2015 after more than a decade. The government launched numerous operations, particularly in the Southern Philippines, against organizations like the ASG, JI, BIFF, and NPA, and prosecuted terrorist suspects and organizations. In 2015, the Philippines also continued coordinating with U.S. law enforcement authorities, especially regarding wanted U.S. fugitives and suspected terrorists.

In November, the Philippines passed the Strategic Trade Management Act (STMA), which allows it to control the import and export of dual-use items. At year's end, the Philippines was working to implement the provisions of the STMA, including setting up a licensing office within the Department of Trade and Industry that will issue licenses required to import and export controlled dual-use commodities and technology. Early implementation progress has been slow, however, due to a number of factors, including a lack of funding, and risks missing the deadlines set by the STMA.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Egypt. Portions of Egypt's Sinai region were a safe haven for terrorist organizations in 2015. The Government of Egypt views terrorism as one of the country's greatest threats and has dedicated significant military resources to combat indigenous and transnational terrorist groups.The Egyptian government continued its extensive security campaign focused on Northern Sinai against ISIL Sinai Province (ISIL-SP), launching Operation Right of the Martyr in September. The Northern Sinai was closed off to tourists, journalists, U.S. government officials, and NGOs in 2015.

ISIL-SP has claimed responsibility for increasingly frequent and sophisticated terrorist attacks against Egyptian forces, such as the simultaneous attack on multiple police and security installations in Sinai's Sheikh Zuewid on July 1; and high profile targets, for example downing a Metrojet airliner, killing all 200 passengers and seven crew members on October 31.

Through its Export Control and Related Border Security Program, the United States is working with the Government of Egypt to enhance Egypt's border security capabilities through the provision of land, air, and maritime border enforcement and targeting and risk management

training for Egyptian Customs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transportation, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials. In addition, since 2009, the Department of State's Nonproliferation & Disarmament Fund has assisted Egypt with the provision of passenger and cargo vehicle x-ray detection equipment with the capability to inspect vehicular and truck traffic at fixed transportation checkpoints for WMD-related materials, conventional weapons, and other illicit items.

Iraq. Portions of Iraq remained under the control of ISIL during 2015, including the city of Mosul. However, after ISIL took control of large swaths of Iraqi territory in 2014, the Government of Iraq made steady, significant progress in retaking terrain from ISIL throughout 2015. Supported by the 66-member Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, the Government of Iraq retook more than 40 percent of Iraqi territory once controlled by ISIL by the end of 2015, including several key cities. In April, an Iraqi-led military effort retook the city of Tikrit, and by the end of the year 80 percent of internally displaced persons had returned to the city. In November, Peshmerga forces retook the town of Sinjar, a city that came to the world's attention in the summer of 2014 when ISIL committed atrocities against the Yezidi community.

At the end of 2015, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), accompanied by local Sunni fighters and police, liberated large parts of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Province and a strategically important hub.

ISIL used the territory under its control in 2015 to produce sulfur mustard and IEDs filled with chlorine. The United States has been proactively working with our allies to dismantle this chemical weapons capability, as well as deny ISIL access to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials and expertise through interdictions and strengthening the ability of regional governments to detect, disrupt, and respond effectively to suspected CBRN activity.

Due to security conditions in Iraq, the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program has had difficulty implementing outreach activities. EXBS priorities previously included working with the Government of Iraq to develop and implement regulations and procedures related to The Act of the Iraqi National Monitoring Authority on WMD Non-Proliferation No. 48 of 2012 (INMA Act), adopt and implement a control list, and to enhance Iraq's border security capabilities related to the inspection and detection of WMD-related goods and technologies. However, these activities are largely on pause. Instead, the EXBS program is assessing equipment and training needs for security forces in the newly liberated regions, as they seek to consolidate gains and reclaim territory from ISIL.

The United States and Iraq strengthened their bilateral partnership to counter nuclear terrorism in September 2014 by concluding the "Joint Action Plan between the Government of the Republic of Iraq and the Government of the United States of America on Combating Nuclear and Radioactive Materials Smuggling." The arrangement expresses the intention of the two governments to work together to enhance Iraq's capabilities to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear smuggling incidents, and ultimately prevent terrorist groups from acquiring nuclear and radiological materials.

Lebanon. The Lebanese government does not control all regions of the country or its borders with Syria and Israel. Hizballah controls access to parts of the country, including restricting Lebanon's security services, which allows Hizballah to operate with relative impunity. The

government took no action in 2015 to disarm Hizballah, to eliminate its safe havens within Lebanese territory, or to prevent the flow of Hizballah members to Syria or Iraq. Ungoverned areas along the un-demarcated Lebanese-Syrian border also served as safe havens for Nusrah Front, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and other Sunni terrorist groups in 2015, which operate in mountainous, mostly uninhabited zones where the government has limited reach. The Government of Lebanon has made attempts to eradicate these safe havens, however, and is engaged in sustained military operations to rid Lebanon of these Sunni terrorist groups. Palestinian refugee camps were also used as safe havens by Palestinian and other armed groups to house weapons, shelter wanted criminals, and plan terrorist attacks.

The United States works closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces to combat terrorist threats along the Syrian border by providing counterterrorism training, military equipment, and weaponry.

Lebanon is not a source country for WMD components, but its porous borders make the country vulnerable for use as a transit and transshipment hub for proliferation-sensitive transfers, particularly with the conflict in Syria. The LAF Engineer Regiment partners with U.S. government agencies to detect and prevent proliferation and trafficking of WMD along the Syrian border.

The Export Control and Related Border Security program (EXBS) is providing robust commodity identification training for items that can be used in chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, in order to keep these items from transiting through Lebanon. EXBS was also launching a frontier border security interdiction training program, in partnership with the Department of Defense, to strengthen LAF and ISF border security and interdiction capabilities.

Libya. Libya's porous borders, fragmented security forces, and vast ungoverned territory have made it a permissive environment for terrorist groups such as Ansar al-Shari'a Benghazi, Ansar al-Shari'a Darnah, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Murabitoun, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Due to the inability of the Libyan government to effectively administer its territory, terrorist organizations have found safe havens primarily in Sirte, Darnah, Benghazi, and Sabratha, although violent extremist groups operate with impunity throughout Libya. While the Libyan National Army launched a military operation in 2014 with the stated goal of removing violent extremists from Benghazi, it has not succeeded in fully liberating Benghazi from the control of terrorist groups. The government failed to eliminate terrorist safe havens in Libya in 2015, and has been unable to prevent flows of foreign terrorist fighters in and out of its territory. Terrorist training camps and facilitation networks exist throughout Libya; local tribes and minority groups frequently serve as facilitators, although this appears largely due to economic rather than ideological motivations. Libya serves as a major source and transit country for foreign fighters en route to Syria and Iraq. There are indications that foreign terrorist fighters are beginning to return to Libya or choosing to stay in Libya to fight there, increasing concerns that Libya has become a battlefield for violent extremist groups such as ISIL.

In 2013, the United States signed an agreement with the Libyan government to cooperate on destroying Libya's stockpile of legacy chemical weapons in accordance with its obligations as an Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) member state. Libya successfully completed operations for the disposal of its remaining mustard gas filled in artillery projectile and aerial bombs in January 2014. Libya also completed the disposal of its remaining

bulk mustard in 2013. However, Libya retains a stockpile of natural uranium ore concentrate (yellowcake), stored in a former military facility near Sebha in Libya's south. This material represents a limited risk of trafficking and proliferation due to the bulk and weight of the storage containers and the need for extensive additional processing before the material would be suitable for weapons purposes.

Yemen. Throughout 2015, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIL-Yemen exploited the political and security vacuum to strengthen their foothold and expand recruiting inside the country. The Yemeni government has operated in exile for much of 2015, greatly diminishing its ability to focus on counterterrorism efforts. AQAP and ISIL-Yemen have portrayed the unrest in Yemen as part of a broader Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict. By exploiting this sectarian divide, these groups have increased their support base in Sunni communities and enabled ISIL-Yemen, in particular, to gain a foothold in the country.

AQAP benefitted during 2015 from the conflict in Yemen by expanding its presence in the southern and eastern governorates. Establishing deeper tribal and familial relationships in these areas allowed AQAP to expand the territory it controlled during 2015 to Abyan, Taiz, and its largest safe haven in the port city of Mukalla. Access to the port enabled AQAP to increase its finances. AQ also maintains a presence in Aden.

While AQAP remains the predominant Sunni Islamist terrorist group in the country, there are seven known *wilayat* (province) pro-ISIL groups operating in 10 of Yemen's provinces, including Sa'ada, Sana'a, al-Jawf, al-Bayda, Taiz, Ibb, Lahij, Aden, Shahwah, and Hadramawt. ISIL-Yemen's *"wilayat"* are beginning to exert more influence by competing to obtain support from Sunni tribes and militias in the same areas. While the exact composition of the group is still unknown, its numbers are considerably smaller than AQAP's despite it having likely drawn members from some of the same disillusioned Yemeni AQAP members who previously supported ISIL in Iraq and Syria. While ISIL-Yemen has demonstrated a violent operational pace, it has yet to occupy significant territory.

Yemen's political instability continued to hinder efforts to enact or enforce strategic trade controls, leaving the country vulnerable as a transit point for WMD-related materials.

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan. The border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan is an under-governed area that terrorists exploit to conduct attacks in both countries. Terrorist networks active in Afghanistan, such as al-Qa'ida (AQ), the Haqqani Network, and others, operate in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. ISIL Khorasan (ISIL-K) is largely based in Afghanistan, but its support network also reaches into Pakistan's tribal areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The Afghan government has struggled to assert control over this remote terrain where the population is largely detached from national institutions. Afghanistan cooperates with U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Since taking office in September 2014, President Ghani has pursued cross-border security cooperation with the Pakistani government, including the prospect of joint operations to reduce safe havens on both sides of the border.

The potential for WMD trafficking and proliferation remains a concern in Afghanistan because of its porous borders and the presence of terrorist groups. The United States and Afghanistan

continued to work to finalize a bilateral framework to facilitate closer cooperation to counter nuclear terrorism and enhance Afghanistan's capabilities to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear smuggling incidents. The Afghanistan and U.S. governments also continued to work to implement comprehensive strategic trade controls and strengthen Afghanistan's border security system.

The Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program contributes to strengthening Afghanistan's border enforcement capacity by providing border interdiction trainings to Afghan Customs Department and the Afghan Border Police. EXBS also sponsors regional cross-border collaboration through trainings with its Central Asian neighbors through the OSCE and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime – World Customs Organization's Container Control Program. To increase the Government of Afghanistan's strategic trade control awareness and capacity, EXBS sponsored training for an Afghan delegation, which included representatives from the Afghan Atomic Energy High Commission, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the University of Georgia, Center for International Trade Security.

The United States continued to assist the Afghan government in building capacity to secure potentially dangerous biological materials and infrastructure housed at Afghan facilities, promote surveillance capabilities to detect and identify possibly catastrophic biological events, and engage Afghan scientists and engineers that have WMD or WMD-applicable expertise.

Pakistan. In 2015, an assortment of terrorist groups, to include the Haqqani Network, attempted to hide in or operate from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, a mountainous region along Pakistan's northwest border with Afghanistan. The National Action Plan (NAP) calls upon the government to "ensure that no armed militias are allowed to function in the country," although claims about the NAP's uneven implementation was a frequent feature in Pakistani media. As in 2014, Pakistan launched military operations to eradicate terrorist safe havens, although their impact on all terrorist groups was uneven. The government administered an Exit Control List (ECL) intended to prevent terrorists and criminal actors from traveling abroad. In August, September, and November, the government announced its intention to remove thousands of people from the ECL on grounds of their wrongful or unsubstantiated addition. Some UN-designated terrorist groups, such as Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT) affiliates Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation, were able to fundraise and hold rallies in Pakistan. LeT/JuD leader, Hafiz Saeed, who is also a UN-designated terrorist, was able tomake frequent public appearances in support of the organization's objectives, which were covered by the Pakistani media, for much of the year. In September, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Agency prohibited media coverage of LeT and affiliated groups, although the groups continued to recruit and operate around the country. Despite JuD and FiF's proscription under UN sanctions regimes, the Pakistani government affirmed in December that neither organization was banned in Pakistan.

To combat the trafficking of items that could contribute to WMDs and their delivery systems, Pakistan continued to work towards harmonizing its national control list with items controlled by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, and Australia Group, as well as taking positive moves such as adding catch-all provisions to its export licensing procedures. Along with list development, Pakistan developed industry internal compliance guidelines and an industry outreach program for strategic technology sectors, which regularly shares information with these industries. The U.S. government seeks to partner more closely with Pakistan on a

further enhanced outreach campaign for industry to fully understand and implement Pakistan's export control requirements, as well as to begin a dialogue on controls on conventional weapons and related dual-use technologies. In addition to industry outreach, Pakistan also participated, developed, and delivered a series of technical trainings to responsible government licensing and enforcement officials for the proper identification of dual-use commodities that could be used to create WMDs and/or their delivery systems. Overall, Pakistan was a committed partner that undertook great efforts to build its export control capabilities.

Pakistan is a constructive and active participant in the Nuclear Security Summit process and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and has worked to strengthen its strategic trade controls, including updating its national export control list. The Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program increased the Government of Pakistan's enforcement capacity by sponsoring training for Pakistani Customs and Strategic Export Control Division officials on how to properly identify strategic commodities of concern. These commodity identification and advanced interdiction trainings were implemented by the U.S. Department of Energy. EXBS also sponsored regional collaboration through nonproliferation fellowships and cross-border coordination with Afghanistan through the UN Office and Drugs and Crime – World Customs Organization's Container Control Program (CCP). Under the CCP, training was provided to enhance the targeting of skills of port control unit officials at the Torkham and Jalalabad border-crossings.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Colombia. Rough terrain and dense forest cover, coupled with low population densities and historically weak government presence have defined Colombia's borders with Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil, and historically have allowed for safe havens for terrorist groups, particularly the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). The Government of Colombia has not only maintained pressure on these groups to deny safe haven, disrupt terrorism financing efforts, and degrade terrorist groups' logistics infrastructure, but it also has continued to conduct operations to combat their ability to conduct terrorist attacks. Coupled with ongoing peace negotiations with the FARC and two FARC unilateral cease fire declarations, Colombia experienced an overall decline in the total number of terrorist incidents in 2015. Despite these successes, illegal armed groups, primarily known as "Bandas Criminales," continued to use the porous border, remote mountain areas, and jungles to maneuver, train, cultivate and transport narcotics, operate illegal mines, "tax" the local populace, and engage in other illegal activities.

Improved relations with neighboring Ecuadorhaveled to some increasedcooperation on law enforcement issues. Colombia also continued to cooperate and share information with the Panamanian NationalBorder Service. Additionally, Brazil began implementing its Integrated Border Monitoring System in an effort to monitor its entire border, and along with continued cooperation with the Government of Colombia, addressed potential safe haven areas along their shared borders.

Venezuela. Venezuela's porous border with Colombia has made the country attractive to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the National Liberation Army, who use it to transit in and out of its territory. There were credible reports that Venezuela maintained a

permissive environment that allowed for support of activities that benefited known terrorist groups.

COUNTERING TERRORISM ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT

In 2015, the Department of State designated one new Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and amended two existing designations. In addition, the Department designated 37 organizations and individuals as Specially Designated Global Terrorists under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, and amended two existing designations. The Department also revoked the designations of two organizations and two individuals.

The Department of the Treasury also designated organizations and individuals under E.O. 13224. For a full list of all U.S. designations, see the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control website at http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx.

2015 Foreign Terrorism Organization/Executive Order 13224 group designations:

- On September 3, the Department of State revoked the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designation of the Revolutionary Organization 17 November.
- On September 29, the Department of State amended the E.O. 13224 designation of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant to include the alias Islamic State, and amended the FTO designation on September 30. (See Chapter 6, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, for further information on ISIL).
- On September 29, the Department of State designated Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN) under E.O. 13224 and as an FTO. (See Chapter 6, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, for further information on JRTN.)
- On September 29, the Department of State amended the FTO and E.O. 13224 designation of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis to include the alias ISIL Sinai Province as its primary name. (See Chapter 6, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, for further information on ISIL-Sinai Province.)
- On December 9, the Department of State revoked the FTO designation of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).

2015 Executive Order (E.O.) 13224 designations:

- On January 14, the Department of State designated 'Abdallah al-Ashqar. Al-Ashqar is a leadership figure and member of the military committee of the Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC). Al-Ashqar is known to have purchased missiles and other materials to attack Israel.
- On February 9, the Department of State designated German national Denis Cuspert. Cuspert was a recruiter and propagandist for ISIL. He was allegedly killed in an airstrike near al-Raqqah, Syria, in October 2015.
- On March 25, the Department of State designated Aliaskhab Kebekov, who was the leader of Russia-based terrorist group Caucasus Emirate, until his death during a battle with Russian Special Forces in April 2015.

- On April 14, the Department of State designated Syrian-based Tunisian national Ali Ouni Harzi. Harzi was also added to the UN 1267/1989 al-Qaida Sanctions List. Harzi joined Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia (AAS-T) in 2011. He was a high-profile member known for recruiting volunteers, smuggling weapons and explosives into Tunisia, and facilitating the travel of AAS-T fighters to Syria. Harzi was killed in an air strike in June 2015.
- On April 21, the Department of State designated Ahmed Diriye and Mahad Karate. Diriye became the leader of al-Shabaab in September 2014, following the death of former leader Ahmed Abdi Godane. Prior to assuming leadership of the group, Diriye served as Godane's assistant, the deputy governor of Lower Juba region and al-Shabaab's governor of the Bay and Bakool regions. By 2013 he had become a senior advisor to Godane and oversaw the group's domestic activities. Karate plays an important role in al-Shabaab's intelligence wing, the Amniyat.
- On April 21, the Department of State designated Christodoulos Xiros and Nikolaos Maziotis. Xiros is a chief assassin of 17 November. He was most recently arrested in January 2015 by Greek police while planning to carry out armed assaults in Greece, possibly with the intent to free prisoners. It is believed that at the time of his arrest, Xiros was working with members of the Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei. Maziotis is the leader of the Greece-based Revolutionary Struggle. Under his leadership, the group claimed responsibility for the April 2014 bombing in central Athens outside the offices of the Greek central bank.
- On April 28, the Department of State designated Meliad Farah, Hassan el-Hajj Hassan, and Hussein Atris. Farah and Hassan have been publicly identified as key suspects in a July 2012 bombing in Burgas, Bulgaria, which targeted Israeli tourists and killed six people. The bombing has been attributed to Hizballah. Atris is a member of Hizballah's overseas terrorism unit. In 2013, Atris was sentenced to two years and eight months in prison by a Thai court for illegally possessing materials to manufacture explosives. He was released in September 2014 and is believed to reside in Lebanon.
- On August 25, the Department of State designated Abdul Aziz Haqqani. Aziz Haqqani is a senior member of the Haqqani Network (HQN) and brother to HQN leader Sirajuddin Haqqani. For several years, Aziz Haqqani has been involved in planning and carrying out IED attacks against Afghan government targets, and assumed responsibility for all major HQN attacks after the death of his brother, Badruddin Haqqani.
- On September 8, the Department of State designated Lebanese born Samir Kuntar. In April 1979, Kuntar participated in the attempted kidnapping of an Israeli family in Israel that resulted in the deaths of five Israelis, including two young children. Kuntar was convicted in an Israeli court for the murders; he was released from prison in 2008 as part of a prisoner exchange. Kuntar later emerged as one of the most visible spokesmen for Hizballah. With the assistance of Iran and Syria, Kuntar played an operational role in building Hizballah's terrorist infrastructure in the Golan Heights. He was killed on December 19, 2015 in Jaramana, Syria.
- On September 8, the Department of State designated Hamas operatives Muhammed Deif, Yahya Ibrahim Hassan Sinwar, and Rawhi Mushtaha. Sinwar and Mushtaha are known for their role in founding the Hamas military wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigade. Deif is a top commander of the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigade.
- On September 9, the Department of State designated Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi, a senior leader of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb. In an April 2013 video, al-Anabi called on violent extremists to initiate armed conflict against French interests worldwide, presumably in response to France's intervention in Mali.

- On September 29, the Department of State designated 10 individuals and five groups connected to foreign terrorist fighters in Algeria, Indonesia, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen:
    - Rustam Aselderov is a former commander of the Caucasus Emirate, and the current leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Caucasus Province (ISIL-CP). Aselderov defected from Caucasus Emirate and swore allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in early December 2014. A spokesman for al-Baghdadi accepted this pledge of allegiance and appointed Aselderov as the "emir" of ISIL-CP.
    - French citizen Peter Cherif is a foreign terrorist fighter and member of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). In 2004, he was captured while fighting for al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) near Fallujah, Iraq. He was convicted in Baghdad in July 2006 for illegally crossing the border and sentenced to 15 years in prison. He escaped in March 2007 after an insurgent attack and prison break and traveled to Syria. He was later arrested in Syria, extradited, and served 18 months in jail in France. He was released pending trial and fled to Yemen. Cherif was sentenced to five years in prison, in absentia, for being a member of a terrorist organization.
    - Tarkhan Ismailovich Gaziyevis a North Caucasian warlord, who has been involved in the Chechen insurgency since 2003. In 2007, Gaziyev became the Caucasus Emirate Commander of the Southwestern Front of the Province of Chechnya and carried out numerous attacks in this role. Gaziyev split from the group in 2010 and travelled to Turkey. He now leads a group in Syria, known as "Tarkhan Jamaat," which is part of ISIL, and has participated in fighting in Latakia, Syria.
    - French national Boubaker Hakim was once a member of Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia. Hakim claimed responsibility for the assassination of two Tunisian politicians in 2013. He is now a member of ISIL.
    - Maxime Hauchard is a French national who traveled to Syria to join ISIL in August 2013. Hauchard was identified among the ISIL fighters appearing in the November 2014 execution video, which depicted the beheadings of several Syrian soldiers and showed the severed head of an American hostage.
    - Shamil Izmaylovis a Russian militant currently fighting in Syria. Before traveling to Syria in 2012, Izmaylov trained in and later set up his own terrorist training center in Egypt. In mid-2013, Izmaylov established a Russian-speaking ISIL faction in Raqqa that has been fighting as a distinct unit. In addition to participating in combat in Syria, Izmaylov has been associated with the Caucus Emirates.
    - British citizen Sally Jones traveled from the UK to Syria in 2013 to join ISIL and fight alongside her husband, deceased ISIL hacker Junaid Hussain. Jones and Hussain targeted American military personnel through the publication of a "hit list" online encouraging lone-offender attacks. Jones has used social media to recruit women to join ISIL. In August 2015, she offered guidance to individuals aspiring to conduct attacks in Britain on how to construct homemade bombs.
    - Tajikistan citizen Gulmurod Khalimov – a former Tajikistan special operations colonel, police commander, and military expert – is a Syria-based ISIL member and recruiter. Khalimov appeared in a propaganda video confirming he fights for ISIL.
    - French citizen Emilie Konigtraveled to Syria in 2012 to join and fight for ISIL. While in Syria, Konig directed individuals in France to attack French government institutions. In a video posted on May 31, 2013, Konig was shown training with weapons in Syria.
    - British citizen Nasser Muthanatravelled to Syria from Cardiff, UK in November 2013 to fight for ISIL. In June 2014, Muthana was featured in an ISIL propaganda video in

which he and two other English-speaking individuals attempt to persuade Muslims in the West to join the fight. In the video, Muthana admitted to participating in battles in Syria and expressed his plans to travel to Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan to continue the fight. Muthana has also used social media to threaten the British government about returning to the UK to test new skills he has gained in Syria.

- Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Caucasus Province (ISIL-CP) became ISIL's newest regional group on June 23, 2015, when the spokesman for ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi released an audio recording accepting the allegiance of the fighters of four Caucasus regions – Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria. On September 2, 2015, ISIL-CP claimed responsibility for an attack on a Russian military base in Magaramkent, southern Dagestan, which killed and wounded a number of Russian citizens. In December 2015, the group also claimed responsibility for a shooting near the citadel of Derbent in Dagestan, Russia that killed one and left 11 others injured.
- Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria (JAK-A) is an ISIL-affiliated group operating in Algeria. The group emerged in September 2014 when top military commanders of AQIM's central region broke away from AQIM and announced allegiance to ISIL. JAK-A became notorious following its September 2014 abduction and beheading of French national Herve Gourdel.
- Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN) aims to overthrow the Government of Iraq and implement a Ba'athist or similar regime. It first announced insurgency operations against Coalition Forces in Iraq in December 2006 in response to Saddam Hussein's death. More recently, the group has played an important role in some of ISIL's most significant military advances, including the seizure of Mosul.
- Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) was announced in an online video in January 2015. ISIL-K is led by former Tehrik e-Taliban Pakistan commander Hafiz Saeed Khan and consists of former Pakistani and Afghan Taliban commanders.
- The Mujahidin Indonesian Timur (MIT) is an ISIL-linked terrorist group operating in Indonesia. MIT members have ties to other Department of State designated FTOs, including Jemmah Anshorut Tauhid and Jemaah Islamiya. In July 2014, MIT's leader, Abu Warda Santoso, pledged allegiance to ISIL. MIT has become increasingly bold in its attacks on security forces.
- The Department of State amended the E.O. 13224 designation of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) to include the alias ISIL Sinai Province as its primary name. ABM has used ISIL Sinai Province as its primary name since pledging allegiance to ISIL in November 2014. The group has since continued attacking Egyptian targets. (See Chapter 6, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, for further information on ISIL Sinai Province.
- The Department of State amended the E.O. 13224 designation of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant to include the alias Islamic State. (See Chapter 6, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, for further information on ISIL.)

- On November 13, the Department of State designated Maghomed Maghomedzakirovich Abdurakhmanov. Abdurakhmanov is believed to have beheaded three individuals in Syria. He was arrested in July 2013, and in July 2015 was sentenced by a Turkish court to seven-and-a-half years in prison for being a member of a terrorist organization.
- On December 9, the Department of State designated Emrah Erdogan. Erdoganis a German-national known to have joined in combat, recruited, and fundraised as a member of al-Qa'ida

and al-Shabaab. Erdogan was sentenced to seven years in prison in January 2014 in Germany for these activities and for phoning in false terrorist threats against the parliament in Berlin in November 2010.

MULTILATERAL EFFORTS TO COUNTER TERRORISM

In 2015, the United States continued to work through multilateral organizations to strengthen regional and international efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism, including by developing and promoting global norms and building the capacities of states to implement them.

The Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). Since its launch in September 2011, the GCTF has mobilized more than US $300 million to support national and regional efforts to strengthen civilian institutions to counter terrorism and violent extremism. This includes support for the development and implementation of GCTF framework documents at both the regional and country levels. The GCTF is working with partners around the globe to change how states – particularly those emerging from authoritarian rule – respond to the challenges of terrorism and the violent extremist ideologies that underpin it. The GCTF, with its 30 founding members (29 countries and the EU), regularly convenes counterterrorism policymakers and practitioners, as well as experts from the UN and other multilateral and regional bodies, to identify urgent CT needs, devise solutions, and mobilize expertise and resources to address such needs and enhance global cooperation.

With its primary focus on countering violent extremism (CVE) and strengthening civilian criminal justice and other rule of law institutions that deal with terrorism, the GCTF aims to diminish terrorist recruitment and increase countries' capacity for dealing with terrorist threats within their borders and regions.

In the past year, the GCTF launched two new initiatives:

- **The International CT and CVE Clearinghouse Mechanism (ICCM):** Operating as a project under the auspices of the GCTF, the ICCM will develop and manage an up-to-date database of recent and ongoing counterterrorism and CVE capacity-building assistance. The ICCM will assist pilot countries and donors to mobilize and coordinate donor resources to address identified needs, especially regarding key aspects of UN Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions related to counterterrorism and CVE. This initiative initially will focus on three pilot countries – Kenya, Nigeria, and Tunisia.

- **The Initiative to Address the Lifecycle of Radicalization to Violence:** This initiative is developing tools that can be applied across the full life cycle of radicalization: from the front end, where governments and communities are attempting to prevent susceptible individuals from being attracted to the ideologies promoted by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and other terrorist groups; to the back end, where governments and communities need to assess the risk posed by violent, radicalized individuals and determine their long-term disposition and possible rehabilitation and reintegration into society, either in or out of the criminal justice system. The purpose of the GCTF cross-working group initiative is to expand on existing GCTF good practices and develop

additional tools needed to address the full life cycle of radicalization from prevention to intervention to rehabilitation and reintegration.

The GCTF has also inspired the establishment of three independent institutions that provide platforms for delivering sustainable training and resources in support of CVE and strengthening rule of law.

- Based in Abu Dhabi, **Hedayah**, the first international center of excellence on CVE, hosted a number of training and capacity-building courses focusing on community policing and community engagement, CVE and education, and CVE and communications. Hedayah developed *Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies* which is a document that offers guidance for national governments interested in developing or refining a national CVE strategy, or CVE components as part of a wider counterterrorism strategy or framework.

- The **International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ)**, based in Malta, was inaugurated in June 2014 as a center dedicated to providing police, prosecutors, judges, corrections officials, lawmakers, and other criminal justice actors with the training and tools required to address terrorism and related transnational criminal activity. During 2015, the IIJ trained more than 450 judges, prosecutors, investigators, parliamentarians, and other criminal justice professionals and experts from more than 30 countries. Some of the activities supported by the IIJ during the last year included programs directed at: dismantling terrorist facilitation networks; building informal and formal legal cooperation networks; combating kidnapping for ransom; fostering the rule of law while developing counterterrorism policies; supporting border security; bringing foreign terrorist fighters to justice; strengthening mutual legal assistance efforts; supporting senior judicial officials in developing criminal justice responses to terrorism; hosting the GCTF Criminal Justice-Rule of Law Working Group Plenary Meeting; and developing a parliamentarian program in the area of counterterrorism.

- In June 2014, the **Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)** became fully operational in Geneva as a foundation under Swiss law, with its first Board meeting held in November of that same year. Pilot countries include Bangladesh, Mali, and Nigeria. In 2015, each of the pilot countries set up a "country support mechanism" which brings government, civil society, and the private sector together to develop needs assessments and oversee development of grant applications. An Independent Review Panel was established to review and make recommendations on grant applications. Grants will be focused on programs that strengthen resilience against violent extremism. In December 2015, the Governing Board approved Burma, Kenya, and Kosovo as additional beneficiary countries and reviewed the pilot countries' draft national applications.

The UN is a close partner of, and participant in, the GCTF and its activities. The GCTF serves as a mechanism for furthering the implementation of the universally-agreed UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and, more broadly, to complement and reinforce existing multilateral counterterrorism efforts, starting with those of the UN. The GCTF also partners with a wide range of regional multilateral organizations, including the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the AU, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The United Nations (UN). Sustained and strategic engagement at the UN on counterterrorism issues is a priority for the United States. Throughout 2015, the UN Security Council (UNSC) remained engaged with stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters by promoting implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 (2014), a Chapter VII binding resolution that requires all states to "prevent and suppress the recruiting, organization, transporting, or equipping" of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as the financing of foreign terrorist fightertravel and activities." Lithuania, Spain and the United States chaired ministerial meetings during their respective UNSC presidencies that focused specifically on measures to enhance border security; criminalize and prevent the travel of foreign terrorist fighters, counter violent extremism (CVE), and counter-ISIL financing. In 2015, the UNSC adopted several other counterterrorism-related resolutions, including: UNSCR 2199 to degrade ISIL, al-Nusrah Front, and other al-Qa'ida (AQ)-associated groups' financial support networks, paying particular attention to halting oil smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, and the illicit trade of antiquities from Syria; UNSCR 2250 to emphasize the role of youth in countering terrorism and countering violent extremism leading to terrorism; and UNSCR 2253 to further disrupt AQ and ISIL's sources of revenue. In addition, the United States engaged with a wide range of UN actors on counterterrorism, which included:

- **The Counter-Terrorism Committee Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED).** The United States supported CTED efforts to analyze capacity gaps of Member States to implement UNSCRs 1373, 1624, and 2178, and facilitate training and other technical assistance to UN member states. This included participating in the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) thematic debates on a range of issues including stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters; the role of women in countering violent extremism; andpreventing terrorists from exploiting the Internet and social media to recruit terrorists and incite terrorist acts, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- **The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF).** The United States supported CTITF efforts to create a capacity-building plan to assist Member States' implementation of UNSCR 2178 and improve implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, including by serving on the Advisory Board of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), which delivers training and technical assistance. In 2015, the United States funded a range of UNCCT and CTITF activities including: promoting effective use of advance passenger information to stem the flow of Foreign terrorist fighters; capacity building for Mali's security and justice sectors; a training initiative to secure open borders; implementing good practices on addressing and preventing terrorist kidnapping for ransom; and supporting community engagement through human rights-led policing.

- **The UNSC 1267/1989/2253 Committee.** On December 17, 2015, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew chaired a special UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting with finance ministers on countering ISIL finance and all forms of terrorist financing to bolster international efforts to further disrupt ISIL's sources of revenue and isolate it from the international financial system. At the finance ministers meeting, the UNSC unanimously adopted UNSCR 2253, which updated the UN sanctions on al-Qa'ida to recognize the increasing prominence of ISIL as a global threat by renaming the 1267/1989 al-Qaida

Sanctions Regime and List to the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qaida Sanctions Regime and List. The United States worked closely with the UN Sanctions Committee and its Monitoring Team in 2015 by proposing listings and de-listings, providing amendments, engaging the Committee's Ombudsperson in de-listings, and providing input to the Committee to enhance its procedures and implementation of sanctions measures. The United States also assisted the Monitoring Team with information for its research and reports. There are 215 individuals and 72 entities listed on the list. In 2015, 35 individuals and four entities were added to the list. The Committee also worked to ensure the integrity of the list by conducting regular reviews and by endeavoring to remove those individuals and entities that no longer met the criteria for listing. In 2015, 21 individuals were de-listed, of which eight individuals were de-listed following the submission of a petition through the Office of the Ombudsperson.

- **The UN Office on Drugs and Crime's Terrorism Prevention Branch (UNODC/TPB).** The Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB), in conjunction with the UNODC's Global Program against Money Laundering, continued to provide assistance to countries seeking to ratify and implement the universal legal instruments against terrorism. The United States provided funding to UNODC/TPB for a vast array of counterterrorism programming focused on strengthening the criminal justice system's response to terrorism. In 2015, the United States provided funding for several new TPB programs aimed at strengthening the legal regime against terrorism within a rule of law framework in Morocco and improving the criminal justice response to foreign terrorist fighters in the Balkans and Central Asia.

- **The UN Inter-Regional Crime Research Institute (UNICRI).** The United States has provided financial support to a UNICRI-led global effort to strengthen the capacity of countries to implement the good practices contained in the GCTF's *Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders*. In addition, in 2015, the United States provided funding to UNICRI to launch a pilot diversion program aimed at potential foreign terrorist fighters and others at risk of recruitment into violent extremism and terrorism. This pilot effort seeks to address the challenges presented by youths who have come to the attention of law enforcement as a result of having come under the influence of violent extremist ideologues or terrorist recruiters.

- **The UNSC 1540 Committee.** The Committee monitors and fosters implementation of the obligations and recommendations of UNSCR 1540, which establishes legally binding obligations on all UN Member States related to the establishment of and enforcement of appropriate and effective measures against the proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, their means of delivery, and related materials to non-state actors, including terrorists. The 1540 Committee's program of work focuses on four main areas: monitoring and national implementation; assistance; cooperation with international organizations, including the UNSC committees established pursuant to UNSCRs 1267 and 1373; and transparency and media outreach. The Committee submitted its annual report on implementation to the UNSC in December 2015, which also described preparations for the 2nd Comprehensive Review of UNSCR 1540 in 2016. The Committee's Group of Experts also participates as part of the CTITF, and cooperates

with INTERPOL, UNODC, FATF, and other bodies involved in counterterrorism efforts.

- **The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).** ICAO's Universal Security Audit Program (USAP) continued to contribute directly to U.S. security by ensuring that each of ICAO's 191 member states conducts regular security audits that comply with aviation security standards. In 2015, ICAO continued to transition to the USAP-Continuous Monitoring Approach (USAP-CMA) to enable greater focus of resources on states requiring more assistance in meeting the Standards. ICAO has begun to pilot the process and certify auditors accordingly. USAP conducted assistance missions to help states correct security problems revealed by surveys and audits. ICAO, in partnership with the UN's CTED, has assisted member states in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on counterterrorism, including border control. The two entities have conducted assessment visits and organized workshops focused on countering terrorism and the use of fraudulent travel documents, and promoting good practices on border control and aviation security. ICAO is also working with member states to encourage incorporation of advance passenger information and Passenger Name Record in the travel decision process and with priority countries on implementation of ICAO's public key directory program, as a means to validate e-passports at key ports of entry. Also, ICAO with the World Customs Organization is working to establish standard practices for enhanced screening of cargo. Together with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, ICAO and CTED have encouraged member states to ratify and implement international counterterrorism treaties.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA continued to implement its Nuclear Security Plan (2014-2017) for countering the threat of terrorism involving nuclear and other radioactive material. The United States was actively involved in IAEA efforts to enhance security for vulnerable nuclear and other radioactive materials and associated facilities, and to reduce the risk that terrorists could gain access to or use such materials or expertise.

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). Through its secure I-24/7 global police communications system, INTERPOL connects its member countries' law enforcement officials to its array of investigative and analytical databases, as well as its system of messages, diffusions, and notices. Following the example of the U.S. National Central Bureau, a number of member countries are now integrating INTERPOL's information sharing resources and capabilities into their respective national border security and law enforcement infrastructure to help monitor and interdict the international transit of foreign terrorist fighters and other transnational criminals. With financial and staffing support from the United States, the INTERPOL Counter-Terrorism Fusion Centre's Foreign Terrorist Fighter project represents a multinational fusion cell that manages an analytical database containing identity particulars that supports law enforcement and border control authorities' abilities to determine the terrorist threat posed by subjects located in, or attempting to enter, their respective jurisdictions. More than 50 countries now contribute to INTERPOL's foreign terrorist fighters database, and information shared through its channels has increased six-fold in the last year, growing to some 5,000 foreign terrorist fighters identities. From these records, dedicated analysis has been delivered to INTERPOL's membership to combine, evaluate, and share intelligence on the capabilities, means and emerging trends of foreign terrorist fighters to ensure that the right piece of data reaches the right officer on the frontlines. In this respect, more than 2,000 INTERPOL alerts

intended to disrupt foreign terrorist fighter mobility were issued by member countries in the last year.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs). The United States supported FATF plenary activities on a number of countering the financing of terrorism (CFT) issues including guidance on, and vulnerabilities of, emerging terrorist financing risks, preventing terrorist financing abuse of the non-profit sector, and countering the financing of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; and participated in the FATF-style regional bodies (FSRBs) work to strengthen the implementation of FATF CFT standards. In particular, the United States continued to stress the importance of targeted sanctions and Recommendation 6, a provision to freeze and confiscate assets. The United States also continued to stress Recommendation 5, a provision to criminalize terrorist financing for any purpose, including, as clarified in a newly-revised interpretive note, the financing of foreign terrorist fighters.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Under the 2015 Serbian Chairman in-Office, the OSCE focused on counterterrorism, culminating in the adoption of declarations on countering violent extremism (CVE) and strengthening OSCE efforts to counter ISIL/DAESH at the OSCE Belgrade Ministerial Council meeting in December 2015. Throughout the year, the OSCE conducted numerous CVE initiatives in line with the February White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, such as launching a robust CVEcommunications campaign, hosting a counterterrorism conference that joinedtogether a broad array of stakeholders on sharing best practices to counter the incitement and recruitment of foreign terroristfighters, and developing a capacity-building program forcommunity leaders to thwart violent extremists. These CVE-related initiatives were bolstered by other OSCE activities, such as an expertworkshop on Media Freedom and Responsibilities in the Context of Counterterrorism Policies in Bucharest in October 2015 and aconference on foreign terrorist fighters in Southeastern Europe in September 2015. On border security, U.S. funding to the OSCE's Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe contributed to building the capabilities of border and customs officials to counter transnational threats in Central Asia. The United States also funded a border security training seminar focused on the OSCE's Mediterranean Partners (North Africa and the Middle East) in Spain. Through the OSCE's Action against Terrorism Unit, the United States also supported initiatives aimed at addressing effective criminal justice system responses to terrorism, travel document security, cyber security, and nonproliferation.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO's counterterrorism efforts focus on improving awareness of the threat, developing response capabilities, and enhancing engagement with partner countries and organizations. In 2015, the North Atlantic Council and working level NATO committees hosted representatives from the UN, GCTF co-chairs Turkey and the United States, and NGOs for discussions on the foreign terrorist fighter threat and lessons learned in countering violent extremist content online. The NATO Headquarters' Intelligence Unit now benefits from increased information sharing between member services and the Alliance, and produces analytical reports relating to terrorism and its links with other transnational threats.

Building partner capacity and developing innovative technologies are part of NATO's core mission, and methods that address asymmetric threats like terrorism are of particular relevance. Much of this work is conducted through the Defence Against Terrorism Programme of Work (DAT POW), which aims to protect troops, civilians, and critical infrastructure against terrorist

attacks, including suicide bombers, IEDs, rockets against aircraft, and chemical, biological and radiological materials. The DAT POW supports the implementation of NATO's spearhead force – the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force – by developing projects to improve troop readiness and preparedness. To complement counter-ISIL coalition efforts, NATO has continued to develop a Defense and Related Security Capacity Building package to assist Iraq in building more effective security forces.

European Union (EU). In 2015, the EU's work with the United States included efforts to curb terrorist financing, strengthen cooperation on countering violent extremism, shut down foreign terrorist fighter networks, and build counterterrorism capacity in partner countries. Much of this work is completed through regular senior-level and working-level consultation and collaboration, including the U.S.-EU Consultation on Terrorism and the U.S.-EU Political Dialogue on Counterterrorist Financing. In the aftermath of the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris, the EU committed during in December to several counterterrorism actions, including improving data entry of foreign terrorist fighters in various EU information data bases, approving a Passenger Name Record directive to help identify and track terrorist travelers, and pursuing closer cooperation with key partners such as the United States.

Group of Seven (G-7). Within the context of the G-7 Roma-Lyon Group (RLG) meetings on counterterrorism and counter-crime, the United States helped develop a policy toolkit of measures to address the foreign terrorist fighter problem and generated support for the newly established International Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Clearinghouse Mechanism (ICCM), which the G-7 supports under the auspices of the GCTF. The United States also sought to advance projects through the RLG's expert groups on counterterrorism, transportation security, high-tech crime, migration, criminal legal affairs, and law enforcement.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Counterterrorism activities of the 27-member ARF countries included the annual meeting on counterterrorism and transnational crime (CTTC) and supported capacity building through ARF institutions. In 2015, the United States provided funding for an ARF Workshop for First Response Support for Victims of Terrorism and Other Mass Casualty Events, which was hosted by the Government of Philippines in Manila on September 22-23. The workshop brought together policymakers, practitioners, and first responders across the ASEAN region from the domains of (natural) disaster preparedness and management and those responsible for managing and coordinating responses to terrorist attacks. Participants included a total of 63 policymakers, practitioners, and first responders from 16 countries. The meeting took stock of national and regional efforts on these fronts in Southeast Asia as well as international good practices in the area of first responder support to victims of terrorism and other mass casualty events. Additionally, the United States encouraged information sharing and supported the CTTC work plan, which focused on illicit drugs; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear terrorism; cybersecurity; counter-radicalization; the sponsorship of a regional transnational crime information sharing center; and a workshop on migration.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). In 2015, APEC continued to implement its comprehensive Consolidated Counterterrorism and Secure Trade Strategy. The Strategy, adopted in 2011, endorsed the principles of security, efficiency, and resilience, and advocated for risk-based approaches to security challenges across its four cross-cutting areas of supply chains, travel, finance, and infrastructure. The United States sponsored a workshop that highlighted the

threat that foreign terrorist fighter travel poses to the Asia-Pacific region and explained why advance passenger information systems are effective at helping mitigate that threat. The United States also sponsored a workshop on countering terrorists' use of new payment systems (NPS) that helped reinforce the capacities of APEC members to promote the legal and transparent use of NPS while effectively countering their illicit uses.

Organization of American States' Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (OAS/CICTE). In 2015, the CICTE Secretariat conducted 62 activities, training courses, and technical assistance missions that benefited more than 3,687 participants in five thematic areas: border control; critical infrastructure protection; counterterrorism legislative assistance and terrorist financing; strengthening strategies on emerging terrorist threats (crisis management); and international cooperation and partnerships. The United States is a major contributor to CICTE's training programs and has provided funding and expert trainers for capacity-building programs focused on aviation security, travel document security and fraud prevention, cybersecurity, legislative assistance and counterterrorism financing, supply chain security, and customs and immigration.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

A matrix of the ratification status of 18 of the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism can be found here: https://www.unodc.org/tldb/universal_instruments_NEW.html

LONG-TERM PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO COUNTER TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS AND RECRUITMENT

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE).CVE refers to proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence; and efforts to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence.

President Obama convened the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February 2015. More than 60 countries, 12 multilateral bodies, and representatives from civil society, business, and the faith community participated and launched a global "whole-of-society" effort to tackle the broad range of factors fueling violent extremism.

The Summit underscored the need for a comprehensive approach that seeks to both limit the growth of active violent extremist groups and prevent new ones from emerging. Summit participants outlined a concrete action agenda with nine pillars related to preventing and countering violent extremism:

1. Promote local research and information-sharing on the drivers of violent extremism;
2. Empower civil society;
3. Strengthen relations between at-risk communities and security and police forces;
4. Promote counter-narratives and weaken the legitimacy of violent extremist messaging;

5. Promote educational approaches to build resilience to violent extremism;
6. Enhance access to mainstream religious knowledge;
7. Prevent radicalization in prisons and rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremists;
8. Identify political and economic opportunities for at-risk communities; and
9. Strengthen development assistance and stabilization efforts.

Governments in Albania, Algeria, Australia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mauritania, and Norway hosted regional CVE summits to engage additional states, municipal governments, and civil society and private sector participants in preventive approaches to violent extremism. A number of countries developed National CVE Action Plans charting their way forward.

On the margins of UNGA 71, mayors from around the world launched a new Strong Cities Network to identify and share community-level best practices for building social cohesion and resilienceagainst violent extremism.

Young people gathered at the first-ever Global Youth CVE Summit to showcase innovative tools for countering the appeal of violent extremism among their peers. Researchers and practitioners with the support of State and USAID launched the RESOLVE Network (Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism) to connect with policy institutes and methodologists around the world to better understand the community-level factors fueling violent extremism and the best evidence-based approaches to address them. Civil society organizations joined in all of these events and initiatives, further amplifying the chorus of voices to counter violent ideologies on the ground.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development sponsored a new CVE Center for Excellence and Counter Messaging for the East Africa region. The Government of Albania is spearheading an initiative to build regional capacity and cooperation around CVE, for example by supporting CVE-related research and counter-messaging.

In line with the Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on CVE, State and USAID leverage a range of available diplomatic, development, and foreign assistance tools and resources to have a demonstrable impact to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremism.

The following five objectives guide our CVE assistance and engagement:

1. Expand international political will, partnerships, and expertise to better understand the drivers of violent extremism and mobilize effective interventions.
2. Encourage and assist partner governments to adopt more effective policies and approaches to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremism, including changing unhelpful practices where necessary.
3. Employ foreign assistance tools and approaches, including development, to reduce specific political or social and economic factors that contribute to community support for violent extremism in identifiable areas or put particular segments of a population at high risk of violent extremist radicalization and recruitment to violence.
4. Empower and amplify locally credible voices that can change the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideology among key demographic segments.
5. Strengthen the capabilities of government and non-governmental actors to isolate, intervene with, and promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals caught in the cycle of radicalization to violence.

State and USAID are pursuing a range of programs to assist partners around the world to prevent and counter radicalization and recruitment to violence. Key areas of programming include the following:

- **Supporting the Development and Implementation of National CVE Action Plans:** The United States is providing technical support and assistance to governments as they design and implement national CVE action plans, in partnership with civil society and the private sector. To reinforce these national action plan efforts, the United States is supporting Hedayah, the CVE Center of Excellence in Abu Dhabi, in providing capacity building and technical expertise to governments on CVE policy and practice.

- **Researching Drivers of Violent Extremism and Effective CVE Interventions:** The United States is supporting innovative regional, country-based, and thematic research on the drivers of violent extremism and on programming approaches designed to inform targeted CVE policy and programming. The United States is supporting the Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism (RESOLVE) Network, which connect academics and researchers to study the dynamics of CVE in specific, local contexts and identify effective CVE interventions. At the same time, the United States is also working with the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) to develop an expanded toolkit for addressing the life cycle of radicalization to violence.

- **Building the CVE Capacity of Criminal Justice Actors and Institutions:** The United States is supporting programs, especially in the Horn, Sahel, and Maghreb regions of Africa to strengthen the CVE capacity of law enforcement, including police deployed to peace and stabilization operations, prison management and justice sector actors, and to help address drivers of violent extremism such as corruption and human rights abuses. The United States is also supporting programs to train and assist corrections officials to counter radicalization to violence in prison settings and promote rehabilitation, including addressing returning foreign terrorist fighters.

- **Strengthening CVE Efforts by Sub-National, City, and Local Partners:** The United States is supporting the Strong Cities Network, a global network of municipal and other sub-national leaders and local government practitioners involved in building community resilience and social cohesion to counter violent extremism in their local communities. The United States is also contributing to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, the first multilateral fund supporting community-based projects that counter local drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violence.

- **Enhancing Civil Society's Role in Countering Violent Extremism:** Recognizing that youth play a vital role in preventing the spread of violent extremism, the United States is supporting programs that empower youth as change agents in preventing violent extremism in their communities. The United States is also supporting programs that elevate the role of women in preventing the spread of violent extremism in their countries, communities, and families.

- **Countering Violent Extremist Messaging and Promoting Alternative Narratives:** With the leadership of the announced interagency Global Engagement Center, the United

States is supporting efforts to help government and non-governmental partners to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL's) messaging and promote alternative narratives. The United States is supporting the Sawab Center in Abu Dhabi, the first-ever joint online messaging program, to counter ISIL propaganda by directly exposing its criminal nature, challenging its doctrine of hate and intolerance, and highlighting Coalition successes. The United States is also supporting efforts to mobilize and build the capacity of civil society actors and other influential voices who can credibly challenge violent extremist narratives, including through the Peer-to-Peer: Challenging Extremism Program (P2P).

CIVILIAN COUNTERTERRORISM CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS. As the terrorist threat has evolved and grown more geographically diverse in recent years, it has become clear that our success depends in large part on the political will and capabilities of our partners to counter terrorism. To succeed over the long term, we must have partners who can not only militarily disrupt threats and degrade networks in a way that comports with international laws and norms, but who have strong civilian capabilities, as well. We need law enforcement, justice sector, and corrections partners, who can disrupt attacks and investigate, arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate terrorists and their facilitation networks.

The United States uses various funding authorities and programs to build the capacity of law enforcement, justice, and corrections officials to counter terrorism. The Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism oversees the following capacity-building programs: Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA), Counterterrorism Financing (CFT), Counterterrorism Engagement with Allies (CTE), the Regional Strategic Initiative (RSI), and the Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP). For further information on these programs, we refer you to the Annual Report on Assistance Related to International Terrorism, Fiscal Year 2014: http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/rpt/221544.htm.

In his speech at West Point in May 2014, President Obama called for the United States to develop more effective partnerships in countries and regions where terrorist networks seek a foothold and announced the **Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF)** to provide significant, flexible resources to build "a network of partnerships from South Asia to the Sahel."

Congress has appropriated significant additional funding for the **Department of State's Counterterrorism Partnership Fund**. This funding will enable us to significantly expand civilian counterterrorism capacity-building activities with key partner nations in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and South and Central Asia, and other regions as required to mitigate the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, prevent and counter terrorist safe havens and recruitment, and counter Iranian-sponsored terrorism.

REGIONAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (RSI). Terrorist groups often take advantage of porous borders and ungoverned areas between countries. The RSI program enables flexible civilian responses to rapidly evolving threats and builds the partner capacity and cooperation necessary to counter the most serious threats facing the United States. Current RSI efforts focus on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Syria and Iraq, countering terrorist safe havens, counter-ISIL messaging, and countering Hizballah's activities.

In 2015, RSI supported a wide variety of projects focused on regional law enforcement cooperation and effectiveness against transnational threats. Examples include the

counterterrorism rapid response project, which allows the Department of State to quickly deploy advisors and experts to provide immediate assistance to partner nations in various technical areas. In 2015, the rapid response fund mechanism was used to assist Kosovo in processing foreign terrorist fighter cases and taking them to trial; training for Tanzanian Police in improving their skills in dismantling explosive devices, including IEDs; and a central authorities-focused project in India that targeted information sharing in counterterrorism cases. Other RSI projects in 2015, included a series of global engagements geared at building partner nations' domestic and regional capacity to counter Hizballah criminal activities by using legal and law enforcement tools; as well as activities aimed to assist in the implementation of the Global Counterterrorism Forum good practices, including the *Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the FTF Phenomenon* (*Hague-Marrakech Memorandum*).

Programs to Counter Foreign Terrorist Fighters

During the period 2012-2015, significant numbers of foreign terrorist fighters traveled to Iraq and Syria to fight alongside a number of violent extremist groups, most prominently the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Nusrah Front. While some of these individuals have been killed in the fighting, thousands have returned home and more will certainly follow. Many of these fighters are returning home with battlefield experience and can pose a direct and immediate threat to their home countries and regions. Amplified by social media, and fueled by local factors, new fighters continue to be attracted to the conflicts in Iraq and Syria and to other regions where ISIL affiliates are active and emerging. North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe remain key source regions for foreign terrorist fighters. There is also increasing concern regarding ISIL's presence in Libya, and the travel of foreign terrorist fighters to that conflict zone.

The Department of State has played a pivotal role in the creation of an international framework for addressing the threat from foreign terrorist fighters. In 2014, the Department of State worked with partners to establish a Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group and adopt *The Hague-Marrakesh Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon* under the auspices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). This memorandum gave practical effect to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178, which was adopted on September 24, 2014, during a high-level UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting chaired by President Obama. Additionally, the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Counter ISIL established an ISIL-focused Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group co-led by Turkey and the Netherlands.

In part as a result of our efforts, at least 45 countries have passed or updated existing laws to more effectively identify and prosecute foreign terrorist fighters. Thirty-five countries have arrested foreign terrorist fighters, and 12 have successfully prosecuted at least one foreign terrorist fighter. The United States has information-sharing arrangements with 50 international partners to identify and track the travel of suspected terrorists, and at least 50 countries, plus the UN, now contribute foreign terrorist fighter profiles to INTERPOL, a four hundred percent increase over a two-year period. Several countries have also developed new action plans and programs to counter foreign terrorist fighterradicalization and recruitment in their countries, for example in the Western Balkans.

Strategic Objectives: Looking forward, the Department of State will continue to expand and deepen bilateral and multilateral engagement to counter the foreign terrorist fighters threat and related radicalization and recruitment to violence. We have identified the following six strategic objectives, which the Department pursues in close partnership with other U.S. government agencies.

- **Work with partners to identify, monitor, and address the travel of foreign terrorist fighters to and from Iraq and Syria and new areas affected by ISIL expansion, such as Libya.** The Department continues to prioritize bilateral engagement with key source and transit countries. Our approach brings together partner countries' homeland security, law enforcement, justice sector, intelligence, diplomatic, military, capacity building, and information sharing efforts. These engagements facilitate increased cooperation and, where appropriate, technical assistance. Such cooperation takes the form of information-sharing arrangements, provision of hardware and software to improve border security and management, financial intelligence exchanges, and support in law enforcement investigations, amongst others. Over the course of the last three years, the Department of State has led interagency delegations to countries in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. In the past six months, the Department has prioritized engagement with Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Turkey, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands to increase cooperation to counter foreign terrorist fighters. Following the November Paris attacks, the Department is leading efforts to deploy interagency expert teams to broaden and deepen cooperation with European partners to combat terrorist travel and help reduce the flow of foreign terrorist fighters across their borders. These teams will provide tailored advice in areas such as information sharing, watchlisting, and border security.

- **Encourage and assist top foreign terrorist fighter source and transit countries to employ more robust border and aviation security procedures to identify and interdict potential foreign terrorist fighters and those returning.** The Department funds a variety of programming that is implemented by our interagency and multilateral partners, including the Department of Homeland Security, to bolster partner nation capacity to secure borders and prevent foreign terrorist fighters travel onward to conflict zones and back home to countries of origin. Trainings focus on aviation security, to include traveler screening and airport security practices; maritime security, which encompasses training to deter and interdict materiel to support ISIL (illicit funds, weapons and people) and a variety of border security courses aimed at improving controls at land borders.

- **Enable top foreign terrorist fighter source and transit countries to track and interdict travel by foreign terrorist fighters through more robust information sharing, watchlisting, and traveler screening both with the United States and between top foreign terrorist fighter source and transit countries.** The United States now has information-sharing arrangements with 50 countries. Under these arrangements, the United States and foreign partners exchange screening information on known and suspected terrorists, which serves to disrupt and stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to ISIL and other terrorist groups. The United States has expanded information sharing with several countries, including Malaysia, Turkey, and some Gulf Cooperation Council countries – many of which were traditionally reluctant to create formal arrangements.

Additionally, the Department, working in partnership with the Department of Justice (DOJ) INTERPOL Washington, has launched a new effort in Southeast Asia to enhance law enforcement and border security agencies' access to INTERPOL data, develop protocols and expertise to leverage INTERPOL data, and encourage best practices for interagency and international collaboration to combat the flow of foreign terrorist fighters from the region.

- **Encourage and assist top foreign terrorist fighter source and transit countries to establish and employ the necessary legislative, administrative, policy and criminal justice frameworks, capabilities, tools and programs to investigate, interdict, divert, prosecute, adjudicate and incarcerate aspirant or returning foreign terrorist fighters.** The Department works with a full range of implementers to help partners develop or improve their criminal justice systems to deal with terrorism cases within a rule of law framework. For example, State funds the DOJ to help governments draft new legislation where necessary and to assist partner countries to enforce laws designed to address the foreign terrorist fighter problem. As a result, countries in the Western Balkans – including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia – have recently adopted counterterrorism legislation. Though it did not receive assistance from the DOJ, Croatia also recently adopted counterterrorism legislation. In addition, the Department is working within the UN system and with regional and sub-regional organizations to develop technical assistance programs that advance the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, UNSCR 2178, and GCTF Good Practices to Counter the Global Foreign Terrorist Fighter Phenomenon.

- **Encourage and assist top foreign terrorist fighter source and transit countries to counter violent extremism and prevent radicalization to violence, including through community resilience programs and counter-messaging.**Our CVE efforts are guided and shaped by a developing understanding of the local geography, demography, and drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violence: where the hotspots are; who is most susceptible; and why they may be motivated to join. We support a range of foreign terrorist fighters-relevant CVE programming including, but not limited to: building the capacity of credible third parties to deliver CT messaging and to develop positive alternatives to the messaging of violent extremists; engaging youth at-risk of radicalization to violence with positive alternatives; empowering women, religious leaders, and civil society more broadly as constructive CVE advocates and activists; amplifying the voices of victims and survivors of terrorism as well as returned/rehabilitated foreign terrorist fighters and other violent extremists; and supporting rehabilitation and reintegration in prisons and beyond. The Department's CVE programming funds counter-recruitment and counter-messaging efforts. For example, in Southeast Asia, we currently support a series of training workshops to share good practices, approaches, and tools for effective counter-narratives with regional governments and civil society; there is a particular thematic focus on ISIL. In the Western Balkans and Southeast Asia, we support local law enforcement engagement with at-risk communities and civil society groups to raise awareness of radicalization to violence, and design collaborative initiatives to provide positive alternatives in places where there has been some foreign terrorist fighter flow.

- **Encourage and assist top foreign terrorist fighter source and transit countries to develop comprehensive diversion and rehabilitation and reintegration programs for aspirant and returning foreign terrorist fighters, both inside and outside the prison setting.** The Department supports rehabilitation and reintegration programs, which are essential elements to assist foreign terrorist fighters in disengaging from violent behavior. We have taken a number of steps over the past several years to promote rehabilitation and reintegration programs in prisons. For instance, the Department is supporting a DOJ and UN project at high-level security prisons in East Asia that focuses on training correction officials on proper management of terrorist inmates. Since prisons can be places where radicalization to violence can occur, we are also supporting efforts to promote a full range of criminal justice sector tools that can be used in lieu of sentencing an offender to prison. For example, we are supporting a pilot diversion program aimed at potential foreign terrorist fighters and others at risk of recruitment into violent extremism and terrorism. This pilot effort seeks to address the challenges presented by youths who have come to the attention of law enforcement as a result of having come under the influence of violent extremist ideologues or terrorist recruiters.Other programs target returning foreign terrorist fighters to help them reintegrate into society and avoid becoming a source of enduring threat. To help partner countries deal with returning foreign terrorist fighters that may be outside of the criminal justice system, we are supporting an initiative being implemented by Hedayah and the International Institute for Justice and Rule of Law. This effort, launched in January 2016, is designed to assist countries develop or refine their rehabilitation and reintegration programs, strategies, policies and procedures.

SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN

In 2015, the United States continued to build a long-term partnership with Pakistan, as we believe that a stable, secure, prosperous, and democratic Pakistan is in the long-term U.S. national security interest. To support this partnership, the United States has allocated civilian and security assistance totaling more than US $9 billion since 2009. U.S. security assistance to Pakistan is designed to build Pakistan's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capacity. In addition, since 2001, the Department of Defense has reimbursed nearly US $14 billion in Coalition Support Funds for Pakistani expenditures in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Account	**FY 2013**	**FY 2014**	**FY 2015 653(a)**
Total Foreign Assistance	**1,237.1**	**853.4**	**787.8**
Economic Support Fund (ESF)	826.3	456.5	468.0
Intl. Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)	47.4	55.4	40.0
Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining (NADR)	8.4	5.6	10.0
Foreign Military Financing (FMF)	280.2	269.9	265.0
International Military Education and Training (IMET)	5.0	4.9	4.8
Food for Peace Title II (FFP)	69.9	61.1	-

*figures in millions, USD

Since the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act (commonly referred to as Kerry-Lugar-Berman, or "KLB") was enacted in October 2009, and with funding made available in annual appropriations legislation, the United States has committed more than US $5 billion in civilian assistance to Pakistan, in addition to more than US $1 billion for humanitarian assistance. The United States continued to focus on five sectors determined in consultation with the Pakistani government in 2011: energy; economic growth including agriculture, stabilization of areas vulnerable to violent extremism; education; and health. Emphasis on improving democracy, governance, and gender equity are integrated into programming across the five sectors.

Since the passage of this major authorization and annual appropriations legislation, U.S. assistance has made almost2,300 megawatts available to Pakistan's electricity grid, benefiting some 23 million Pakistanis and helped Pakistan take steps to reform the troubled sector; funded the refurbishment or construction of nearly 1,000 kilometers of roads, enabling trade, security, and mobility; trained more than 5,600 police and 1,000 prosecutors across Pakistan; provided scholarships to approximately 12,000 Pakistanis to attend Pakistani universities, 50 percent of whom were women; and supplied better access to comprehensive family planning services to more than 100,000 women.

Energy: Chronic energy shortages severely limit Pakistan's economic development. As such, energy is our top assistance priority, supporting the goal of job creation, security, and political stability in Pakistan. U.S. assistance has helped Pakistan improve governance and management systems, and increase the country's distribution companies' revenue collection by more than US $400 million in 2015, as well as provide commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses. The United States continued to fund infrastructure rehabilitation projects, especially in clean energy,

and provided technical assistance to Pakistani energy institutions, including distribution companies, to increase power generation and improve performance. The new U.S.-Pakistan Clean Energy Partnership will help the private sector add at least 3,000 megawatts of clean power generation infrastructure to Pakistan's national electricity system by 2020.

Economic Growth: Through a range of programs and public-private partnerships in agriculture and other sectors of Pakistan's economy, U.S. assistance helped Pakistan create jobs and foster economic growth. In 2014, the United States made awards for the Pakistan Private Investment Initiative, a public-private program in which U.S. capital, matched equally by private sector funding, committed to provide equity to small-and medium-sized Pakistani enterprises to provide much needed liquidity. During U.S.-Pakistan Economic Partnership Week in Islamabad in March 2015, U.S. Secretary Penny Pritzker and Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar hosted the third U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunties Conference. The U.S. Department of Commerce is providing technical assistance in the areas of trade facilitation, intellectual property reform, competition and telecommunications law, and commercial law education. The Pakistani participants attend trade shows and hear from U.S. companies and business associations about best practices and the underpinnings of U.S. success, including the free market and rule of law. The Department of Commerce also trains private sector professionals in a variety of industries, including supply chain, packaging, and gems and jewelry. To promote private investment, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) facilitated US $800 million in financing and insurance for projects in Pakistan. Trade and investment assistance was provided under the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. The United States supported implementation of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement. The United States has contributed US $15 million to the development of the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000) project, which will transmit 1,300 megawatts of electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and supports the CASA-1000 Secretariat.

Stabilization: The United States supported Pakistan's efforts to make its territory inhospitable to violent extremists by strengthening governance and civilian law enforcement capacity and promoting socioeconomic development, particularly in areas bordering Afghanistan and other targeted locations vulnerable to violent extremism. U.S. efforts included road construction, small community-based grants, police and governance training, and providing equipment to civilian law enforcement.

Education: Pakistan's ability to educate its youth is critical to its economic growth and future trajectory. U.S. education programs focused on increasing the number of students who enroll in and complete courses in primary and tertiary educational institutions; and improving the quality of that education – with a specific focus on reading – to prepare Pakistani students for the workforce. Pakistan is the recipient of the largest U.S. government-funded Fulbright Program in the world, and, since 2009, the Fulbright Program has funded more than 800 Masters and 200 PhD candidates and nearly 100 Senior Scholars from Pakistan. Through the Merit- and Needs-Based Scholarship Program and predecessor projects, the United States has funded more than 12,000 total scholarships for underprivileged students to attend university in Pakistan and financed a new dormitory for women at Forman's Christian College in Lahore. The United States funds 23 partnerships between Pakistani and U.S. universities to facilitate professional development for faculty, curriculum reform, joint research, and peer-to-peer interaction. In June 2015, USAID, in collaboration with Pakistan's Higher Education Commission, launched the

U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies, which established three centers in Pakistan through partnerships between four Pakistani and three U.S. universities in energy, water, and agriculture and food security. Under a U.S.-Pakistan Basic Education Initiative, the United States funded reading programs to improve the reading skills of 1.9 million primary grade students. The United States has also funded the rebuilding or renovation of almost 600 schools, and provided English language training to 9,400 underprivileged Pakistani teenagers countrywide.

Health: The provision of basic health services in Pakistan is inadequate for much of the population, particularly for rural populations. U.S. health programs supported the Government of Pakistan's efforts to deliver healthcare, particularly in the areas of maternal and child health. U.S. assistance was also used to support Government of Pakistan initiatives to construct health clinics and hospitals, fund the acquisition of medical materials, and provide critical family planning and reproductive health care. Since 2010, USAID has trained more than 29,000 health care workers, who served more than 3.5 million community members throughout Pakistan.

Humanitarian Assistance: Since October 2009, more than US $1 billion of emergency humanitarian assistance has been provided to Pakistan in response to floods and conflict, above and beyond bilateral assistance. During the historic floods in 2010, funding from the American people helped 10 million flood-affected citizens, who received rescue services, food, emergency shelter, cash grants, and even seeds to replant crops. During his January 2015 visit to Pakistan, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry pledged US $250 million to facilitate the return of 1.6 million Internally Displaced Persons to the FATA. The pledge consists of humanitarian aid, early recovery assistance, and post-conflict development assistance.

International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement: Pakistan took important steps to counter violent extremists operating in the areas bordering Afghanistan during 2015. These steps included intensifying support to civilian law enforcement and border security agencies. The United States directly supported Pakistan's efforts to build the capacity of its civilian law enforcement and border security agencies by providing training, equipment, infrastructure, and aviation assistance. U.S. assistance helped build capacity in law enforcement agencies responsible for holding areas cleared by Pakistan's military, protecting local populations from militant attacks, and maintaining law and order. Collectively, these efforts enhanced the counterinsurgency, law enforcement, and counter-narcotics capacities of Pakistan's civilian law enforcement and border security agencies. Improved security will, in turn, facilitate economic development, which is necessary for long-term Pakistani stability and progress.

Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR): The United States provided assistance to strengthen Pakistan's export control system to prevent transfer of WMD and related technology. NADR/Export Control and Related Border Security funds were used for nonproliferation export control training, national control list harmonization, and customs enforcement, general inspection, and WMD detection training for border control personnel. The United States also provided targeted assistance to build Pakistani law enforcement capacity to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist threats.

Foreign Military Financing (FMF): FMF promotes the development of Pakistan's long-term counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism capabilities to enable security and stability throughout the country, particularly in the conflict-affected areas bordering Afghanistan, and to improve Pakistan's ability to lead and participate in maritime security operations that support

counterterrorism aims. The United States continued to focus FMF towards seven core capabilities: precision strike; air mobility/combat search and rescue; battlefield communications; night operations; survivability and countering IEDs; border security; and maritime security.

International Military Education and Training (IMET): The IMET program supported professional military education for Pakistan's military leaders, emphasizing respect for the rule of law, human rights, and democratic values, including civilian control of the military. IMET also supported effective management of Pakistan's defense establishment through training in logistics, defense acquisition, and resource management. A significant portion of this funding supported training related to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in Pakistan. To build capacity and cooperation between our security forces, Pakistan received the largest amount of IMET of any of our global partners, at nearly US $5 million annually. Since 2009, the United States has trained more than 2,300 members of the Pakistan military.

Measures to ensure that assistance has the greatest long-term positive impact on the welfare of the Pakistani people and their ability to counter terrorism: More than a quarter of U.S. civilian assistance is implemented via Pakistani partners, including the Government of Pakistan and private sector actors, when practicable. This is done to strengthen local capacity and increase sustainability, providing the greatest possible long-term impact of U.S. assistance. Increasingly, the Administration is also implementing public-private partnerships to engage the private sector as a long-term partner in Pakistan's development.

COUNTERTERRORISM COORDINATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA

The United States and Saudi Arabia have a strong bilateral relationship. Multiple high-level visits in 2015 deepened this relationship at the personal and institutional level and provided senior officials from both countries the chance to discuss means of improving counterterrorism coordination.

During 2015, the Government of Saudi Arabia, working with the United States, continued to build and augment its capacity to counter terrorism and violent extremist ideologies, including al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Saudi Arabia continued to maintain a robust counterterrorism relationship with the United States and supported enhanced bilateral cooperation to ensure the safety of U.S. and Saudi citizens in both countries, and to enhance the security of infrastructure in Saudi Arabia critical to the global economy. Saudi Arabia continued its long-term counterterrorism strategy to track and halt the activities of terrorists and terror financiers, dismantle the presence or reconstitution of al-Qa'ida (AQ)-affiliates, impede the ability of militants to operate from or within Saudi Arabia, and to implement laws against supporting terrorist groups and travel to conflict zones. Saudi Arabia welcomed UN Security Council Resolutions 2170 and 2178, expanding existing counterterrorism programs and rhetoric to address the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, and leveraged terrorist finance provisions of its Law for Crimes of Terrorism and Terrorist Financing (CT Law) to combat funding of violent extremist groups operating throughout the region. Saudi Arabia continued to cooperate with the United States to prevent acts of terrorism both through engagement in bilateral programs and through information exchange agreements with the United States. During 2015, Saudi Arabia increased its public designations of individuals and entities for violating the Kingdom's laws criminalizing terrorist financing and support. Saudi Arabia in

April designated the Pakistan-based al-Furqan Foundation for providing financial support to groups operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including AQ, and in May and November sanctioned more than 12 individuals and entities acting on behalf of Hizballah.

Saudi Arabia sought to expand economic and civic opportunities for its people. Nearly half of the Saudi populace is under 25 years of age. The late King Abdullah promoted an economic development agenda, and Saudi Arabia has sought to address economic sources of social discontent, such as housing scarcity and the need to create jobs for millions of Saudis. During his September 2015 visit to Washington, King Salman announced a US $4 trillion investment plan to diversify the Saudi economy away from oil and provide employment to Saudi youth. In December 2015, for the first time, women were allowed to vote in and run as candidates for municipal elections.

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs continued to train and regulate imams, prohibiting them from inciting violence, and continued to monitor mosques and religious education. The King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue continued to promote tolerance and respect for diversity through its dialogue and awareness-raising programs. The Ministry of Interior continued to operate its flagship de-radicalization program (the Sakina Campaign for Dialogue). Some religious figures not directly associated with the establishment, however, reportedly made statements that promoted intolerant views.

The United States continued to support Saudi Arabia in reforms it is undertaking by facilitating Saudi nationals studying in the United States and promoting educational exchanges; encouraging increased bilateral trade and investment; urging Saudi Arabia to take actions necessary to attract job-creating partnerships with U.S. companies; and supporting programming in such areas as judicial reform and women's entrepreneurship, as well as the Ministry of Interior's well-developed extremist rehabilitation program, the Mohammed bin Naif Counseling and Care Center, to reduce recidivism among former fighters charged with crimes related to terrorism.

Throughout 2015, Saudi Arabia continued its efforts to disrupt terrorist activities in its territory by tracking, arresting, and prosecuting terrorist suspects. Neighborhood police units engaged and worked directly with community members in Saudi Arabia, encouraging citizens to provide tips and information about terrorist activity. The government offered rewards for information on terrorists, and Saudi security services made several announcements throughout the year pertaining to the arrest of hundreds of AQAP and ISIL members and supporters.

Saudi security professionals regularly participated in joint programs and information exchange agreements around the world in 2015, including in the United States and Europe. The Saudi Arabian government has continued to provide specialized training programs to combat terrorism financing for bankers, prosecutors, judges, customs officers, and other officials from government departments and agencies. In 2008, the U.S. and Saudi Arabian governments concluded a Technical Cooperation Agreement, and a year later established the joint Office of Program Management-Ministry of Interior (OPM-MOI) to implement it, institutionalizing a Saudi-funded bilateral program of technical assistance focused on the protection of critical infrastructure and the Saudi public. Through the OPM-MOI program, U.S. agencies are helping Saudi Arabia improve its ability to thwart terrorists before they act and to respond to terrorist attacks if they occur. In April 2014 and August 2015, the Saudi Arabian government participated in the U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Strategic Cooperation Forum Task Force on counterterrorism

and border security. Saudi officials have issued statements encouraging enhanced cooperation among GCC and Arab League states on counterterrorism issues, and the Saudi Arabian government has hosted international counterterrorism conferences on combating extremist ideology and countering terrorist financing. In May 2015, the Saudi government hosted the second meeting of the Counter ISIL Finance Group (CIFG).

U.S.-Saudi collaboration was not confined to bilateral issues. With political upheaval across the region throughout the year, the United States consulted closely with the Saudi government on regional stability, including in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Working both bilaterally and multilaterally through the GCC and the Arab League, the Saudi government provided leadership in promoting peaceful transitions. Saudi Arabia has cooperated regionally and internationally on counterterrorism issues as demonstrated by its participation in the Global Counterterrorism Forum. Saudi Arabia is a member of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force. As part of its strategy to promote stability throughout the region, the Saudi government increased the scope of its economic and development assistance. On the humanitarian front, Saudi Arabia pledged a US $500 million grant to the UN for Iraq humanitarian assistance in July 2014, US $60 million in Syria humanitarian assistance at the International Pledging Conference in Kuwait, and US $104 million in humanitarian assistance to the World Food Program for refugees in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Syria.

Saudi Arabia has been an important partner in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, participating in Coalition airstrikes against ISIL in Syria, and offering to host a train and equip program for the moderate Syrian opposition. In addition, Saudi Arabia has enacted tough criminal penalties for those traveling to fight in foreign conflicts and has enforced those penalties. The Government of Saudi Arabian and religious leaders have issued many public statements against ISIL. Saudi Arabia, along with Italy and the United States, co-leads the Counter-ISIL Finance Group (CIFG), which coordinates the Coalition's efforts to disrupt and dismantle ISIL's financial infrastructure.

On December 14, 2015, the Saudi government announced the formation a 34-state Islamic Counterterrorism Coalition to be headquartered in Riyadh that will focus on countering violent extremism and coordinating military efforts against all terrorist threats – including ISIL – in Muslim countries.

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS INITIATIVES: OUTREACH TO FOREIGN MUSLIM AUDIENCES

This section is provided by the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG)

Four of the five broadcast entities under the supervision of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) provided programming for countries with large Muslim populations in 2015: the Voice of America (VOA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (Alhurra TV, Radio Sawa, and Afia Darfur), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), and Radio Free Asia (RFA).

- Eighteen of RFE/RL's broadcast languages – almost two-thirds of the total – were directed to regions with majority-Muslim populations, including Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan,

Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Additional broadcasting regions in the Russian Federation included the majority Muslim populations of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and the North Caucasus.

- VOA has been particularly successful in reaching non-Arabic-speaking Muslim audiences, with strong performances in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tanzania, among other places.
- The Middle East Broadcasting Networks broadcast throughout the region to more than 340 million people.
- VOA and RFE/RL provided news and information to Afghanistan and the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region in Dari and Pashto. Together, RFE/RL and VOA reached nearly 53 percent of Afghan adults each week.
- Radio Free Asia broadcast to the more than 16 million mainly ethnic Uighur Muslims in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of northwestern China and Central Eurasia.
- The BBG, in partnership with Radio Free Asia, launched the online news operation Benar News to reach predominantly Muslim audiences in India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. These communities often lack access to accurate and balanced journalism, but at the same time are exposed to a proliferation of violent extremist narratives supporting the ideology of terrorist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Benar News counters those narratives by publishing credible domestic news, features, analysis, and commentary in multiple formats – text, video, and pictures – and in five languages – Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Malaysia, Thai, Bengali, and English. Among its inaugural coverage in 2015, Benar News launched the series "Torn Lives," which profiles people affected by the rise of ISIL and violent extremist groups.

The BBG used the latest communications technologies to avoid jamming of its signals and to reach audiences through digital and other communications tools, such as web chats and blogs.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Arabic: Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN) has seven bureaus/production centers in the region, in addition to its main studios in Virginia, and a network of regional correspondents. MBN broadcast to a population that includes an estimated 317 million Muslims or about 23 percent of the world's Muslim population. MBN takes a diverse approach to reaching the largest potential audience, using three platforms: television (Alhurra TV, Alhurra-Iraq TV), radio (Radio Sawa, Radio Sawa Iraq and Afia Darfur), and digital (Alhurra.com, RadioSawa.com and Irfasaatak.com). The networks provided a unique, local perspective of breaking news, current events, and balanced coverage on topics such as freedom of speech, religion, and the role of women in society and politics. Alhurra also produced programs encouraging freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and non-violence.

Iraq: Every week, 36 percent of Iraqi adults – some 6.3 million people – listened to or watched one of the three BBG broadcasters serving the country: Alhurra TV, Radio Sawa, and VOA Kurdish. One in three Iraqis say Alhurra-Iraq is their most important source of information. Radio Sawa Iraq is one of the top radio stations among adults. In August 2015, the resources of RFI were merged with Sawa to provide the audience extensive Iraq-specific news informational programming. VOA Kurdish reached three percent of Kurdish-speaking Iraqis weekly.

In 2015, MBN created **Raise Your Voice**, a multi-platform initiative for Iraqi audiences across television, radio, and digital, composed of five television programs, one radio program, an interactive website, and a digital team to engage audiences on "Raise Your Voice" social media properties. This initiative, entirely in Arabic, is designed as a non-sectarian platform to encourage citizens to speak out and be a part of the discussion about the fight against violent extremism.

These television programs air on Alhurra-Iraq, targeting Iraqi audiences, and the radio program is broadcast over Radio Sawa Iraq. These programs are also available to the entire region via satellite and digital distribution, through YouTube and social media properties.

Television

- **Delusional Paradise:** A 30-minute, weekly mini-documentary series composed of firsthand accounts, obtained through original interviews, of families and communities that have suffered at the hands of ISIL. The program covers families that have lost loved ones both due to ISIL recruitment and attacks, including an interview with the Jordanian pilot's family. The program was launched on Sept. 26, 2015 and airs on Alhurra, as well as Alhurra-Iraq. MBN has licensed the program to LBC, so that Delusional Paradise also airs on the popular Lebanese channel.
- **From Irbil:** Kurdistan is not well represented in the major Arabic-language satellite television networks. Launched on November 28, 2015, "From Irbil" is a weekly program in Arabic that reports from the streets of Kurdistan and will focus on the plurality of Iraq, discussing issues that are important to Kurds, Shia, and Sunni. It airs on Alhurra-Iraq, targeting Iraqi audiences, but is also available to the entire region via satellite and online.
- **Light Among Us:** A weekly mini-documentary series coming from the streets of Iraq, it will be dedicated to stories of Iraqis who have overcome challenges and obstacles to better their lives and their country despite the current crisis. The program started airing on Alhurra-Iraq November 8, 2015.

Radio

- **What's Your Opinion:** Launched in August 2015, this daily interactive program on Radio Sawa's Iraq streams during the evening drive. The program's two Iraqi hosts field calls and interact with social media throughout the program. This program features topics that tie into MBN's "Raise Your Voice" digital properties.

Digital

- ***Irfaasawtak.com*:** An interactive website, with a corresponding Facebook page, that provides a platform for essayists, reporters, and community-members to productively discuss violent extremism. The website has a weekly theme, such as "Children in Danger: How to protect children from extremist ideology" and "Reform in Arab countries: How the lack of reforms has contributed to extremism." The website posts six to seven daily articles on the topic that are either commissioned articles, selected audience posts, or pieces of MBN journalism.

VOA is providing news coverage of ISIL activities in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and the region on all platforms – radio, television, online, and social media – as well as providing information on U.S.

policies and activities to address the ISIL threat. In 2015, VOA established the Extremism Watch Desk to acquire content in eight different languages focused on ISIL and its extremist activities. That content is translated into English, video is added when available, and it is shared with VOA's 45 language services, the VOA News Center, and BBG colleagues at MBN and RFE/RL, multiplying the amount of material available for broadcast across the BBG.

Kurdish: The Kurdish Service covered counterterrorism on a daily basis by conducting interviews and increasing stringer reporting from the region, including audio and video reports from the front lines. Much of this content has been broadcast on affiliate NRT TV in northern Iraq, on the BBG FM network in northern Iraq, and on numerous radio affiliates in Iraq. VOA Kurdish has conducted many interviews with the people on the ground including Yezidi girls who were taken by ISIL and were able to escape.

Persian: VOA's Persian Service provided relevant global and regional news relating to Iran and crucial information about U.S. policy toward Iran and the region. VOA Persian delivered original television programming for six hours per day. In addition, VOA and RFE/RL's Radio Farda each produced one hour of Radio-on-TV (ROT), starting with VOA Persian's ROT Tamasha, and followed by Radio Farda's ROT "Sobhane Ba Khabar." As of June 2015, Radio Farda was also providing live, five-minute TV newscasts online and on VOA's Persian video stream at the top of the hour from 7am to 1pm Tehran time.

- VOA Persian became the first international broadcaster into Iran during the P5+1 talks to start live news updates at the top of every hour and to provide 11 hourly live five-minute news bulletins to the Iranian viewers throughout the day that resulted in increasing delivery of combined VOA Persian – Radio Farda live news content by 62 percent during a 24-hour cycle.
- VOA Persian implemented a sharp increase – by 60 percent – of live breaking news broadcasts focusing on major speeches and statements by President Obama and Secretary Kerry, key Congressional hearings, and major international events. In most cases, VOA Persian was the only broadcaster in Farsi in Iran to go live.
- VOA Persian launched "Tablet," a new, edgy weekly current affairs talk show with a youthful, energetic feeling.

RFE/RL's Radio Farda broadcast newscasts at the top of each hour, followed by reports, features, interviews, and regular segments on youth, women, culture, economics, and politics.

- Radio Farda live coverage from Vienna of the P5+1 negotiations over Iran's nuclear program served as a primary source of information for Iranians, with a record one million page views logged on July 14, 2015 – the day the deal was announced.
- Radio Farda's comprehensive human rights monitoring is unique inside Iran. It is listened to by prison inmates who rely on it for accurate reporting on their cases.
- Radio Farda's online community continued to increase. Its main Facebook page has a fan base of 1.5 million.
- Radio Farda's circumvention strategies to fight internet blockage by the Iranian regime remained successful, with nearly 286 million page views logged in 2015.

Afghan: VOA's Afghan Service and RFE/RL's Radio Free Afghanistan covered all aspects of the conflict in Afghanistan and the border region on radio, TV, and digital platforms. In addition, VOA and RFE/RL provided extensive coverage of the emergence of ISIL in eastern Afghanistan since January 2015, dispatching reporting teams to the region and collaborating with VOA's News Center. The coverage included exclusive interviews with two ISIL defectors, a profile of a counter-ISIL commander and reports on a pro-ISIL rally on a university campus that led to the arrest of several ISIL sympathizers.

- VOA's Afghan Service covered the Afghan government's peace initiatives with interviews with High Peace Council officials, former Taliban officials, and ordinary citizens as well as original reports and analysis.
- Research shows that RFE/RL's Radio Free Afghanistan is one of the most popular and trusted media outlets in Afghanistan. One of the leading news sources inside the country, its programs provided reliable information on the war on terrorism.
- Radio Azadi has covered the emergence of ISIL in Afghanistan from its beginning, and was the first media outlet in the country that reported on the threat.

Urdu: VOA Urdu reporters in Washington and stringers in five major Pakistani cities reported on terrorism-related activities and provided updates on all major developments in the target area. VOA Urdu particularly highlighted the ongoing Pakistani military operation in Pakistan's volatile tribal areas with close coordination between Islamabad, Kabul, and Washington. Another issue of focus has been Pakistan's efforts to facilitate the Afghan peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

The Pakistan/Afghanistan Border Region: VOA Deewa and RFE/RL Radio Mashaal broadcasts go directly to Pakistan-Afghanistan border regionsto cover the terrorism threat, which includes ISIL sympathizers, the Haqqani Network, AQ, and the Taliban. Broadcasting highlights included:

- The Nobel peace laureate Malala Yousafzai chose VOA Deewa to connect with girls and women in the region.
- VOA Deewa has a daily 'Radio on TV' broadcast targeted toward women called 'Bibi Shereen' (Darling Woman). Violent extremists believe it is forbidden for women to raise their voices but VOA Deewa empowers women in communities where there are violent extremists to raise their voice against violence and radical views.
- Radio Mashaal continues to offer audiences programming that is an alternative to the extremist rhetoric in the region. Mashaal launched a weekly program, *Towards Peace,* aimed at promoting dialogue and democracy as a means of conflict resolution in the tribal regions of Pakistan. The program talks to experts, tribal leaders, and other relevant stakeholders to examine ways to achieve political goals, settle disputes, and solve problems through non-violent means.

Bangla: The VOA Bangla Service continuously broadcasts the following on multimedia platforms: interviewbased reports, features, roundtable discussions, and popular call-in shows on terrorism, human rights themes, and security issues.

CENTRAL ASIA

In September 2015, RFE/RL started producing a version of its Russian-language “Current Time” video program for the Central Asian market. The show is on domestic stations in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, and provides audiences with unique video-reporting tailored to their needs.

RFE/RL launched an experimental wire service directed at Central Asia, which provides news in the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Russian languages to more than 900 subscribers, including a large number of Central Asian media professionals. This allows RFE/RL to help foster a positive, pluralistic media environment.

RFE/RL’s English-language Mejlis experts’ roundtable regularly reports on Taliban, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and ISIL terrorism throughout the region, and is among RFE/RL’s most popular online features.

Kazakhstan: RFE/RL’s Kazakh Service content was delivered via its internet website, mobile site, and social media platforms. The web strategy attracted a younger audience to this bilingual (Kazakh and Russian) site, providing opportunities for interactivity and exploring new genres such as video reporting. The Service’s reporting on Kazakh terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq was widely quoted in local Kazakh media and sparked many discussions on Kazakh language web forums.

Kyrgyzstan: RFE/RL’s Kyrgyz Service is the second most trusted radio news source in Kyrgyzstan, according to a July 2015 survey conducted by the International Republican Institute, Baltic Surveys Ltd./The Gallup Organization, SIAR Research and Consulting, and USAID. The weekly reach of the Service rose in 2015 to 36.2 percent of the population. The Kyrgyz Service's weekly television news programs – the political talk show "Inconvenient Questions" and youth-oriented "*Azattyk+*" – reach one in four Kyrgyz every week.

Tajikistan: RFE/RL’s Tajik Service served as a reliable source of news and information in Tajikistan. An international conference on combating extremism in Dushanbe was opened with a Tajik Service video report about Tajiks who had joined ISIL.

Uzbekistan: The VOA Uzbek Service’s weekly 30-minute TV feature program, daily six-minute TV News Brief and a daily 30-minute radio broadcast featured interviews with U.S. and international sources on topics including religious extremism, terrorism, and U.S.-Uzbekistan and U.S.-Central Asian relations. VOA Uzbek regularly covers the Fergana valley. The Service distributed original stories to mobile phone subscribers. Reports were also accessible on Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, SoundCloud, and Russia based Odnoklassniki, MoiMir, and VKontakte. VOA Uzbek has FM radio affiliates in Northern Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan, and a TV affiliate in Southern Kyrgyzstan and Northern Afghanistan.

Turkmenistan: RFE/RL’s Turkmen Service is the only international media company under supervision of the BBG providing regular multi-media reporting from inside the country, with original video reporting and photojournalism on such issues as homelessness, housing conditions, and travel restrictions on Turkmen citizens, while its reporting on human rights cases has brought critical attention to cases of activists and journalists imprisoned or detained.A variety

of foreign stringers, such as those of AP, Reuters, and RIA Novosti, also contribute reporting on Turkmenistan.

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

China: VOA delivers news, including religious and local issues affecting more than 23 million Chinese Muslims, to China via satellite television, radio, internet, social media, and mobile channels in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Tibetan. VOA provided extensive coverage of Chinese government policies and treatment of ethnic Uighurs and Tibetans. There were also reports about Muslim migrants traveling through Southeast Asia and their alleged involvement in terrorist activities.

- Radio Free Asia's Uighur language service broadcast two hours daily, seven days a week, and was the only international radio service providing impartial news and information in the Uighur language to the potential audience of more than 16 million Uighur Muslims in northwestern China and Central Eurasia. Consistent with RFA's mandate, the Uighur service acted as a substitute for indigenous media reporting on local events in the region. Its programs included breaking news, analysis, interviews, commentary, a weekly news review, and feature stories. RFA's Uighur service first reported on a knife attack at a coal mine that left dozens dead in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. RFA's reports were cited by global media outlets and human rights groups worldwide including CNN, *The New York Times, Washington Post,* BBC, *Le Obs,* Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch.
- RFA Uighur also closely covered the arrest and trial of Uighur economics scholar Ilham Tohti, who was sentenced to life in prison for his blogging activity. Tohti was considered a moderate Uighur voice. RFA interviewed Tohti's colleagues, friends, and family.

Indonesia: About 89 percent of Indonesians are Muslim making it the country with the single largest Muslim population. VOA Indonesian's weekly audience reach stands at more than 33 million people or 18.9 percent of the adult population as last measured in 2015. The VOA Indonesian Service routinely covered all terrorist developments in Indonesia and the Indonesian government's and civil society's response. The Indonesian Service also reported to Indonesia on ISIL and violent extremism developments in the Middle East as well as the U.S. and world response.

Thailand: VOA's Thai Service has 11 affiliate radio stations in southern Thailand. VOA Thai broadcast news and information eight hours and 30 minutes per week to all of its affiliates; it also produced a weekly video report for placement with TV networks in Thailand. The programs emphasized the U.S.-Thailand relationship, religious and cultural diversity, and education. VOA Thai broadcasts via six radio affiliates to the three southern provinces and also Songkhla, an adjacent province.

Burma: VOA's Burmese Service closely monitored and reported on relations between the Buddhist and Muslim communities in Burma, particularly in Arakan State, while reporting on events and ways to promote mutual trust, tolerance, and understanding. VOA weekly call-in discussion programs provided effective fora to discuss national elections and sensitive issues and to stimulate further dialogue. VOA Burmese broadcast daily radio and television programs via domestic affiliates and via satellite and with popular web and mobile sites. The VOA Burmese

Bureau in Yangon participated in local, ethnic media seminars to discuss professional journalism standards and to identify and counter hate messages.

- RFA's Burma Service closely covered the ongoing plight of Burma's minority Muslim Rohingyas, who have often had to bear the brunt of anti-Muslim communal violence and have been forced in many cases to live as refugees.
- The service also continued to cover the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Burmese government's policies in Rakhine state.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

The Russian Federation and Ukraine: In 2015 the BBG expanded "Current Time," its daily 30-minute Russian-language television news program, jointly produced by VOA and RFE/RL. Airing in nine countries via 25 media outlets and available to digital audiences worldwide, weekend editions of the program were launched. A version of "Current Time" produced for the Central Asian market aired in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. In support of the "Current Time" brand, RFE/RL launched a social media-driven digital reporting and engagement service (DIGIM), tasked with disseminating and producing innovative cross-platform digital content and engaging with Russian-language audiences on social media.

VOA's Russian and Ukrainian Services regularly addressed terrorism-related issues and threats in the United States, Europe, and other key areas of interest to the target audience. Journalist Fatima Tlisova provided VOA Russian with enterprise reporting related to the trial of Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, which began in March 2015. The Service also provided extensive coverage of ISIL's growing influence in the North Caucasus and Russia's military intervention in Syria.

Tatarstan/Bashkortostan: The Tatar and Bashkir communities are the two largest Muslim communities in Russia. RFE/RL's Tatar/Bashkir Service was the only major international media producing content in the Tatar and Bashkir languages and provided listeners with objective news and analysis on issues such as Russia's policy toward ethnic and religious minorities, centralization, corruption, the role of Islam in predominantly Muslim regions, and gender issues. The Service's webpage, the most technologically advanced state-of-the-art web source in Tatar, remained a virtual meeting place for people to discuss these and other issues.

North Caucasus: Broadcasting in the Avar, Chechen, and Circassian languages, RFE/RL's North Caucasus Service reported the news in a region where media freedom and journalists remained under severe threat.

Turkey: The VOA Turkish Service produced 2.5 hours of original television content per week, and had a strong presence in Turkey on TV and on the internet. Content was distributed nationwide via affiliate TGRT Haber TV and online on affiliate Mynet. Turkish stringers in Ankara and Istanbul have been covering Turkey's security operations against suspected ISIL militants and recruiters inside Turkey. Stringers in Berlin, Paris, Brussels ,and Syria covered ISIL-related stories as well. Coverage of Turkey-Syria-U.S.-ISIL issues and interviews were often picked up by many Turkish media outlets with full attribution to VOA Turkish.

The Balkans: VOA's Balkan Services provided extensive coverage of the rise of violent extremism in the region's countries with sizeable Muslim populations – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia. More than 4.7 million adults weekly consumed VOA content across broadcast and digital platforms throughout the Balkans. VOA coverage highlighted the threats posed by international terrorist networks that recruit foreign terrorist fighters for ISIL and for al-Qa'ida and its affiliates. VOA's Balkan Services also focused on U.S.-sustained efforts to work with western Balkans nations to confront the terrorists and reduce their capacity to recruit in the region.

RFE/RL's Balkan Service is the only inclusive source of news in a region where genuine media freedom remains elusive and many outlets reflect ethnic divisions. The Service provided comprehensive coverage of the worsening refugee crisis situation, as tens of thousands fleeing Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, made their way through Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia in the hopes of reaching Germany.

Azerbaijan: VOA's Azerbaijani Service delivered daily TV and web programming focused on the country's political dynamics. Due to its aggressive social media campaign, VOA Azerbaijani's multimedia content now receives half a million views per month on Facebook. VOA Azerbaijani remained a leading authoritative source of news regarding the large Azeri population in northern Iran.

Despite the December 2014 raid by Azerbaijani authorities on RFE/RL's Baku bureau, which led to the bureau's formal closure in May 2015, the Azerbaijani Service has continued to provide vital coverage of under-reported events in the country. The Service's "Korrupsiometr" web portal features the latest laws and regulations, along with Azerbaijani lawyers responding to audience questions.

AFRICA

Hausa: VOA's Hausa Service continued to provide comprehensive, multimedia coverage of Boko Haram's terrorist activities in Northern Nigeria and neighboring countries through its daily news programming, interactive call-in shows, and audio streaming and postings on its website.

- The Service also launched its first television program in September 2015. The new half-hour weekly magazine show, "Taskar," combines original reporting from across the United States and from Hausa Service reporters not only in Nigeria, but also in Niger and Cameroon.

Somali: VOA Somali continues to cover an area heavily affected by terrorism and violent extremism. Somalia has seen relentless attacks by the terrorist group al-Shabaab. VOA Somali regularly interviewed Somali government officials, Islamic scholars, and independent experts to give perspectives and context on the terrorist threat.

- In April 2015, VOA Somali interviewed a former high-level al-Shabaab intelligence official who had surrendered to the Federal Government of Somalia in the months prior. His interview provided an insider's view of al-Shabaab's foreign terrorist fighter recruitment, relationship with al-Qa'ida affiliates, and prospects of aligning with ISIL.

- In November 2015, VOA Somali launched a daily youth show called "Today's Youth" that gives the latest updates on music, technology, and news, about employment and arts to youth who have been affected by years of war.
- In addition, VOA Somali's weekly "Islamic Affairs" show, which focuses on major issues affecting Muslims, continued to attract lots of interest among the listeners. In one program, Islamic scholars discussed the causes of violent extremism among youth.

Swahili: VOA's Swahili Service broadcast to large Muslim populations in Tanzania and Kenya, and smaller Muslim communities in Uganda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since 2014, the Service has increased its efforts to reach the Muslim communities in Kenya's Indian Ocean coastline, where the city of Mombasa was rocked by several terrorist attacks. To improve its coverage in the area, VOA Swahili is opening a reporting center in Mombasa. In 2015, Swahili service programming on the security situation in the city has played a significant role in initiating a conversation in Mombasa exploring how older people, religious leaders, and matriarchal leaders can reclaim the moral authority they used to enjoy before vocal radical voices silenced them in recent years.

French to Africa: VOA's French-to-Africa Service broadcast to Muslims throughout Francophone Africa. Via FM transmitters in Bamako, Niamey, Abidjan, and Ouagadougou, VOA provided extensive coverage of the peace process in Mali. VOA also provided reports about terrorist attacks in Mali and in Paris. In 2015, VOA continued to broadcast to the entire region in French and to Mali in Bambara, the most widely spoken local language of Mali. The service also reaches Muslims through Sahel Plus, a 25-minute weekly French program with news and features about issues of common concern to people in the Sahel region. French-to-Africa's weekly program *Dialogue des Religions* also offered discussions with Muslim scholars and experts on a variety of topics, including Islam.

ENGLISH

On September 10, VOA English joined with VOA CentralNews to produce a 90-minute Radio/TV/Web simulcast around President Obama's speech on ISIL, complete with analysis and Congressional reaction.

VOA English provided extensive, timely and in-depth coverage on conflicts in the Middle East and parts of Africa to a global audience on multimedia platforms, and special reports to affiliate stations.

- In October 2015, VOA Englishand theNewseum Institute coproduced a television special that took an in-depth look at ISIL and its use of propaganda. *ISIL and the Digital War* featured analysts Michael Weiss and Lorenzo Vidino.
- VOA English current affairs program *Press Conference, USA* interviewed U.S. Representative Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.
- In 2015, VOA English provided in-depth analysis and perspective on the war in Syria with newsmakers, such as former U.S. Ambassador to Syria Edward Djerejian and Mideast and strategic analyst Anthony Cordesman.

Chapter 6
Foreign Terrorist Organizations

Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designations are an important element of our counterterrorism efforts. Designations of foreign terrorist groups expose and isolate these organizations, deny them access to the U.S. financial system, and create significant criminal and immigration consequences for their members and supporters. Moreover, designations can assist or complement the law enforcement actions of other U.S. agencies and other governments.

On September 30, 2015 the following FTO was designated by the Department of State: Jaysh Rijal Al-Tariq Al-Naqshabandi. In 2015, the Department of State also revoked the designations of the Revolutionary Organization 17 November on September 3 and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group on December 9.

Legal Criteria for Designation under Section 219 of the INA as amended:

1. It must be a *foreign organization.*

2. The organization must *engage in terrorist activity*, as defined in section 212 (a)(3)(B) of the INA (8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(3)(B)), or *terrorism*, as defined in section 140(d)(2) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. § 2656f(d)(2)), *or retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism.*

3. The organization's terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (national defense, foreign relations, or the economic interests) of the United States.

U.S. Government Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations

Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)
Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)
Ansar al-Dine (AAD)
Ansar al-Islam (AAI)
Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi (AAS-B)
Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah (AAS-D)
Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia (AAS-T)
Army of Islam (AOI)
Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)
Aum Shinrikyo (AUM)
Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)
Boko Haram (BH)
Communist Party of Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA)
Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)
Gama'a al-Islamiyya (IG)
Hamas

Haqqani Network (HQN)
Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)
Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)
Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HUM)
Hizballah
Indian Mujahedeen (IM)
Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)
ISIL Sinai Province (ISIL-SP)
Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis-Sudan (Ansaru)
Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)
Jaysh Rijal Al-Tariq Al-Naqshabandi (JRTN)
Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT)
Jemaah Islamiya (JI)
Jundallah
Kahane Chai
Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)
Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT)
Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)
Al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)
National Liberation Army (ELN)
Al-Nusrah Front (ANF)
Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)
Palestine Liberation Front – Abu Abbas Faction (PLF)
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC)
Al-Qa'ida (AQ)
Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
Real IRA (RIRA)
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)
Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)
Revolutionary Struggle (RS)
Al-Shabaab (AS)
Shining Path (SL)
Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

ABDALLAH AZZAM BRIGADES

akaAbdullah Azzam Brigades; Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades; Yusuf al-'Uyayri Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on May 30, 2012, the Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB) formally announced its establishment in a July 2009 video statement

claiming responsibility for a February 2009 rocket attack against Israel. The group is divided into two branches: the Arabian Peninsula-based Yusuf al-'Uyayri Battalions of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades – named after Yusef al-'Uyayri – and the Lebanon-based Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades, named after Lebanese citizen Ziad al Jarrah, one of the planners of the September 11 attacks on the United States.

Activities: After its initial formation, AAB relied primarily on rocket attacks against Israeli civilians. It is responsible for numerous rocket attacks fired into Israeli territory from Lebanon targeting – among other things – population centers,including Nahariya and Ashkelon.

In November 2013, AAB began targeting Hizballah. AAB claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing outside the Iranian Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, which killed 23 people and wounded more than 140, and warned it would carry out more attacks if Hizballah did not stop sending fighters to Syria in support of Syrian government forces.

In February 2014, AAB again attacked Hizballah for its involvement in the Syrian conflict, claiming a twin suicide bomb attack against the Iranian cultural center in Beirut, which killed four people. AAB was also believed to be responsible for a series of bombings in Hizballah-controlled areas around Beirut. In June 2014, AAB was believed to have targeted Lebanese General Security head Major General Abbas Ibrahim in a suicide bombing at a police checkpoint on the Beirut-Damascus highway; Ibrahim narrowly escaped. AAB has also been blamed for a suicide bombing in June 2014 in the Beirut neighborhood of Tayyouneh, which killed a security officer and wounded 25 people.

In February 2015, Lebanon's military court charged four AAB suspects for their involvement in the June 2014 suicide bombings. During 2015, AAB also continued its involvement in the Syrian conflict. In June 2015, the group released photos of a training camp for its "Marwan Hadid Brigade" camp in Syria, likely located in Homs province.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: AAB is based in Lebanon but operates in both Lebanon and Syria.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION

aka ANO; Arab Revolutionary Brigades; Arab Revolutionary Council; Black September; Fatah Revolutionary Council; Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Muslims

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) was founded by Sabri al-Banna (aka Abu Nidal), after splitting from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1974. In August 2002, Abu Nidal died in Baghdad. Leadership of the organization after Nadal's death remains unclear. ANO advocates the elimination of Israel and has sought to derail diplomatic efforts in support of the Middle East peace process.

Activities: The ANO has carried out terrorist attacks in 20 countries—killing or injuring almost 900 people. It has not staged a major attack against Western targets since the late 1980s and was expelled from its safe haven in Libya in 1999. Major attacks include those on the Rome and Vienna airports in 1985, the 1986 attack on the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul, the hijacking of Pan Am Flight 73 in Karachi in 1986, and the 1988 attack on the City of Poros day-excursion ship in Greece. The ANO was suspected of assassinating PLO Deputy Chief Abu Iyad and PLO Security Chief Abu Hul in Tunis in 1991, and a senior Jordanian diplomat in Beirut in 1994. In 2008, a Jordanian official apprehended an ANO member planning to carry out attacks in Jordan. There were no known ANO attacks in 2014 or 2015.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: ANO associates may still exist in Lebanon, though they are likely inactive.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

ABU SAYYAF GROUP

akaal Harakat al Islamiyya (the Islamic Movement)

Description: The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. ASG is the most violent terrorist group operating in the Philippines and claims to promote an independent Islamic state in western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. The group split from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the early 1990s.

Activities: ASG has committed kidnappings for ransom, bombings,ambushes of security personnel, public beheadings, assassinations, and extortion. In April 2000, an ASG faction kidnapped 21 people, including 10 Western tourists, from a resort in Malaysia. In May 2001, the group kidnapped three U.S. citizens and 17 Philippine citizens from a tourist resort in Palawan, Philippines; several hostages were murdered, including U.S. citizen Guillermo Sobero. A hostage rescue operation in June 2002 freed U.S. hostage Gracia Burnham; her husband, U.S. national Martin Burnham was killed. In October 2002, Philippine and U.S. authorities blamed ASG for a bombing near a military base in Zamboanga that killed an American soldier, and in February 2004, ASG bombed SuperFerry 14 in Manila Bay, killing 116 people. On July 28, 2014, ASG militants with assault rifles opened fire on civilians celebrating the end of Ramadan, killing at least 21 people – including six children and at least four members of a Talipao security force – and wounding 11 others. In a July 2014 video, senior ASG leader Isnilon Hapilon, also an FBI most-wanted terrorist, swore allegiance to ISIL and ISIL's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

ASG continued to remain active throughout 2015. On January 30, one soldier was killed and four were injured in a clash with ASG in Sulu. A day later, ASG ambushed a convoy of Philippine soldiers, wounding five. In February, a 73-year-old Korean businessman was freed by the ASG in Lanao del Sur after 10 days in captivity. On May 15, ASG abducted two civilians at a resort in Sandakan. One hostage was released after six months; a Malaysian hostage, however, was beheaded after ransom demands were not met. Also in May, ASG abducted two Philippine Coast Guard personnel and a city official in Aliguay Island, a tourist destination near Dapitan City; the city official was beheaded. On September 21, ASG was blamed for the armed

abduction of two Canadians, a Norwegian, and a Philippine woman from the Holiday Oceanview Samal Resort on Samal Island. ASG set the ransom at $60 million. In December, a Philippine military clash against 100 ASG fighters in Patikul left one solider dead and four wounded, and killed eight ASG members.

Strength: ASG is estimated to have 400 members.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily in the Philippine provinces of the Sulu Archipelago – namely Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi – and on the Zamboanga Peninsula.The group also conducted cross-border operations into eastern Malaysia.

Funding and External Aid:ASG is funded through kidnapping for ransom operations and extortion, and may receive funding from external sources including remittances from supportive overseas Philippine workers and Middle East-based sympathizers. In the past, ASG has also received assistance from regional terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiya (JI), whose operatives have provided training to ASG members and have helped facilitate several ASG terrorist attacks.

AL-AQSA MARTYRS BRIGADE

akaal-Aqsa Martyrs Battalion

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 27, 2002, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB) is composed of small cells of Fatah-affiliated activists that emerged at the outset of the al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000. AAMB strives to drive the Israeli military and West Bank settlers from the West Bank in order to establish a Palestinian state loyal to the Fatah.

Activities: AAMB employed primarily small-arms attacks against Israeli military personnel and settlers as the intifada spread in 2000, but by 2002 turned increasingly to attacks against Israeli civilians inside Israel. In January 2002, the group claimed responsibility for the first female suicide bombing in Israel. In 2010 and 2011, AAMB launched numerous rocket attacks on communities in Israel, including the city of Sederot and areas of the Negev desert. In November 2012, two men recruited by AAMB were arrested in connection with the stabbing of a student in Beersheba, Israel. That same year, AAMB claimed it had fired more than 500 rockets and missiles into Israel during Operation Pillar of Defense, the week-long Israeli Defense Force operation in Gaza.

In February 2015, AAMB declared an open war against Israel. In a TV broadcast in June 2015, AAMB asked Iran for funds to help the group in its fight against Israel. In the same broadcast, an AAMB fighter displayed a new two-mile tunnel crossing the border beneathGaza and Israel, which the leader claimed would be used in the next rounds of battle. In October 2015, the group announced it had developed a new rocket, the K60, with a 40-mile firing range.

In addition to threatening and preparing for future attacks, AAMB continued attacking Israeli soldiers and civilians. In November 2015, the group claimed responsibility for a series of shootings against Israeli soldiers and civilians, including the October fatal shooting of husband and wife, Rabbi Eitam and Na'ama Henkin, in front of their four children.

Strength: Estimated at a few hundred members.

Location/Area of Operation: Most of AAMB's operational activity is in Gaza but it has also planned and conducted attacks inside Israel and the West Bank. AAMB also has members in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Funding and External Aid: Iran has exploited AAMB's lack of resources and formal leadership by providing funds and guidance, mostly through Hizballah facilitators.

ANSAR AL-DINE

akaAnsar Dine; Ansar al-Din; Ancar Dine; Ansar ul-Din; Ansar Eddine; Defenders of the Faith

Description: Ansar al-Dine (AAD) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 22, 2013. Operating in Mali, AAD was created in late 2011 after AAD's leader, Iyad ag Ghali, failed in an attempt to take over another secular Tuareg organization. Following the March 2012 coup that toppled the Malian government, AAD was among the organizations (including al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb [AQIM] and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa) to take over northern Mali, destroy UNESCO World Heritage sites, and enforce a severe interpretation of Sharia law upon the civilian population living in the areas it controlled.

Beginning in January 2013, French and allied African forces conducted operations in northern Mali to counter AAD and other violent extremist groups, eventually forcing AAD and its allies out of the population centers they had seized. Ghali, however, remained free, and in October 2015 appeared in an AAD video threatening to attack France.

Activities:AAD received backing from AQIM in its fight against the Government of Mali – most notably in the capture of the Malian towns of Agulhok, Gao, Kidal, Tessalit, and Timbuktu, between January and April 2012. In March 2012, Tuareg rebels, reportedly including AAD, executed 82 Malian soldiers and kidnapped 30 others in an attack against the town of Aguelhok. Before the French intervention in January 2013, Malian citizens in towns under AAD's control who did not comply with AAD's laws, reportedly faced harassment, torture, and execution.

AAD was severely weakened by the 2013 French intervention in Mali, but increased the pace of its attacks in 2015. In June, AAD claimed responsibility for attacks in Nara, Misseni, and Fakola, Mali, which killed 12 people and damaged public buildings. In November, AAD was one of the terrorist groups to claim participation in an attack – likely planned by al-Mulathamun Battalion (aka al-Murabitoun) – against the Radisson Hotel in Bamako, Mali that killed 20 people. That same month, AAD claimed responsibility for an attack against a UN base in Kidal, which killed three people, including two Guinean UN peacekeepers. In December, AAD carried out a series of attacks against French and Malian interests, including an IED attack targeting Chadian and French military vehicles in Tessalit, Mali.

Strength: The group's exact membership numbers were unknown at the end of 2015.

Location/Area of Operation: Mali. In 2015, AAD also threatened to attack Mauritania and the Ivory Coast.

Funding and External Aid: AAD cooperates closely with and has received support from AQIM since its inception. AAD is also said to receive funds from foreign donors and through smuggling.

ANSAR AL-ISLAM

akaAnsar al-Sunna; Ansar al-Sunna Army; Devotees of Islam; Followers of Islam in Kurdistan; Helpers of Islam; Jaish Ansar al-Sunna; Jund al-Islam; Kurdish Taliban; Kurdistan Supporters of Islam; Partisans of Islam; Soldiers of God; Soldiers of Islam; Supporters of Islam in Kurdistan

Description: Ansar al-Islam (AAI) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 22, 2004. AAI was established in 2001 in Iraqi Kurdistan with the merger of two Kurdish violent extremist factions that traced their roots to the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan. On May 4, 2010, AAI's leader Abu Abdullah al-Shafi'i was captured by U.S. forces in Baghdad and remains in prison. On December 15, 2011, AAI announced a new leader: Abu Hashim Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman al Ibrahim. AAI seeks to expel western interests from Iraq and establish an independent Iraqi state based on its interpretation of Sharia law.

In March 2012, a Norwegian court convicted Iraqi citizen and AAI founder Mullah Krekar (aka Najmuddin Faraj Ahmad)of issuing threats and inciting terrorism, and sentenced him to six years in prison. Living in Norway on a long-term resident permit,Krekar appealed, and in December 2012, an appeals court affirmed his convictions for issuing threats and intimidating witnesses, but reversed his conviction for inciting terrorism. The appeals court reduced his prison sentence to two years and 10 months. He was released from prison in late January 2015, but was arrested again shortly after for praising the January 2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in a TV interview.

Activities:AAI has conducted attacks against a wide range of targets including Iraqi government and security forces, as well as U.S. and Coalition Forces. AAI has conducted numerous kidnappings, executions, and assassinations of Iraqi citizens and politicians. The group has either claimed responsibility or is believed to be responsible for attacks in 2011 that resulted in 24 deaths and wounded 147. In 2012, the group claimed responsibility for the bombing of the Sons of Martyrs School in Damascus, which was occupied by Syrian security forces and pro-government militias; seven people were wounded in the attack. In 2014, AAI claimed responsibility for attacks near Kirkuk, Tikrit, and Mosul, Iraq; primarily directed against Iraqi police and security forces and, in one instance, an oil field.

During summer 2014, part of AAI issued a statement pledging allegiance to ISIL. In 2015, however, reports suggested that a faction of AAI in Syria continued to oppose ISIL. In June 2015, for example, AAI urged factions in Aleppo to confront ISIL militarily and religiously.

Strength: Precise numbers are unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily northern Iraq, but also maintains a presence in western and central Iraq. AAI expanded its operations into Syria in 2011.

Funding and External Aid: AAI receives assistance from a loose network of associates in Europe and the Middle East.

ANSAR AL-SHARI'A IN BENGHAZI

akaAnsar al-Sharia in Libya; Ansar al-Shariah Brigade; Ansar al-Shari'a Brigade; Katibat Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi; Ansar al-Shariah-Benghazi; Al-Raya Establishment for Media Production; Ansar al-Sharia; Soldiers of the Sharia; Ansar al-Shariah; Supporters of Islamic Law

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on January 13, 2014, Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi (AAS-B) was created after the 2011 fall of the Qadhafi regime in Libya. It has been involved in terrorist attacks against civilian targets, and assassinations and attempted assassinations of security officials and political actors in eastern Libya.

Activities: Members of AAS-B were involved in the September 11, 2012 attacks against the U.S. Special Mission and Annex in Benghazi, Libya. Four American citizens were killed in the attack: Glen Doherty, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, J. Christopher Stevens.

In 2013 and 2014, AAS-B is believed to have cooperated with Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah in multiple attacks and suicide bombings targeting Libyan security forces in Benghazi. Throughout 2015, AAS-B was involved in clashes in Benghazi that resulted in the deaths of both Libyan security forces and civilians.

In addition to its attacks, AAS-B controls several terrorist training camps in Libya, and has trained members of other terrorist organizations, some of which operate in Syria, Iraq, and Mali. At least 12 of the 28 individuals involved in the January 2013 al-Mulathamun Battalion (aka al-Murabitoun) attack led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar against the Tiguentourine gas facility near In Amenas, Algeria, were trained in AAS-B camps.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Benghazi, Libya

Funding and External Aid: In the past,AAS-B has obtained funds from AQIM, charities, donations, and criminal activities.

ANSAR AL-SHARI'A IN DARNAH

akaSupporters of Islamic Law; Ansar al-Sharia in Derna; Ansar al-Sharia in Libya; Ansar al-Sharia; Ansar al-Sharia Brigade in Darnah

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on January 13, 2014, Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah (AAS-D) was created after the 2011 fall of the Qadhafi regime in Libya. It has been involved in terrorist attacks against civilian targets, and assassinations and attempted assassinations of security officials and political actors in eastern Libya.

Activities: Members of AAS-D were involved in the September 11, 2012 attacks against the U.S. Special Mission and Annex in Benghazi, Libya. Four American citizens were killed in the

attack: Glen Doherty, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, J. Christopher Stevens.

In 2013 and 2014, AAS-D is believed to have cooperated with Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi in multiple attacks and suicide bombings targeting Libyan security forces in Benghazi. In 2015, AAS-D continued its involvement in fighting in and around Darnah.

In addition to its attacks, AAS-D maintains several terrorist training camps in Darnah and Jebel Akhdar, Libya, and has trained members of other terrorist organizations operating in Syria and Iraq.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Darnah, Libya

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

ANSAR AL-SHARI'A IN TUNISIA

akaAl-Qayrawan Media Foundation; Supporters of Islamic Law; Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia; Ansar al-Shari'ah; Ansar al-Shari'ah in Tunisia; Ansar al-Sharia

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on January 13, 2014, Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia (AAS-T) was founded by Specially Designated Global Terrorist Seif Allah Ben Hassine in early 2011. AAS-T has been implicated in attacks against Tunisian security forces, assassinations of Tunisian political figures, and attempted suicide bombings of locations frequented by tourists. AAS-T has also recruited youth in Tunisia for fighting in Syria.

Activities: AAS-T was involved in the September 14, 2012 attack against the U.S. Embassy and American school in Tunis, which threatened the safety of more than 100 U.S. employees in the Embassy. In February and July 2013, AAS-T members were implicated in the assassination of Tunisian politicians, Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi. In October 2013, a bomber associated with AAS-T blew himself up outside a hotel in Sousse, Tunisia, resulting in no other fatalities. On the same day, police prevented a suicide bombing in Monastir, Tunisia, when they arrested a would-be bomber at the Tomb of Habib Bourguiba.

In 2015, Tunisian authorities continued to confront and arrest AAS-T members. [For further information on Tunisia's counterterrorism efforts, see Chapter 2, Country Reports.]

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Tunisia and Libya

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

ARMY OF ISLAM

aka Jaysh al-Islam; Jaish al-Islam

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on May 19, 2011, the Army of Islam (AOI), founded in late 2015, is a Gaza-based terrorist organization that is responsible for numerous terrorist acts against the Governments of Israel and Egypt, as well as British, New Zealand, and U.S. citizens. Led by Mumtaz Dughmush, AOI primarily operates in Gaza. AOI subscribes to a violent extremist Salafist ideology.

Activities: AOI's terrorist activity includes a number of rocket attacks on Israel, the 2006 kidnapping of two journalists in Gaza (an American and a New Zealander), and the 2007 kidnapping of a British citizen in Gaza. AOI is also responsible for early 2009 attacks on Egyptian civilians in Cairo and Heliopolis, Egypt, and for planning the January 1, 2011 attack on a Coptic Christian church in Alexandria that killed 25 and wounded 100. On July 28, 2012, AOI released a statement that its member Nidal al 'Ashi was killed fighting in Syria and in November 2012 announced that it had carried out rocket attacks on Israel in a joint operation with the Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC). In August 2013, an Israeli official reported that AOI leader Dughmush was running training camps in Gaza. In August 2014, Israeli forces reportedly intercepted and killed several AOI fighters allegedly planning to attack Israel. In September 2015, AOI reportedly released a statement pledging allegiance to ISIL. In the short post attributed to the group, AOI declared itself an inseparable part of the Sinai Province, the ISIL-branch in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

Strength: Membership is estimated in the low hundreds.

Location/Area of Operation: Gaza, Egypt, and Israel.

Funding and External Aid: AOI receives much of its funding from a variety of criminal activities in Gaza.

ASBAT AL-ANSAR

akaAAA; Band of Helpers; Band of Partisans; League of Partisans; League of the Followers; God's Partisans; Gathering of Supporters; Partisan's League; Esbat al-Ansar; Isbat al-Ansar; Osbat al-Ansar; Usbat al-Ansar; Usbat ul-Ansar

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 27, 2002, Asbat al-Ansar (AAA) is a Lebanon-based violent Sunni extremist group composed primarily of Palestinians with links to al-Qa'ida (AQ) and other Sunni violent extremist groups. The group's stated goals include thwarting perceived anti-Islamic and pro-Western influences in the country. The group remains largely confined to Lebanon's refugee camps.

Activities: AAA first emerged in the early 1990s. In the mid-1990s, the group assassinated Lebanese religious leaders and bombed nightclubs, theaters, and liquor stores. The group has also plotted against foreign diplomatic targets. In October 2004, AAA member Mahir al-Sa'di was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for his 2000 plot to assassinate then-U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon David Satterfield. Between 2005 and 2011, AAA members traveled to Iraq to fight Coalition Forces. AAA has been reluctant to involve itself in operations in Lebanon

due in part to concerns of losing its safe haven in the Ain al-Hilwah refugee camp. AAA did not publicly claim any attacks in 2015.

Strength: The group has at least 650 members.

Location/Area of Operation: The group's primary base of operations is the Ain al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon in southern Lebanon.

Funding and External Aid: It is likely that the group receives money through international Sunni extremist networks.

AUM SHINRIKYO

akaA.I.C. Comprehensive Research Institute; A.I.C. Sogo Kenkyusho; Aleph; Aum Supreme Truth

Description: Aum Shinrikyo (AUM) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. Jailed leader Shoko Asahara established AUM in 1987, and the organization received legal status in Japan as a religious entity in 1989. The Japanese government revoked its recognition of AUM as a religious organization following AUM's deadly 1995 sarin gas attack in Tokyo. Despite claims it has renounced violence and Asahara's teachings, members of AUM continue to adhere to the violent and apocalyptic teachings of its founder.

Activities: In March 1995, AUM members simultaneously released the chemical nerve agent sarin on several Tokyo subway trains, killing 13 and causing up to 6,000 people to seek medical treatment. Subsequent investigations by the Japanese government revealed the group was responsible for other mysterious chemical incidents in Japan in 1994, including a sarin gas attack on a residential neighborhood in Matsumoto that killed seven and injured approximately 500. Japanese police arrested Asahara in May 1995; in February 2004, authorities sentenced him to death for his role in the 1995 attacks, but have yet to carry out the sentence. In 2010 and 2011, several death sentences for other AUM senior members were finalized or affirmed by Japanese courts. In 2012, the final three AUM fugitives were arrested after 17 years on the run. In April 2015, the Tokyo District Court sentenced former AUM sect leader Katsuya Takahashi to life in prison for his involvement in the 1995 Tokyo subway bombing and three other attacks carried out by the group in the 1990s.

Since 1997, the group has split into two factions, both of which have recruited new members, engaged in commercial enterprises, and acquired property. In July 2000, Russian authorities arrested a group of Russian AUM followers who planned to detonate bombs in Japan as part of an operation to free Asahara from jail and smuggle him to Russia. In August 2012, a Japan Airlines flight to the United States turned back after receiving a bomb threat demanding the release of Asahara.

Although AUM has not conducted a terrorist attack since 1995, concerns remain regarding its continued adherence to the violent teachings of Asahara. In October 2015, local Russian authorities uncovered an AUM cell operating in central Moscow.

Strength: As of December 2014, AUM membership in Japan was approximately 1,650 with another 160 in Russia. As of November 2015, the group's numbers were unchanged in Japan. AUM continues to maintain at least 32 facilities in 15 prefectures in Japan and continues to possess several facilities in Russia.

Location/Area of Operation: AUM's principal membership is located in Japan; a residual branch of followers live in Russia.

Funding and External Aid: Funding primarily comes from member contributions and group-run businesses.

BASQUE FATHERLAND AND LIBERTY

aka ETA; Askatasuna; Batasuna; Ekin; Euskal Herritarrok; Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna; Herri Batasuna; Jarrai-Haika-Segi; K.A.S.; XAKI

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) was founded in 1959 with the aim of establishing an independent homeland based on Marxist principles in the Spanish Basque provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, and Alava; the autonomous region of Navarre; and the southwestern French territories of Labourd, Lower-Navarre, and Soule.

Activities: ETA has primarily conducted bombings and assassinations. Targets typically include Spanish government officials, businessmen, politicians, judicial figures, and security and military forces; however, the group has also targeted journalists and major tourist areas. ETA is responsible for killing 829 civilians and members of the armed forces and police, and injuring thousands since it formally began its campaign of violence in 1968.

ETA has committed numerous attacks in the last four decades, including the February 2005 car bombing in Madrid that wounded more than 20 people at a convention center where Spanish King Juan Carlos and then-Mexican President Vicente Fox were scheduled to appear. In December 2006, ETA exploded a massive car bomb destroying much of the covered parking garage at Madrid's Barajas International Airport. ETA marked its fiftieth anniversary in 2009 with a series of high profile and deadly bombings, including the July 2009 attack on a Civil Guard Barracks that injured more than 60 men, women, and children.

ETA has not launched any attacks since it announced a "definitive cessation of armed activity" in October 2011. The group, however, had not formally disbanded or given up its weapons arsenal by the end of 2015.

Strength: Since 2004, more than 902 ETA militants have been arrested both in Spain and abroad. It is unknown how many ETA members are still free, but the number is likely to be approximately 10.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily in the Basque autonomous regions of northern Spain southwestern France, and Madrid. The group has also attacked Spanish and French interests elsewhere.

Funding and External Aid: Between 2007 and 2011, ETA collected 60 million euros at the *Herriko Tabernas* (bars where members and supporters of ETA meet). ETA is probably experiencing financial shortages given that the group announced publicly in September 2011 that it had ceased collecting "revolutionary taxes" from Basque businesses. This extortion program was a major source of ETA's income in the past. Sources of ETA funding are unknown today.

BOKO HARAM

aka Nigerian Taliban; Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad; Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad; People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad; Sunni Group for Preaching and Jihad

Description: Boko Haram (BH) wasdesignated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on November 14, 2013. Led by Abubakar Shekau, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, BH is a Nigeria-based group responsible for numerous attacks in northern and northeastern Nigeria, and the Lake Chad Basin areas in Niger, Chad and Cameroon, that have killed thousands of people since its emergence in 2009.

Activities:BH was responsible for the August 26, 2011 bomb attack on the UN building in Abuja that killed at least 21 people and wounded dozens more. The group is also responsible for a series of bomb attacks in Kano, Nigeria, in 2012.

Boko Haram has increasingly crossed Nigerian borders to evade pressure and conduct operations. In February 2013, BH claimed responsibility for kidnapping seven French tourists in the Far North of Cameroon. Security forces from Chad and Niger also reportedly participated in skirmishes against suspected BH members along Nigeria's borders. In 2013, the group also kidnapped eight French citizens in northern Cameroon and obtained ransom payments for their release.

In 2014, BH killed approximately 5,000 Nigerian civilians in various attacks. The kidnapping of 276 female students from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State, brought global attention to Boko Haram's activities and highlighted its deliberate targeting of non-combatants, including children. In 2015, the group continued to abduct women and girls in the northern region of Nigeria, some of whom it later subjected to domestic servitude, other forms of forced labor, and sexual servitude through forced marriages to its members. (For further information, refer to *the Trafficking in Persons Report 2015,* http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/index.htm.)

The group opened 2015 with the January 3 to January 7 massacre in the town of Baga, Borno state; reported casualties range from 150 to more than 2,000 killed, injured, or disappeared. The January 2015 attack and other BH operations in surrounding smaller villages displaced an estimated 35,000 people and resulted in BH control of Borno state. In February, BH expanded into Cameroon with an attack on the northern town of Fotokol, where it murdered residents inside their homes and in a mosque. On April 6, BH militants disguised as Islamic preachers killed at least 24 people and wounded several others in an attack near a mosque in Borno state; the attackers gathered people in the village of Kwajafa, offering to preach Islam, then opened fire. In mid-October, BH conducted a coordinated attack on the Baga Sola market and a refugee camp in N'Djamena, Chad; 33 people were killed and 51 others wounded. On November 18, two

young female suicide bombers detonated explosives just before afternoon prayers in Kano, killing at least 15.

In March 2015, BH pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in an audiotape message. Later that month, ISIL accepted the group's pledge.

Strength: Membership is estimated to be several thousand fighters.

Location/Area of Operation: Northern Nigeria, northern Cameroon, Lake Chad Basin, and southeast Niger.

Funding and External Aid:BH receives the bulk of its funding from criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, bank robberies, and extortion.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF PHILIPPINES/NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY

akaCPP/NPA; Communist Party of the Philippines; the CPP; New People's Army; the NPA

Description: The Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on August 9, 2002. The military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA), is a Maoist group formed in March 1969 with the aim of overthrowing the government through protracted guerrilla warfare. NPA's founder, Jose Maria Sison, reportedly directs CPP/NPA activity from the Netherlands, where he lives in self-imposed exile. Luis Jalandoni, a fellow Central Committee member and director of the CPP's overt political wing, the National Democratic Front (NDF), also lives in the Netherlands. Although primarily a rural-based guerrilla group, CPP/NPA has an active urban infrastructure to support its terrorist activities and, at times, uses city-based assassination squads.

Senior CPP/NPA leaders Wilma and Benito Tiamzon were arrested in the Philippines in 2014. NPA second-in-command Adelberto Silva was arrested in 2015.

Activities:CPP/NPA primarily targets Philippine security forces, government officials, local infrastructure, and businesses that refuse to pay extortion, or "revolutionary taxes." CPP/NPA also has a history of attacking U.S. interests in the Philippines. In 1987, for example, CPP/NPA conducted direct actions against U.S. personnel and facilities, killing three American soldiers in four separate attacks in Angeles City. In 1989, the group issued a press statement claiming responsibility for the ambush and murder of Colonel James Nicholas Rowe, chief of the Ground Forces Division of the Joint U.S.-Military Advisory Group.

Over the past few years, CPP/NPA has continued to carry out killings, raids, kidnappings, acts of extortion, and other forms of violence primarily directed against security forces. In May 2013, the Armed Forces of the Philippines reported that from 2011 through the first quarter of 2013, 383 people, including 158 civilians, were killed in encounters between CPP/NPA and government forces.

Despite a ceasefire with the Government of the Philippines in December 2014, CPP/NPA continued to carry out attacks, including setting fire to construction equipment and a vehicle, abducting a jail warden, and shooting and killing three unarmed military-affiliated individuals.

On January 24, 2015, the CPP/NPA attacked a Dole plantation, burned down a facility and chopped down more than 700 banana trees. On February 16, CPP/NPA attempted to seize a police station in Mati City; four AFP soldiers were killed and a policeman wounded. The group left behind landmines upon withdrawal, which killed another three soldiers. On February 28, two Philippine army soldiers were killed and three wounded in an ambush by CPP/NPA in Kalinga. In March, the CPP/NPA killed a soldier and wounded three others in an ambush in the Compostela Valley and executed two unarmed Philippine soldiers wearing civilian clothes in a separate attack. Senior CPP/NPA leaders Wilma and Benito Tiamzon were arrested in the Philippines in 2014, followed by CPP/NPA second-in-command Adelberto Silva in 2015.

Strength: The Philippine government estimates there are 4,000 CPP/NPA members.

Location/Area of Operation: The Philippines, including Rural Luzon, Visayas, and parts of northern and eastern Mindanao. There are also cells in Manila and other metropolitan centers.

Funding and External Aid: The CPP/NPA raises funds through extortion and theft.

CONTINUITY IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

akaContinuity Army Council; Continuity IRA; Republican Sinn Fein

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on July 13, 2004, the Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA) is a terrorist splinter group formed in 1994 as the clandestine armed wing of Republican Sinn Fein; CIRA split from Sinn Fein in 1986. "Continuity" refers to the group's belief that it is carrying on the original goal of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) – to force the British out of Northern Ireland. CIRA cooperates with the larger Real IRA (RIRA). In 2012, CIRA released a statement claiming new leadership, after the previous leadership was ousted over allegations it was acting to the detriment of the organization.

Activities:CIRA has been active in Belfast and the border areas of Northern Ireland, where it has carried out bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, extortion, and robberies. On occasion, it has provided advance warning to police of its attacks. Targets have included the British military, Northern Ireland security forces, and Loyalist paramilitary groups. CIRA did not join the Provisional IRA in the September 2005 decommissioning, and remains capable of effective – if sporadic – terrorist attacks.

The group has remained active over the past three years. In January 2013, the group claimed responsibility for firing shots at police officers in Drumbeg, Craigavon County, Northern Ireland. In March 2014, CIRA claimed an attempted bomb attack on the home and vehicle of a Police Service of Northern Ireland officer. In 2015, CIRA did not carry out any successful attacks on the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), but in July, PSNI officers were called to Lurgan, County Armagh, Northern Ireland for reports of a bomb; officers found the concealed device and narrowly escaped harm when a second explosive detonated in what was later described as an "elaborate trap."

Strength: Membership is small, with possibly fewer than 50. Police counterterrorism operations have reduced the group's strength.

Location/Area of Operation: Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

Funding and External Aid: CIRA supports its activities through criminal activities, including smuggling.

GAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYYA

akaal-Gama'at; Egyptian al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya; GI; Islamic Gama'at; IG; Islamic Group

Description: Gama'a al-Islamiyya (IG) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. Formed in the 1970s, IG was once Egypt's largest terrorist group. In 2011, it formed the Building and Development political party that competed in the 2011 parliamentary elections and won 13 seats. Egypt-based members of IG released from prison prior to the 2011 revolution have renounced terrorism, although some members located overseas have worked with or joined al-Qa'ida (AQ). The external wing, composed mainly of exiled members in several countries, maintained that its primary goal was to replace the Egyptian government with an Islamist state. IG's "spiritual" leader, the "blind Sheikh," Omar Abd al-Rahman, is serving a life sentence in a U.S. prison for his involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Supporters of Abd al-Rahman have called for reprisal attacks in the event of his death in prison.

Activities: In the 1990s, IG conducted armed attacks against Egyptian security, other government officials, and Coptic Christians. IG claimed responsibility for the June 1995 attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The group also launched attacks on tourists in Egypt, most notably the 1997 Luxor attack. In 1999, part of the group publicly renounced violence. IG is not known to have committed a terrorist attack in recent years.

Strength: At its peak, IG likely commanded several thousand core members and a similar number of supporters. Security crackdowns following the 1997 attack in Luxor and the 1999 ceasefire, along with post-September 11 security measures and defections to AQ, have likely resulted in a substantial decrease in what is left of the group.

Location/Area of Operation: Unknown

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

HAMAS

akathe Islamic Resistance Movement; Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya; Izz al-Din al Qassam Battalions; Izz al-Din al Qassam Brigades; Izz al-Din al Qassam Forces; Students of Ayyash; Student of the Engineer; Yahya Ayyash Units; Izz al-Din al-Qassim Brigades; Izz al-Din al-Qassim Forces; Izz al-Din al-Qassim Battalions

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, Hamas was established in 1987 at the onset of the first Palestinian uprising, or Intifada, as an outgrowth of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. The armed element, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, has conducted anti-Israeli attacks, including suicide bombings against civilian targets inside Israel. Hamas also manages a broad, mostly Gaza-based, network of "Dawa" or ministry activities that include charities, schools, clinics, youth camps, fundraising, and political activities. After winning Palestinian Legislative Council elections in January 2006, Hamas gained control of significant Palestinian Authority (PA) ministries in Gaza, including the Ministry of Interior. As of 2015, the group retained control of Gaza.

Activities: Prior to 2005, Hamas conducted numerous anti-Israeli attacks, including suicide bombings, rocket launches, IED attacks, and shootings. Hamas has not directly targeted U.S. interests, although U.S. citizens have died and been injured in the group's attacks against Israeli targets. In June 2007, after Hamas took control of Gaza from the PA and Fatah; the Gaza borders were closed and Hamas increased its use of tunnels to smuggle weapons into Gaza, using the Sinai and maritime routes. Hamas has since dedicated the majority of its activity in Gaza to solidifying its control, hardening its defenses, building its weapons caches, tightening security, and conducting limited operations against Israeli military forces.

Hamas fought a 23-day war with Israel from late December 2008 to January 2009. From November 14-21, 2012, Hamas fought another war with Israel during which it claims to have launched more than 1,400 rockets into Israel. Despite the Egypt-mediated ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in 2012, operatives from Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) coordinated and carried out a November bus bombing in Tel Aviv that wounded 29 people. On July 8, 2014, Israel launched Operation Protective Edge in Gaza with the intent of preventing rocket fire into the country, which had increased following Israeli military operations after Hamas' kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers. In March 2015, Amnesty International released a report in which it accused Hamas of committing war crimes for launching rockets and mortars into civilian areas in Israel during Operation Protective Edge. In May 2015, Amnesty International published another report declaring Hamas' abduction, torture, and killing of Palestinians during the 2014 Gaza war was further evidence the group had committed war crimes.

Throughout 2015, Hamas continued preparing for attacks against Israel. In July, Hamas announced on Iranian television that it had built a new tunnel into Israel to carry out attacks. A month later, the group released a video showing members conducting training exercises while moving through its newly reconstructed tunnels. In October, Hamas ordered members to conduct suicide attacks in Israel. In November, Hamas fired two rockets into the Mediterranean Sea as part of its ongoing missile tests in preparation for any future war with Israel.

Strength: Several thousand Gaza-based operatives.

Location/Area of Operation: Since 2007, Hamas has controlled Gaza and also has a presence in the West Bank. The group retains leaders and facilitators that conduct political, fundraising, and arms-smuggling activities throughout the region. Hamas also has a presence in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Funding and External Aid: Historically, Hamas has received funding, weapons, and training from Iran. The group also raises funds in the Gulf countries and receives donations from

Palestinian expatriates around the world. Hamas also receives donations from its charity organizations. Hamas's supply lines have suffered since the crackdown on smuggling tunnels in the Sinai Peninsula by the Egyptian military.

HAQQANI NETWORK

akaHQN

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on September 19, 2012, the Haqqani Network (HQN) was formed in the late 1970s, around the time of the then-Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. HQN's founder Jalaluddin Haqqani established a relationship with Usama bin Laden in the mid-1980s, and joined the Taliban in 1995. After the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, Jalaluddin retreated to Pakistan where, under the leadership of Jalaluddin's son Sirajuddin Haqqani, the group continued to direct and conduct terrorist activity in Afghanistan. In July 2015, Sirajuddin Haqqani was appointed a Deputy leader of the Taliban.

Activities: HQN has planned and carried out a number of significant kidnappings and attacks against U.S. and Coalition Forces in Afghanistan, the Afghan government, and civilian targets. HQN's most notorious attacks in recent years include the June 2011 attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul, which killed 11 civilians and two Afghan policemen; a September 2011 truck bombing in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, which wounded 77 U.S. soldiers; the September 2011 19-hour attack on the U.S. Embassy and ISAF headquarters in Kabul, which killed 16 Afghans, including six children; a June 2012 suicide bomb attack against Forward Operating Base Salerno, which killed two U.S. soldiers and wounded more than 100; and a 12-hour siege of the Spozhmai Hotel in Kabul in June 2012, which resulted in the death of at least 18 Afghans, including 14 civilians. HQN was also involved in holding U.S. Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, who was kidnapped in 2009 and remained in captivity until he was released in May 2014.

HQN's attacks continued throughout 2015. In April, Afghan officials blamed HQN for a suicide attack in Khost Province, which killed at least 20 people and injured more than 60 others. In May, HQN was blamed for an attack on a Guesthouse in Kabul, which killed 14 people, including one U.S. citizen. In addition to these and other suspected HQN attacks, multiple HQN plots and many suicide operations in Kabul were disrupted by the Afghan police before they could be carried out.

Strength: HQN is believed to have several hundred core members, but it is estimated that the organization is also able to draw upon a pool of upwards of 10,000 fighters. HQN cooperates closely with the larger Afghan Taliban and draws strength through cooperation with other terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan, including al-Qa'idaand Jaish-e Mohammad.

Location/Area of Operation: HQN is active along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and across much of southeastern Afghanistan, particularly in Loya Paktia, and has repeatedly targeted Kabul in its attacks. The group's leadership has historically maintained a power base around Pakistan's tribal areas.

Funding and External Aid: In addition to the support it receives through its connections to other terrorist organizations, HQN receives much of its funds from donors in Pakistan and the

Gulf, as well as through criminal activities such as kidnapping, extortion, smuggling, and other licit and illicit business ventures.

HARAKAT-UL JIHAD ISLAMI

akaHUJI; Movement of Islamic Holy War; Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami; Harkat-al-Jihad-ul Islami; Harkat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami; Harakat ul Jihad-e-Islami; Harakat-ul Jihad Islami

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on August 6, 2010, Harakat-ul Jihad Islami (HUJI) was founded in 1980 in Afghanistan to fight against the former Soviet Union. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the organization redirected its efforts to India. HUJI seeks the annexation of Indian Kashmir and the expulsion of Coalition Forces from Afghanistan, and has supplied fighters to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Since 2001, HUJI has refocused its activities on the Afghanistan-Pakistan front and has established several camps in Pakistan. HUJI is mostly composed of Pakistani militants and veterans of the Soviet-Afghan war. In recent years HUJI has experienced a number of internal splits and a portion of the group has aligned with al-Qa'ida (AQ), including training its members in AQ training camps. Mohammad Ilyas Kashmiri, one of HUJI's top leaders (who also served as an AQ military commander and strategist), died on June 3, 2011.

Activities:HUJI has been involved in a number of terrorist attacks. HUJI claimed responsibility for the September 7, 2011 bombing of the New Delhi High Court, which left at least 11 dead and an estimated 76 wounded. The group sent an email to the press stating that the bomb was intended to force India to repeal a death sentence of a HUJI member. In 2015, it was discovered that HUJI had set up bases at Silchar's Assam University with the help of a group of professors and students.

Strength: HUJI has an estimated strength of several hundred members.

Location/Area of Operation: HUJI's area of operation extends throughout South Asia, with its terrorist operations focused primarily in Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

HARAKAT UL-JIHAD-I-ISLAMI/BANGLADESH

aka HUJI-B; Harakat ul Jihad e Islami Bangladesh; Harkatul Jihad al Islam; Harkatul Jihad; Harakat ul Jihad al Islami; Harkat ul Jihad al Islami; Harkat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami; Harakat ul Jihad Islami Bangladesh; Islami Dawat-e-Kafela; IDEK

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 5, 2008, Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B) was formed in April 1992 by a group of former Bangladeshi Afghan veterans wanting to establish Islamic rule in Bangladesh. In October 2005, Bangladeshi authorities banned the group. HUJI-B has connections to Pakistani terrorist groups advocating similar objectives, including HUJI, al-Qa'ida, and Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT). The leaders of HUJI-B signed the February 1998 *fatwa* sponsored by Usama bin Laden that declared American civilians legitimate targets.

Activities: In December 2008, three HUJI-B members were convicted for the May 2004 grenade attack that wounded the British High Commissioner in Sylhet, Bangladesh. In 2011, Bangladeshi authorities formally charged multiple suspects, including HUJI-B leader Mufti Abdul Hannan, with the killing of former Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria of the Awami League in a grenade attack on January 27, 2005. Though HUJI-B committed no known attacks in 2013, in March 2013, police in Dhaka arrested a group of militants which included HUJI-B members. The group was preparing attacks on public gatherings and prominent individuals; bombs, bomb-making material, and counterfeit currency were found at the time of arrest. In October 2014, a number of HUJI-B members were arrested, including a bomb expert. Some HUJI-B members may have traveled to Pakistan to receive military training from LeT. There were no known terrorist acts carried out by HUJI-B in 2015.

Strength: HUJI-B leaders claim that up to 400 of its members are Afghan war veterans, but its total membership is unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily in Bangladesh and India. HUJI-B trains and has a network of madrassas in Bangladesh.

Funding and External Aid:HUJI-B funding comes from a variety of sources. Several international Muslim NGOs may have funneled money to HUJI-B and other Bangladeshi terrorist groups.

HARAKAT UL-MUJAHIDEEN

akaHUM; Harakat ul-Ansar; HUA; Jamiat ul-Ansar; JUA; al-Faran; al-Hadid; al-Hadith; Harakat ul-Mujahidin; Ansar ul Ummah

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HUM) seeks the annexation of Indian Kashmir and the expulsion of Coalition Forces from Afghanistan. In January 2005, HUM's long-time leader Fazlur Rehman Khalil stepped down and was replaced by Dr. Badr Munir. HUM operated terrorist training camps in eastern Afghanistan until Coalition air strikes destroyed them in 2001. In 2003, HUM began using the name Jamiat ul-Ansar; Pakistan banned the group in November 2003.

Activities: HUM has conducted a number of operations against Indian troops and civilian targets in Kashmir. It is linked to the Kashmiri terrorist group al-Faran, which kidnapped – and later killed – five Western tourists in Kashmir in July 1995. HUM was also responsible for the hijacking of an Indian airliner in December 1999. The attack led to the release of Masood Azhar, an important leader of the former Harakat ul-Ansar (HUA), who was imprisoned by India in 1994; after his release, Azhar founded Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM). Another former member of HUA, Ahmed Omar Sheik, was also released by India as a result of the hijacking and was later convicted of the 2002 abduction and murder of U.S. journalist Daniel Pearl.

HUM pursues Indian security and civilian targets in Kashmir. The group conducted numerous attacks on Indian interests from 2005 through 2013. There were no known HUM attacks during 2014 but in late December 2015 the group claimed responsibility for attacks in Handwor and Poonch. The attacks led to deaths of five Indian army personnel.

Strength: HUM has a few hundred armed supporters. After 2000, a significant portion of HUM's membership defected to JEM.

Location/Area of Operation: Operates from Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, as well as several cities in Pakistan. HUM conducts operations primarily in Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Funding and External Aid: HUM collects donations from wealthy and grassroots donors in Pakistan.

HIZBALLAH

akathe Party of God; Islamic Jihad; Islamic Jihad Organization; Revolutionary Justice Organization; Organization of the Oppressed on Earth; Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine; Organization of Right Against Wrong; Ansar Allah; Followers of the Prophet Muhammed

Description: Hizballah was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. Formed in 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Lebanon-based radical Shia group takes its ideological inspiration from the Iranian revolution and the teachings of the late Ayatollah Khomeini. The group generally follows the religious guidance of the Iranian Supreme Leader (which in 2015 was Ali Khamenei). Hizballah is closely allied with Iran and the two often work together on shared initiatives, although Hizballah also acts independently. Hizballah shares a close relationship with Syria, and like Iran, provides assistance – including fighters – to Syrian regime forces in the Syrian conflict.

Activities: Hizballah's terrorist attacks include the suicide truck bombings of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983; the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut in 1984; and the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847, during which U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem was murdered. Elements of the group were responsible for the kidnapping, detention, and murder of Americans and other Westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s. Hizballah was implicated, along with Iran, in the 1992 attacks on the Israeli Embassy in Argentina and in the 1994 bombing of the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association in Buenos Aires. In 2000, Hizballah operatives captured three Israeli soldiers in the Shebaa Farms area and, separately, kidnapped an Israeli non-combatant in Dubai. Although the non-combatant survived, on November 1, 2001, Israeli Army Rabbi Israel Weiss pronounced the soldiers dead. The surviving non-combatant and the bodies of the Israeli soldiers were returned to Israel in a prisoner exchange with Hizballah in 2004.

Hizballah is believed to have carried out two attacks against UN Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeepers: an attack in late July 2011 that wounded six French citizens and a second attack, days later, which injured three French soldiers. Also in 2011, four Hizballah members were indicted by the UN-based Special Tribunal for Lebanon, an international tribunal investigating the 2005 assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. A fifth Hizballah member, Hassan Habib Merhi, was indicted in October 2013.

In January 2012, Thai police detained Hizballah operative Hussein Atris on immigration charges as he was attempting to depart Thailand. Atris, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, was

convicted of possessing bomb-making materials by a Thai court in September 2013 and sentenced to two years and eight months in prison. He was released in September 2014 and is believed to reside in Lebanon. In July 2012, a suspected Hizballah operative was detained by Cypriot authorities for allegedly helping plan an attack against Israeli tourists on the island. On March 21, 2013, a Cyprus court found the operative guilty of charges based on his surveillance activities of Israeli tourists

Hizballah was also responsible for the July 2012 attack on a passenger bus carrying 42 Israeli tourists at the Sarafovo Airport in Bulgaria, near the city of Burgas. The explosion killed five Israelis and one Bulgarian, and injured 32 others.

In May 2013, Hizballah publicly admitted to playing a significant role in the ongoing conflict in Syria, rallying support for Syrian President Bashar al-Asad. Hizballah's support for the Asad regime continued in 2015.

In 2015, the group also continued its operations against Israel. In January, Hizballah fired rockets on an Israeli convoy, killing two Israeli soldiers. In a speech in Tehran in August, Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim declared Israel, the United States, and *Takfiri* groups as enemies of Islam and urged Muslims to fight against these enemies. In December, Hizballah leader Nasrallah threatened attacks in revenge for the death of senior Hizballah militant Samir Kuntar. Nasrallah claimed orders had already been given and fighters on the ground were preparing attacks.

In May 2015, Cypriot authorities arrested dual Lebanese-Canadian national Hussein Bassam Abdallah after finding 8.2 tons of liquid ammonium nitrate in the basement of a residence in Larnaca. Abdallah admitted to Cypriot authorities he was a member of Hizballah. He was charged on five offenses, including participation in a terrorist organization and providing support to a terrorist organization, by the Republic of Cyprus and sentenced to six years in prison on June 29, 2015.

Strength: Tens of thousands of supporters and members worldwide.

Location/Area of Operation: Hizballah is based in the southern suburbs of Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and southern Lebanon. As evidenced by Hizballah's activities during the course of 2012 and 2013, the group is capable of operating around the globe. Since 2013, Hizballah fighters have assisted Asad regime forces in many areas across Syria.

Funding and External Aid: Iran continues to provide Hizballah with training, weapons, and explosives, as well as political, diplomatic, monetary, and organizational aid; Syria has furnished training, weapons, and diplomatic and political support. Hizballah also receives funding from private donations and profits from legal and illegal businesses. Hizballah receives financial support from Lebanese Shia communities in Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and Asia. Hizballah supporters are often engaged in a range of licit and illicit activities that benefit the group financially. These have included smuggling contraband goods, passport falsification, trafficking in narcotics, money laundering, and credit card, immigration, and bank fraud.

INDIAN MUJAHEDEEN

aka Indian Mujahidin; Islamic Security Force-Indian Mujahideen (ISF-IM)

Description: The Indian Mujahedeen (IM) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on September 19, 2011. The India-based terrorist group is responsible for dozens of bomb attacks throughout India since 2005, and has caused the deaths of hundreds of civilians. IM maintains ties to other U.S.-designated terrorist entities including Pakistan-based Lashkar e-Tayyiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Harakat ul-Jihad Islami. IM's stated goal is to carry out terrorist actions against Indians for their oppression of Muslims. IM has also expanded its area of operations into Nepal, which is now the biggest hub for IM operatives.

Activities: IM is known for carrying out multiple coordinated bombings in crowded areas against economic and civilian targets in order to maximize terror and casualties. In 2008, for example, IM was responsible for 16 synchronized bomb blasts in crowded urban centers. That same year, IM was also responsible for an attack in Delhi that killed 30 people and an attack at a local hospital in Ahmedabad that killed 38 and injured more than 100. In 2010, IM bombed a popular German bakery in Pune, India, frequented by tourists; 17 people were killed and more than 60 people injured in the attack.

IM continued engaging in terrorist activity in 2015. In January, for example, the arrest of three IM militants linked the group to the December 2014 low-intensity blast near a restaurant in Bangalore that killed one woman and injured three others. The arrest also uncovered IM plans to carry out attacks on Republic Day and that IM operatives had provided explosives to carry out attacks in other parts of the country. In May, IM fugitive commander Muhammad 'Bada' Sajid, one of the perpetrators of the 2008 bombings, died fighting with Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant forces in Syria.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: India, Nepal,and Pakistan

Funding and External Aid: Suspected to obtain funding and support from other terrorist organizations, as well as from sources in Pakistan and the Middle East.

ISLAMIC JIHAD UNION

akaIslamic Jihad Group; Islomiy Jihod Ittihodi; al-Djihad al-Islami; Dzhamaat Modzhakhedov; Islamic Jihad Group of Uzbekistan; Jamiat al-Jihad al-Islami; Jamiyat; The Jamaat Mojahedin; The Kazakh Jama'at; The Libyan Society

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on June 17, 2005, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) is a Sunni violent extremist organization. The group splintered from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the early 2000s and has been based in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Najmiddin Jalolov founded the organization as the Islamic Jihad Group in March 2002, but the group was renamed IJU in May 2005. Although IJU remains committed to overthrowing the Government of Uzbekistan, it also has a global agenda, demonstrated by its attacks on international forces in Afghanistan.

Activities: The IJU primarily operates against international forces in Afghanistan and remains a threat to Central Asia. IJU claimed responsibility for attacks in March and April 2004 in Uzbekistan, which targeted police at several roadway checkpoints and at a popular bazaar, killing approximately 47 people, including 33 IJU members, some of whom were suicide bombers. In July 2004, the group carried out near-simultaneous suicide bombings of the Uzbek Prosecutor General's office and the U.S. and Israeli Embassies in Tashkent. In September 2007, German authorities disrupted an IJU plot to attack U.S. military bases and personnel by detaining and prosecuting three IJU operatives, including two German citizens. Foreign terrorist fighters from Germany, Turkey, and elsewhere in Europe continued to travel to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area to join IJU to fight against U.S. and Coalition Forces.In 2013, two IJU videos showed attacks against an American military base in Afghanistan and an IJU sniper shooting an Afghan soldier at a base in Afghanistan.

According to statements and photos released by the group, IJU participated in the April-September 2015 Taliban siege of Kunduz city. At least 13 police were killed in the attacks and according to a UN report, some 848 civilians were killed or wounded. In June 2015, IJU claimed it carried out multiple attacks in eastern Afghanistan with al-Qa'ida (AQ) and the Taliban, including an attack on an Afghan military base that killed "many apostate soldiers." On July 22, the IJU stated it had expanded its base of operations and was engaged in activity in southern Afghanistan (in the provinces of Paktika, Paktia, and Nangarhar) and in Badakhshan and Kunduz. On August 20, IJU followed AQ and pledged allegiance to Mullah Mansour, the newly appointed leader of the Taliban.

Strength:100 to 200 members

Location/Area of Operation: Based in Pakistan and active in Afghanistan; IJU members are also scattered throughout Central Asia and Europe.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN

akaIMU

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on September 25, 2000, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) seeks to overthrow the Uzbek government and establish an Islamist state. For most of the past decade, however, the group has recruited members from other Central Asian states and Europe and has focused its fighting against international forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The IMU has had a decade-long relationship with al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

In August 2015, IMU leader Usman Ghazi announced the group's allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. IMU's leadership is based in Pakistan's tribal areas and operates primarily along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and in northern Afghanistan. Top IMU leaders have integrated themselves into the Taliban's shadow government in Afghanistan's northern provinces and have established training camps in the region. IMU members may have also traveled to Syria to fight with violent extremist groups.

Activities: Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, the IMU has predominantly been focused on attacks against international forces in Afghanistan. In late 2009, NATO forces reported an increase in IMU-affiliated foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan. In 2010, IMU claimed responsibility for the September 19 ambush that killed 25 Tajik troops in Tajikistan. On October 15, 2011, IMU claimed responsibility for a suicide assault on a U.S.-led Provincial Reconstruction Team inPanjshir Province, Afghanistan, that killed two Afghan civilians and wounded two security guards. On June 8, 2014, IMU claimed responsibility for participating in an attack on Karachi's international airport that resulted in the deaths of at least 39 people.

Throughout 2015, the IMU actively threatened the Afghan government, specifically in the northern part of the country. In April, the group released a video showing IMU members beheading an individual they claimed to be an Afghan soldier and threatened to behead Hazara (a historically persecuted ethnic group in Afghanistan that follows Shia Islam) hostages, in supposed retaliation for the Afghan security forces capture of several female members of IMU.

Also in 2015, Uzbek refugee Fazliddin Kurbanov was convicted and sentenced by a U.S. federal court to 25 years in prison for planning a bomb attack in Idaho. Kurbanov had been in contact with members of IMU online, seeking advice on how to make explosives and formulate attack plans. He discussed attacking U.S. military bases, including the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Strength: 200 to 300 members

Location/Area of Operation: Central Asia, Iran, andSouth Asia

Funding and External Aid: The IMU receives support from a large Uzbek diaspora, terrorist organizations, and donors from Europe, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East.

ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND THE LEVANT

akaal-Qa'ida in Iraq; al-Qa'ida Group of Jihad in Iraq; al-Qa'ida Group of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qa'ida in Mesopotamia; al-Qa'ida in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qa'ida of Jihad in Iraq; al-Qa'ida of Jihad Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qa'ida of the Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Tawhid; Jam'at al-Tawhid Wa'al-Jihad; Tanzeem Qa'idat al Jihad/Bilad al Raafidaini; Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn; The Monotheism and Jihad Group; The Organization Base of Jihad/Country of the Two Rivers; The Organization Base of Jihad/Mesopotamia; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base in Iraq; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base in the Land of the Two Rivers; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in Iraq; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in the Land of the Two Rivers; The Organization of Jihad's Base in the Country of the Two Rivers; al-Zarqawi Network; Islamic State in Iraq; Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham; Islamic State in Iraq and Syria; ad-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-'Iraq wa-sh-Sham; Daesh; Dawla al Islamiya; Al-Furqan Establishment for Media Production; Islamic State; ISIL; ISIS

Description: Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on December 17, 2004. In the 1990s, Jordanian militant Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi organized a terrorist group called al-Tawhid wal-Jihad to oppose the presence of U.S. and Western military forces in the Middle East and the West's support for, and the existence of, Israel. In late 2004,

he joined al-Qa'ida (AQ) and pledged allegiance to Usama bin Laden, at which point al-Tawhid wal-Jihad became known as AQI. Zarqawi traveled to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and led his group against U.S. and Coalition Forces until his death in June 2006.

In October 2006, AQI publicly re-named itself the Islamic State in Iraq and in 2013 it adopted the moniker Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to express its regional ambitions as it expanded its operations to include the Syrian conflict. On May 15, 2014, the Department of State amended the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation of AQI to add several aliases, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and to make ISIL the organization's primary name. ISIL is led by Specially Designated Global Terrorist Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, aka Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri, aka Abu Du'a. In June 2014, ISIL leader al-Baghdadi declared an Islamic caliphate.

Activities: As AQI, ISIL conducted numerous high profile attacks, including IED attacks against U.S. military personnel and Iraqi infrastructure, videotaped beheadings of Americans, suicide bombings against both military and civilian targets, and rocket attacks. ISIL perpetrates the majority of its suicide and mass casualty bombings in Iraq using foreign and Iraqi operatives. In 2014, ISIL was responsible for the majority of deaths of the more than 12,000 Iraqi civilians killed that year. ISIL was heavily involved in the fighting in Syria during 2014, including against other militant opposition groups, and participated in a number of kidnapping incidents against civilians, including aid workers and reporters.

ISIL remained active throughout 2015, conducting several large scale attacks across the globe. In January alone, an ISIL sympathizer killed a policewoman and attacked a Jewish supermarket in Vincennes, France, leaving five dead, including the policewoman. In November, ISIL detonated two suicide bombs in Beirut, leaving 43 dead and an estimated 239 wounded. Also in November, ISIL carried out seven coordinated attacks in Paris – outside restaurants, at a major sporting event attended by French President Francois Hollande and at a rock concert at the Bataclan concert hall – killing at least 130 and injuring more than 350 others. In December 2015, 14 people were killed and 22 injured when two ISIL supporters opened fire on the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California in an act of domestic terrorism.

In Iraq, ISIL's use of military equipment captured in the course of fighting gave ISIL greater capabilities in line with a more conventional military force, including the reported use of eastern bloc tanks, artillery, and self-developed unmanned aerial drones. According to estimates from the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), acts of terrorism and violence killed more than 7,500 civilians and injured more than 13,800 in 2015. (Please see the Iraq report in *Chapter 2, Country Reports on Terrorism*, for a list of representative attacks.)

ISIL also committed multiple brutal murders against hostages and other victims in 2015, including beheading Japanese citizens Haruna Yukawa and Kenji Goto in January in Syria; killing U.S. aid worker Kayla Mueller in February after holding her captive in Syria; burning downed-Jordanian pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh while locked in a cage in Syria in February; and the execution-style shootings of Norwegian Ole Johan Grimsgaard-Ofstad and Chinese Fan Jinghui in Syria in November.

Secretary Kerry has asserted that, in his judgment, ISIL is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control, including Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims; and was also

responsible for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing directed at these same groups and in some cases also against Sunni Muslims, Kurds, and other minorities.

In 2015, ISIL abducted, systematically raped, and abused thousands of women and children, some as young as eight years of age. Women and children were sold and enslaved, distributed to ISIL fighters as spoils of war, forced into marriage and domestic servitude, or subjected to physical and sexual abuse. ISIL established "markets" where women and children were sold with price tags attached and has published a list of rules on how to treat female slaves once captured. (For further information, refer to *the Trafficking in Persons Report 2015,* http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/index.htm.)

Although ISIL has not claimed responsibility, ISIL was likely responsible for several attacks involving chemical-filled munitions in Iraq and Syria, including a sulfur mustard attack in Marea on August 21, 2015. The United States has been proactively working with our allies to dismantle this chemical weapons capability, as well as deny ISIL and other non-state actors access to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN)-useable materials and expertise through interdictions and strengthening the ability of regional governments to detect, disrupt, and respond effectively to suspected CBRN activity.

Strength: Estimates at year's end suggested between 19,000 and 25,000.

Location/Area of Operation: ISIL's operations are predominately in Iraq and Syria, but 2015 witnessed the continued creation of external ISIL branches based on preexisting governance boundaries. In 2015, ISIL claimed affiliates in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (Khorasan) region, northern Nigeria, and the North Caucasus region. In 2014, ISIL had claimed affiliates in Algeria, Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. In addition, supporters and associates worldwide inspired by the group's ideology may be operating without direction from ISIL central leadership.

Funding and External Aid: ISIL receives most of its funding from a variety of businesses and criminal activities within areas it controls in Iraq and Syria. Criminal activities include robbing banks, smuggling oil, looting and selling antiquities and other goods, as well as extortion, human trafficking, and kidnapping for ransom.

ISIL SINAI PROVINCE

aka Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis; Ansar Jerusalem; Supporters of Jerusalem; Ansar Bayt al-Maqdes; Ansar Beit al-Maqdis; ISIL Sinai Province; Islamic State-Sinai Province; Islamic State in the Sinai; Jamaat Ansar Beit al-Maqdis; Jamaat Ansar Beit al-Maqdis fi Sinaa; Sinai Province; Supporters of the Holy Place; The State of Sinai; Wilayat Sinai

Description: Originally designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on April 9, 2014, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) rose to prominence in 2011 following the uprisings in Egypt. It is responsible for attacks against Israeli and Egyptian government and security elements, and against tourists in Egypt. In November 2014, ABM officially declared allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In September 2015, the Department of State amended ABM's designation to add the primary name ISIL Sinai Province (ISIL-SP).

Activities: ISIL-SP has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks against Israeli interests, including a July 2012 attack against a Sinai pipeline exporting gas to Israel and an August 2012 rocket attack on the southern Israeli city of Eilat. In September 2012, ISIL-SP militants attacked an Israeli border patrol, killing one soldier and injuring another.

In October 2013, ISIL-SP claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing targeting the South Sinai Security Directorate in el Tor, which killed three people and injured more than 45. In January 2014, ISIL-SP successfully downed an Egyptian military helicopter in a missile attack, killing five soldiers on board. In 2014 the group also claimed responsibility for four attacks involving car bombs and hand grenades in Cairo, which left six people dead and more than 70 wounded.

ISIL-SP has targeted government officials, including the September 2013 attempted assassination of the Egyptian Interior Minister, and the January 2014 assassination of the head of the Interior Minister's technical office. In February 2014, ISIL-SP claimed responsibility for the bombing of a tour bus in the Sinai Peninsula, killing the Egyptian driver and three South Korean tourists; the attack was ISIL-SP's first against foreign tourists.

In October 2014, ISIL-SP beheaded four individuals who it claimed spied for Israel. Also in October, ISIL-SP claimed an attack on a security checkpoint that killed 33 Egyptian soldiers and wounded 26 others, including civilians.

In April 2015, ISIL-Sinai claimed responsibility for three separate attacks on Egyptian security forces on the same day in Northern Sinai, which claimed the lives of 12 people, including one civilian. On November 4, ISIL-SP released an audio recording in which it claimed responsibility for the bombing of a Russian passenger plane carrying 224 people as it flew from the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh to St. Petersburg, Russia on October 31. All 224 passengers and seven crew members were killed. ISIL-SP also claimed a suicide bombing that killed four Egyptian police officers and wounded at least five civilians in northern Sinai in November 2015.

On August 5, 2015, ISIL-SP claimed responsibility for the July 22 abduction of Croatian citizen Tomislav Salopek, who worked as a topographer for a French energy company. Salopek was kidnapped in the western desert, approximately 20 km west of the Cairo suburb of 6th of October City. ISIL-SP demanded the release of all female Muslims in Egyptian prisons within 48hours in exchange for Salopek. Salopek was ultimately beheaded and ISIL-SP claimed responsibility for the killing.

Strength: ISIL-SP is estimated to have several hundred fighters in the Sinai Peninsula and affiliated cells in the Nile Valley.

Location/Area of Operation: ISIL-SP operations are based out of the Sinai Peninsula, but its reach extends to Cairo, the Egyptian Nile Valley, as well as possibly more than 200 militants in Gaza.

Funding and External Aid: Although the source of ISIL-SP's funding is largely unknown, there are indications that it may receive funding from external actors.

JAMA'ATU ANSARUL MUSLIMINA FI BILADIS-SUDAN (ANSARU)

akaAnsaru; Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan; Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa; JAMBS; Jama'atu Ansaril Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on November 14, 2013, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis-Sudan (Ansaru) publicly splintered from Boko Haram in January 2012. Ansaru's leadership structure remained unclear, though it is known that Khalid al-Barnawi, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, held one of the top leadership positions within the organization. Since its inception, Ansaru has targeted civilians, including westerners, and Nigerian government and security officials. Ansaru's stated goals are to defend Muslims throughout all of Africa by fighting against the Nigerian government and international interests. While Ansaru claims to identify with Boko Haram's objectives and struggle, it has criticized the group for killing fellow Muslims.

Activities: In November 2012, Ansaru raided a police station in Abuja, killing Nigerian police officers and freeing detained terrorists from prison. In January 2013, Ansaru attacked a convoy of Nigerian peacekeepers on their way to Mali.

Ansaru has also carried out multiple kidnapping operations targeting civilians. In late 2012, Ansaru kidnapped a French engineer claiming the action was justified due to French involvement in Mali. Similarly, in early 2013, Ansaru kidnapped and subsequently executed seven international construction workers.

Ansaru did not publicly claim any attacks in 2014 and 2015.

Strength: Total membership is unknown. Given its narrower scope of operations, it is estimated that Ansaru's membership is much smaller than that of Boko Haram's.

Location/Area of Operation: Northern Nigeria

Funding and External Aid: Ansaru maintained a working relationship with Boko Haram and during 2014 may have rejoined with the larger group.

JAISH-E-MOHAMMED

aka the Army of Mohammed; Mohammed's Army; Tehrik ul-Furqaan; Khuddam-ul-Islam; Khudamul Islam; Kuddam e Islami; Jaish-i-Mohammed

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on December 26, 2001, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM) is based in Pakistan. JEM was founded in early 2000 by former senior leader of Harakat ul-Mujahideen, Masood Azhar, upon his release from prison in India in exchange for 155 hijacked Indian Airlines hostages. The group's aim is to annex Indian-administered Kashmir to Pakistan and expel international forces from Afghanistan. JEM has openly declared war against the United States.

Activities: JEM has continued to operate openly in parts of Pakistan despite the 2002 ban on its activities. Since its founding, JEM has conducted many fatal terrorist attacks in the region. JEM claimed responsibility for several suicide car bombings in Indian-administered Kashmir, including an October 2001 suicide attack on the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly

building in Srinagar that killed more than 30 people. The Indian government has publicly implicated JEM, along with Lashkar e-Tayyiba, in the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament that killed nine and injured 18. In 2002, Pakistani authorities arrested and convicted a JEM member for the abduction and murder of U.S. journalist Daniel Pearl. Pakistani authorities reportedly suspect that JEM members may have been involved in the 2002 anti-Christian attacks in Islamabad, Murree, and Taxila that killed two Americans. In December 2003, Pakistan implicated JEM members in two assassination attempts against then-President Pervez Musharraf. In 2006, JEM claimed responsibility for a number of attacks, including the killing of several Indian police officials in the Indian-administered Kashmir capital of Srinagar. In December 2013, JEM threatened to kill Indian politician Narendra Modi if he were elected Prime Minister. In 2015, JEM launched three small-scale attacks targeting Pakistani army camps; approximately five to 10 people were killed in the attacks.

Strength:JEM has at least several hundred armed supporters in Pakistan.

Location/Area of Operation: Kashmir in India; Afghanistan; and Pakistan, particularly southern Punjab.

Funding and External Aid: To avoid asset seizures by the Pakistani government, since 2007 JEM has withdrawn funds from bank accounts and invested in legal businesses, such as commodity trading, real estate, and the production of consumer goods. JEM also collects funds through donation requests in magazines and pamphlets, sometimes using charitable causes to solicit donations.

JAYSH RIJAL AL-TARIQ AL-NAQSHABANDI (JRTN)

aka Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandi; Army of the Men of the Naqshbandi Order; Armed Men of the Naqshabandi Order; Naqshbandi Army; Naqshabandi Army; Men of the Army of al-Naqshbandia Way; Jaysh Rajal al-Tariqah al-Naqshbandia; JRTN; JRN; AMNO.

Description: Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandi (JRTN) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in September 2015. The group first announced insurgency operations against international forces in Iraq in December 2006, in response to the execution of Saddam Hussein. Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, former vice president of Saddam Hussein's Revolutionary Council, leads the group, which consists of former Baath Party officials, military personnel, and Sunni nationalists. Al-Douri was once one of the most-wanted men in Iraq by Coalition Forces. JRTN's goals are to overthrow the government of Iraq, install a new Ba'athist regime, and to end external influence in Baghdad. JRTN believes in Iraqi and Arab secular nationalism and Naqshabandi Sufi Islam ideals.

Activities: Since its founding in 2006, JRTN claimed and distributed numerous videos of attacks on U.S. bases and forces until the 2011 withdrawal of Coalition Forces from Iraq. JRTN is also known to have used vehicle IEDs against Iraqi government security forces. JRTN's influence grew by exploiting the disintegration of other insurgent groups.

In 2014, JRTN joined military forces with ISIL in opposition to the Iraqi government. The group played a major role in the capture of Mosul from Iraqi security forces in 2014.

Strength:1,500 to 5,000 as of 2011

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily Iraq

Funding and External Aid:JRTN receives funding from former regime members, major tribal figures in Iraq, and external contributions from the Gulf.

JEMAAH ANSHORUT TAUHID

akaJAT; Jemmah Ansharut Tauhid; Jem'mah Ansharut Tauhid; Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid; Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid; Laskar 99

Description: The Department of State designated Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 13, 2012. Formed in 2008, the Indonesia-based group seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate in Indonesia, and has carried out numerous attacks on Indonesian government personnel, police, military, and civilians. In 2011, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the founder and leader of JAT, was convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role in organizing a militant training camp in Aceh. Ba'asyir is also the co-founder and former leader of Jemaah Islamiya (JI). JAT maintains ties to JI and other terrorist groups in Southeast Asia.

Activities: JAT has conducted multiple attacks targeting civilians and Indonesian officials, resulting in the deaths of numerous Indonesian police and innocent civilians. In October 2012, authorities blamed JAT for torturing and killing two police officers investigating an alleged terrorist camp linked to JAT in Poso. In December 2012, four police officers were killed and two wounded in an attack by suspected local JAT members in Central Sulawesi.

JAT continued engaging in terrorist activity throughout 2015. Since Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014, many JAT members have joined Indonesia's ISIL-affiliated groups, while others have joined al-Qa'ida-linked groups.

Strength:JAT is estimated to have several thousand supporters and members.

Location/Area of Operation: Based in Indonesia

Funding and External Aid:JAT raises funds through membership donations, cyber hacking, and legitimate business activities. JAT has also robbed banks and carried out other illicit activities to fund the purchase of assault weapons, ammunition, explosives, and bomb-making materials.

JEMAAH ISLAMIYA

akaJemaa Islamiyah; Jema'a Islamiyah; Jemaa Islamiyya; Jema'a Islamiyya; Jemaa Islamiyyah; Jema'a Islamiyyah; Jemaah Islamiah; Jemaah Islamiyah; Jema'ah Islamiyah; Jemaah Islamiyyah; Jema'ah Islamiyyah; JI

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 23, 2002, Jemaah Islamiya (JI) is a Southeast Asia-based terrorist group co-founded by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu

Bakar Ba'asyir. The group seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate spanning Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, and the southern Philippines. More than 400 JI operatives have been captured since 2002, including operations chief and al-Qa'ida associate Hambali. In 2006, several members connected to JI's 2005 suicide attack in Bali were arrested. In 2007, Muhammad Naim (aka Zarkasih) and JI military commander Abu Dujana were arrested, and in 2008, two senior JI operatives were arrested in Malaysia and a JI-linked cell was broken up in Sumatra. In February 2010, the Indonesian National Police discovered and disbanded a violent extremist training base in Aceh in which former members of JI and other Indonesian violent extremist groups participated. The police raid resulted in the capture of more than 60 militants, including former JI operatives, and led authorities to former JI senior operative Dulmatin, one of the planners of the 2002 Bali bombings. In March 2010, Dulmatin was killed outside of Jakarta. In January 2011, JI member Umar Patek was captured in Abbottabad, Pakistan and put on trial in Indonesia, where he was convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison in June 2012 for his role in the Bali bombing. In January 2015, JI bomb-maker Zulfiki bin Hir (aka Marwan) was killed in the Philippines in a raid.

Activities: Significant JI attacks include the 2002 Bali bombings, which killed more than 200 people, including seven U.S. citizens; the August 2003 bombing of the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta; the September 2004 bombing outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta; and the October 2005 suicide bombing in Bali, which left 26 dead, including three suicide bombers.

On July 17, 2009, a JI faction led by Noordin Mohamed Top claimed responsibility for suicide attacks at the J.W. Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta that killed seven people and injured more than 50, including seven Americans.

In November 2014, Indonesian authorities released former JI bomb-maker Taufik Abdul Halim from prison after he served a 12-year sentence for attempting to bomb a Jakarta shopping mall in 2001.

In January 2015 in the southern Philippines, 44 Philippines policemen and three civilians were killed when a police anti-terrorism squad was ambushed while conducting a raid in Mamasapano in the southern island of Mindanao. That same month, it was reported that JI-linked extremists had attempted to carry out attacks during a papal visit to Manila and Tacloban. In October, two senior JI leaders – Zarkashi and JI military leader Abu Dujana – were released from prison after serving seven years in Indonesian jails. In December, police in East Java arrested four individuals associated with JI involved in manufacturing firearms for terrorist activities.

Strength: Estimates vary from 500 to several thousand.

Location/Area of Operation: Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines

Funding and External Aid: JI fundraises through membership donations and criminal and business activities. It has received financial, ideological, and logistical support from Middle Eastern contacts and illegitimate charities and organizations.

JUNDALLAH

aka People's Resistance Movement of Iran (PMRI); Jonbesh-i Moqavemat-i-Mardom-i Iran; Popular Resistance Movement of Iran; Soldiers of God; Fedayeen-e-Islam; Former Jundallah of Iran; Jundullah; Jondullah; Jundollah; Jondollah; Jondallah; Army of God (God's Army); Baloch Peoples Resistance Movement (BPRM)

Description: Jundallah was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on November 4, 2010. Since its inception in 2003, Jundallah, which operates primarily in the province of Sistan va Balochistan of Iran, and the Baloch areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, has engaged in numerous attacks, killing and maiming scores of Iranian civilians and government officials. Jundallah's stated goals are to secure recognition of Balochi cultural, economic, and political rights from the Government of Iran, and to spread awareness of the plight of the Baloch situation.

Activities: In March 2006, Jundallah attacked a motorcade in eastern Iran, which included the deputy head of the Iranian Red Crescent Security Department, who was taken hostage. The Governor of Zahedan, his deputy, and five other officials were wounded, seven others were kidnapped, and more than 20 were killed in the attack. Jundallah claimed responsibility for an October 2009 suicide bomb attack in a marketplace in the city of Pishin in the Sistan va Balochistan province that killed more than 40 people and was reportedly the deadliest terrorist attack in Iran since the 1980s. In a statement on its website, Jundallah also claimed the December 15, 2010 suicide bomb attack inside the Iman Hussein Mosque in Chabahar, which killed an estimated 35 to 40 civilians and wounded 60 to 100. In July 2010, Jundallah attacked the Grand Mosque in Zahedan, killing approximately 30 and injuring an estimated 300. There were no known attacks attributed to Jundallah in 2014 or 2015.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Jundallah has traditionally operated throughout the Sistan va Balochistan province in southeastern Iran and the greater Balochistan area of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

KAHANE CHAI

akaAmerican Friends of the United Yeshiva; American Friends of Yeshivat Rav Meir; Committee for the Safety of the Roads; Dikuy Bogdim; DOV; Forefront of the Idea; Friends of the Jewish Idea Yeshiva; Jewish Legion; Judea Police; Judean Congress; Kach; Kahane; Kahane Lives; Kahane Tzadak; Kahane.org; Kahanetzadak.com; Kfar Tapuah Fund; Koach; Meir's Youth; New Kach Movement; Newkach.org; No'ar Meir; Repression of Traitors; State of Judea; Sword of David; The Committee Against Racism and Discrimination (CARD); The Hatikva Jewish Identity Center; The International Kahane Movement; The Jewish Idea Yeshiva; The Judean Legion; The Judean Voice; The Qomemiyut Movement; The Rabbi Meir David Kahane Memorial Fund; The Voice of Judea; The Way of the Torah; The Yeshiva of the Jewish Idea; Yeshivat Harav Meir

Description: Kach – the precursor to Kahane Chai – was founded by radical Israeli-American Rabbi Meir Kahane, with the aim of restoring Greater Israel, the term generally used to refer to

Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Its offshoot, Kahane Chai (translation: "Kahane Lives"), was founded by Meir Kahane's son Binyamin, following his father's 1990 assassination in the United States. Both organizations were designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations on October 8, 1997. The group has attempted to gain seats in the Israeli Knesset over the past several decades but has won just one seat in 1984.

Activities: Kahane Chai has harassed and threatened Arabs, Palestinians, and Israeli government officials, and has vowed revenge for the death of Binyamin Kahane and his wife. The group is suspected of involvement in a number of low-level attacks since the start of the Second Palestinian Intifada in 2000. Since 2003, Kahane Chai activists have physically intimidated Israeli and Palestinian government officials who favored the dismantlement of Israeli settlements. There were no known Kahane Chai attacks during 2015.

Strength: Kahane Chai's core membership is believed to be fewer than 100. The group's membership and support networks are overwhelmingly composed of Israeli citizens that live mostly in West Bank settlements.

Location/Area of Operation: Israel and West Bank settlements, particularly Qiryat Arba in Hebron

Funding and External Aid: Kajame Cjao receives support from sympathizers in the United States and Europe.

KATA'IB HIZBALLAH

akaHizballah Brigades; Hizballah Brigades in Iraq; Hizballah Brigades-Iraq; Kata'ib Hezbollah; Khata'ib Hezbollah; Khata'ib Hizballah; Khattab Hezballah; Hizballah Brigades-Iraq of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq; Islamic Resistance in Iraq; Kata'ib Hizballah Fi al-Iraq; Katibat Abu Fathel al-A'abas; Katibat Zayd Ebin Ali; Katibut Karbalah

Description: Formed in 2006 andDesignated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on July 2, 2009, Kata'ib Hizballah (KH) is a radical Shia Islamist group with an anti-Western outlook and violent extremist ideology. Prior to the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 2011, the group conducted attacks against Iraqi, U.S., and Coalition targets in Iraq, and has threatened the lives of Iraqi politicians and civilians supporting the legitimate political process in Iraq. The group is notable for its extensive use of media operations and propaganda, including filming and releasing videos of attacks. KH has ideological ties to and receives support from Iran.

Activities: KH has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist attacks since 2007, including IED bombings, rocket propelled grenade attacks, and sniper operations. In 2007, KH gained notoriety from attacks against U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq. In June 2011, five U.S. soldiers were killed in a rocket attack in Baghdad when KH assailants fired between three and five rockets at U.S. military base Camp Victory. The group remained active in 2015, participating in fighting in Iraq,and also in Syria in support of the Asad regime. In June and July 2015, the group broadcast its recruitment contact information and an appeal for donations on a pro-Iran channel and on YouTube in an effort to recruit fighters to Syria and Iraq.

Strength: Membership is estimated as at least 400 individuals.

Location/Area of Operation: Predominately Iraq-based, but also participated in fighting alongside pro-Asad regime forces in Syria. Traditionally, KH conducted the majority of its operations in Baghdad, but its operations have expanded across Iraq in response to ISIL's territorial gains.

Funding and External Aid: KH is heavily dependent on support from Iran.

KURDISTAN WORKERS' PARTY

aka the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress; the Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan; KADEK; Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan; the People's Defense Force; Halu Mesru Savunma Kuvveti; Kurdistan People's Congress; People's Congress of Kurdistan; KONGRA-GEL

Description: Founded by Abdullah Ocalan in 1978 as a Marxist-Leninist separatist organization, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. The group, composed primarily of Turkish Kurds, launched a campaign of violence in 1984. The PKK's original goal was to establish an independent Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey. In recent years, however, the PKK has spoken more about autonomy within a Turkish state that guarantees Kurdish cultural and linguistic rights.

Activities: In the early 1990s, the PKK moved beyond rural-based insurgent activities to include urban terrorism. Anatolia became the scene of significant violence, with some estimates suggesting at least 40,000 casualties. Following his capture in 1999, Ocalan announced a "peace initiative," ordering members to refrain from violence and requesting dialogue with Ankara on Kurdish issues. Ocalan's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment; he remains the symbolic leader of the group. The PKK foreswore violence until June 2004, when its hardline militant wing took control and renounced the self-imposed ceasefire of the previous five years. Striking over the border from bases within Iraq, the PKK engaged in terrorist attacks in eastern and western Turkey. In 2009, the Turkish government and the PKK resumed peace negotiations, but talks broke down after the PKK carried out an attack in July 2011 that left 13 Turkish soldiers dead. In 2012, the PKK claimed responsibility for multiple car bombings resulting in the deaths of at least 10 people. Primary targets included Turkish government security forces, local Turkish officials, and villagers who oppose the organization in Turkey.

Between January and mid-July 2015, the PKK carried out small-scale armed attacks against Turkey's security forces and military bases. A ceasefire, negotiated between 2012 and 2014, ended in July 2015 when the PKK killed two security personnel. Government reports indicate that since July 2015, more than 300 security personnel have died from PKK-attributed attacks.

Strength: Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 members; 3,000 to 3,500 are located in northern Iraq.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Europe.

Funding and External Aid: The PKK receives financial support from the large Kurdish diaspora in Europe and from criminal activity.

LASHKAR E-TAYYIBA

akaal Mansooreen; Al Mansoorian; Army of the Pure; Army of the Pure and Righteous; Army of the Righteous; Lashkar e-Toiba; Lashkar-i-Taiba; Paasban-e-Ahle-Hadis; Paasban-e-Kashmir; Paasban-i-Ahle-Hadith; Pasban-e-Ahle-Hadith; Pasban-e-Kashmir; Jamaat-ud-Dawa; JUD; Jama'at al-Dawa; Jamaat ud-Daawa; Jamaat ul-Dawah; Jamaat-ul-Dawa; Jama'at-i-Dawat; Jamaiat-ud-Dawa; Jama'at-ud-Da'awah; Jama'at-ud-Da'awa; Jamaati-ud-Dawa; Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq; Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation; FiF; Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation; Falah-e-Insaniyat; Falah-i-Insaniyat; Falah Insania; Welfare of Humanity; Humanitarian Welfare Foundation; Human Welfare Foundation; Al-Anfal Trust; Tehrik-e-Hurmat-e-Rasool; Tehrik-e-Tahafuz Qibla Awwal

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) on December 26, 2001, Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT) is one of the largest and most proficient of the anti-India-focused terrorist groups. LeT formed in the late 1980s as the terrorist wing of the Islamist extremist organization Markaz ud Dawa ul-Irshad, a Pakistan-based Islamic fundamentalist mission organization and charity originally formed to oppose the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Led by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, LeT is not connected to any political party. Shortly after LeT was designated as an FTO, Saeed changed its name to Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JUD) and began humanitarian projects to circumvent restrictions. LeT disseminates its message through JUD's media outlets. In addition to the creation of JUD, LeT has repeatedly changed its name in an effort to avoid sanctions; other LeT aliases and front groups include Al-Anfal Trust, Tehrik-e-Hurmat-e-Rasool, and Tehrik-e-Tahafuz Qibla Awwal. Elements of LeT and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JEM) combined with other groups to mount such attacks as "The Save Kashmir Movement." The Pakistani government banned LeT in January 2002 following the 2008 Mumbai attack. LeT and Saeed continue to spread terrorist ideology and virulent hate speech condemning the India, Israel, the United States, and other perceived enemies.

Activities: LeT has conducted operations against Indian troops and civilian targets in Jammu and Kashmir since 1993; several high profile attacks inside India; and operations against Coalition Forces in Afghanistan. The group uses assault rifles, machine guns, mortars, explosives, and rocket-propelled grenades.

LeT was responsible for the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai against luxury hotels, a Jewish center, a train station, and a popular café that killed 166 people – including six American citizens – and injured more than 300. India has charged 38 people in the case; most are at large and thought to be in Pakistan.

In March 2010, Pakistani-American businessman David Headley pled guilty in a U.S. court to charges related to his role in the November 2008 LeT attacks in Mumbai, as well as to charges related to a separate plot to bomb the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*. In May 2011, Headley was a witness in the trial of Tahawwur Rana, who was charged and prosecuted successfully for providing material support to LeT; he was sentenced to 14 years in prison in January 2013.In December 2015, Headley agreed to testify on behalf of the prosecution via videoconference in the trial of Zabiuddin Ansari in India.

LeT was responsible for the May 23, 2014 attack on the Indian consulate in Herat, Afghanistan. Throughout the course of 2014-2015, LeT terrorists also engaged in repeated gun battles with Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

LeT was behind a July 2015 attack in Gurdaspur, Punjab, which killed seven people. In August 2015, operatives affiliated with LeT attacked Indian security forces in Udhampur, Jammu, and Kashmir. In December 2015, LeT carried out an attack on a paramilitary convoy after it left Srinagar, Kashmir when three militants opened fire on the convoy, injuring one civilian and seven Indian military personnel.

Strength: The precise size of LeT is unknown, but it has several thousand members in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Pakistani Punjab; Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab Provinces in Pakistan; and in the southern Doda, Jammu, Kashmir regions in India.

Location/Area of Operation: LeT has global connections and a strong operational network throughout South Asia. LeT maintains a number of facilities, including training camps, schools, and medical clinics in Pakistan.

Funding and External Aid: LeT collects donations in Pakistan and the Gulf as well as from other donors in the Middle East and Europe – particularly the UK. In 2015, LeT front organizations continued to openly fundraise in Pakistan and solicited donations in the Pakistani press.

LASHKAR I JHANGVI

akaArmy of Jhangvi; Lashkar e Jhangvi; Lashkar-i-Jhangvi

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on January 30, 2003, Lashkar I Jhangvi (LJ) is the terrorist offshoot of the Sunni Deobandi sectarian group Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan. LJ focuses primarily on anti-Shia attacks and other attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was banned by the Government of Pakistan in August 2001 as part of an effort to rein in sectarian violence. Many of its members then sought refuge in Afghanistan with the Taliban, with whom they had existing ties. After the collapse of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, LJ members became active in aiding other terrorists; they provided safe houses, false identities, and protection in Pakistani cities, including Karachi, Peshawar, and Rawalpindi. LJ works closely with the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan.

Activities:LJ specializes in armed attacks and bombings and has admitted to numerous killings of Shia religious and community leaders in Pakistan. In January 1999, the group attempted to assassinate Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab Province. Media reports linked LJ to attacks on Christian targets in Pakistan, including a March 2002 grenade assault on the Protestant International Church in Islamabad that killed two U.S. citizens.

In January 2014, at least 24 people were killed and 40 others wounded in a bombing that targeted a bus carrying Shia pilgrims. LJ claimed responsibility for the attack. In July 2015, LJ leader Malik Ishaq was killed in a shootout with police in Punjab, Pakistan. Ishaq had been arrested on suspicion of involvement in sectarian killings. LJ also claimed responsibility for a December

2015 suicide bombing targeting a market in the predominantly Shia town of Parachinar, Pakistan; at least 23 people were killed and 50 others wounded.

Strength: Membership is assessed in the low hundreds.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily in Pakistan's Punjab province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Karachi, and Baluchistan.

Funding and External Aid: Funding comes from wealthy donors in Pakistan, as well as the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia. The group engages in criminal activity to fund its activities, including extortion.

LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM

akaEllalan Force; Tamil Tigers

Description: Founded in 1976 and designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is a Tamil secessionist group in Sri Lanka. Despite its military defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan government in 2009, the LTTE's international network of sympathizers and financial support persists.

Activities: Although the LTTE has been largely inactive since its military defeat in 2009, in the past it was responsible for an integrated battlefield insurgent strategy that targeted key installations and senior Sri Lankan political and military leaders. In early 2009, Sri Lankan forces recaptured the LTTE's key strongholds, including their capital of Kilinochchi. In May 2009, government forces defeated the last LTTE fighting forces, killed LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and other members of the LTTE leadership and military command, and declared military victory.

There have been no known attacks in Sri Lanka that could verifiably be attributed to the LTTE since the end of the war, but a total of 13 LTTE supporters, several of whom had allegedly planned attacks against U.S. and Israeli diplomatic facilities in India, were arrested in Malaysia in 2014. Additional LTTE members were arrested in Malaysia and India in 2015, one of whom was accused of exhorting other Sri Lankans to fund and revive the LTTE.

Strength: Exact strength is unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Sri Lanka and India

Funding and External Aid: LTTE's financial network of support continued operations in 2015; the group used its international contacts and the large Tamil diaspora in North America, Europe, and Asia to procure weapons, communications, funds, and other needed supplies. The group employed charities as fronts to collect and divert funds for its activities.

MUJAHIDIN SHURA COUNCIL IN THE ENVIRONS OF JERUSALEM

aka MSC; Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem; Mujahideen Shura Council; Shura al-Mujahedin Fi Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis; Majlis Shura al-Mujahidin; Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen; Magles Shoura al-Mujahddin

Description: The Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on August 19, 2014. The MSC is a consolidation of several Salafi terrorist groups based in Gaza that have claimed responsibility for numerous attacks against Israel since the group's founding in 2012.

Activities: On August 13, 2013, MSC claimed responsibility for a rocket attack targeting the southern Israeli city of Eilat. Previously, MSC claimed responsibility for the March 21, 2013 attack in which Gaza-based militants fired at least five rockets at Sderot, Israel; and the April 17, 2013 attack in which two rockets were fired at Eilat, Israel. There were no known MSC attacks in 2015.

Strength:MSC is estimated to have several hundred fighters.

Location/Area of Operation:MSC operates in Gaza.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

AL-MULATHAMUN BATTALION

akaal-Mulathamun Brigade; al-Muwaqqi'un bil-Dima; Those Signed in Blood Battalion; Signatories in Blood; Those who Sign in Blood; Witnesses in Blood; Signed-in-Blood Battalion; Masked Men Brigade; Khaled Abu al-Abbas Brigade; al-Mulathamun Masked Ones Brigade; al-Murabitoun; The Sentinels

Description: The al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on December 19, 2013. Originally part of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), AMB became a separate organization in late 2012 after its leader, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, split from AQIM. In his first public statement after the split, Belmokhtar threatened to fight against Western interests and announced the creation of the sub-battalion, "Those Who Sign in Blood." In August 2013, AMB and the Mali-based Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) announced that the two organizations would merge under the name "al-Murabitoun." In late 2015, ABM announced a re-merger with AQIM.

Activities:AMB's Those Who Sign in Blood sub-battalion claimed responsibility for the January 2013 attack against the Tiguentourine gas facility near In Amenas, in southeastern Algeria. More than 800 people were taken hostage during the four-day siege, resulting in the deaths of 39 civilians, including three U.S. citizens. Seven other Americans escaped.

Before their merger in August 2013, AMB cooperated with MUJAO in twin suicide bombings in northern Niger on a Nigerien military base in Agadez and a French uranium mine in Arlit in May 2013. The coordinated attacks killed at least 20 people, including all of the attackers. AMB's attacks continued in 2014. In February, AMB claimed responsibility for attacking French forces with rockets near the Timbuktu airport.

In March 2015, AMB claimed responsibility for an attack at La Terrasse restaurant in Bamako, Mali. A French national, a Belgian security officer, and three Malians were killed when a masked gunman fired indiscriminately on the restaurant. Nine others were also wounded in the attack. In April, AMB claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing outside a UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) camp in Ansongo, killing three civilians and wounding nine Nigerian peacekeepers. AMB also claimed the August hotel siege in central Mali; 17 people were killed, including four Malian soldiers and nine civilians, five of whom worked for MINUSMA. In November, the group again targeted a hotel. Gunmen belonging to AMB invaded the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, Mali, taking more than 170 people hostage, some of whom were American. As many as 27 people were killed in the attack; one of those killed was an American international development worker.

Strength: Membership levels of AMB are unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: Algeria, Libya, Mali, and Niger

Funding and External Aid: In addition to the support it may receive through its connections to other terrorist organizations in the region, AMB is likely funded through kidnapping for ransoms and other criminal activities.

NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY

aka ELN; Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional

Description: The National Liberation Army (ELN) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. The ELN is a Colombian Marxist-Leninist group formed in 1964. It is primarily rural-based, although it has several urban units. The ELN remains focused on attacking economic infrastructure – in particular oil and gas pipelines and electricity pylons – and on extorting foreign and local companies. In 2015, the Colombian government continued exploratory talks with the ELN, although formal peace negotiations had not started by year's end.

Activities: The ELN has targeted Colombia's infrastructure, particularly oil pipelines and equipment. The group was responsible for eighty percent of the country's pipeline attacks in 2014. During 2015, the ELN continued kidnapping operations. In January, the ELN kidnapped a Dutch citizen and others in Norte de Santander; they were released in February 2015. On February 11, the group seized two hostages for ransom at a road checkpoint in Choco and on February 24, kidnapped four geologists in Norte de Santander. In October, the ELN attacked a military foot patrol escorting election workers and ballots in Boyaca, killing 11 soldiers and one police officer. Two soldiers were also kidnapped in the attack; they were released on November 16.

Strength: Approximately 2,000 armed combatants and an unknown number of active supporters.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily in the rural and mountainous areas of northern, northeastern, and southwestern Colombia, as well as the border regions with Venezuela.

Funding and External Aid: The ELN draws its funding from the illicit narcotics trade and from extortion of oil and gas companies. Additional funds are derived from kidnapping ransoms. There is no known external aid.

AL-NUSRAH FRONT

aka Jabhat al-Nusrah; Jabhet al-Nusrah; The Victory Front; al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant; al-Nusrah Front in Lebanon; Jabhat al-Nusra li-Ahl al-Sham min Mujahedi al-Sham fi Sahat al-Jihad; Support Front for the People of the Levant

Description: Al-Nusrah Front (ANF) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on May 15, 2014, and is led by Specially Designated Global Terrorist Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani aka al-Julani. It was formed in late 2011 when al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, also a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, sent al-Jawlani to Syria to organize terrorist cells in the region. In 2013, the group split from AQI and became an independent entity. ANF's stated goal is to oust Syria's Asad regime and replace it with a Sunni Islamic state. The group currently controls a portion of Syrian territory from which it participates in the Syrian conflict.

Activities: ANF has been active in a number of operations against other factions in the Syrian Civil War. The group claimed responsibility for the Aleppo bombings in 2012, the al-Midan bombing in January 2012, a series of Damascus bombings in 2012, and the murder of journalist Mohammed al-Saeed. In December 2013, ANF abducted 13 nuns from a Christian monastery in Maaloula and held them until March 9, 2014. In 2014, ANF also carried out multiple suicide bomb attacks and kidnappings, including the abduction of UN peacekeepers.

ANF continued fighting in Syria throughout 2015 – including participating in fighting against other opposition groups – and carried out a number of kidnappings against civilians. In March, ANF claimed an attack on the intelligence headquarters of Syria's air force in Aleppo, killing an estimated 20 members of the security force. In April, ANF reportedly kidnapped, and later released, approximately 300 Kurdish civilians from a checkpoint in Syria. In June, ANF claimed responsibility for the massacre of the Druze village Qalb Lawzeh in Idlib province, Syria, which killed 20. In July, it claimed responsibility for a July suicide bombing of an army outpost in Aleppo, which killed at least 25 soldiers and allied militia.

In June, ANF released a propaganda video celebrating the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Syria.

Funding and External Aid:ANF receives funding from a variety of sources, such as kidnapping for ransom payments and donations from external Gulf-based donors.

PALESTINE ISLAMIC JIHAD

aka PIJ; PIJ-Shaqaqi Faction; PIJ-Shallah Faction; Islamic Jihad of Palestine; Islamic Jihad in Palestine; Abu Ghunaym Squad of the Hizballah Bayt al-Maqdis; Al-Quds Squads; Al-Quds Brigades; Saraya al-Quds; Al-Awdah Brigades

Description: Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. Formed by militant Palestinians in Gaza during the 1970s, PIJ is committed to the destruction of Israel through attacks against Israeli military and civilian targets and to the creation of an Islamic state in all of historic Palestine, including present day Israel.

Activities: PIJ terrorists have conducted numerous attacks, including large-scale suicide bombings against Israeli civilian and military targets. Although U.S. citizens have died in PIJ attacks, the group has not directly targeted U.S. interests. Between 2008 and 2011, PIJ primarily conducted rocket attacks aimed at southern Israeli cities and attacked Israeli targets with explosive devices. In November 2012, PIJ operatives, working with Hamas, detonated a bomb on a bus in Tel Aviv, wounding 29 civilians. In December 2013, four PIJ operatives were arrested by Israeli authorities for their role in a bus bombing near Tel Aviv. In March 2014, PIJ carried out a wave of rocket attacks into Israeli territory. While the group claimed it fired 130 rockets and mortars, 60 were believed to have reached Israel.

In early 2015, PIJ began re-arming and replenishing its ranks. In March, reports suggested that around 200 new recruits between the ages of 19 and 22 were undergoing various PIJ training programs lasting anywhere from 36 days to six months. Also in March, PIJ revealed its militants were smuggling weapons, including rockets and mortars made inside Gaza, through tunnels in Gaza, in preparation for future attacks against Israel. In May, Israeli forces blamed PIJ for firing a rocket that landed in Gan Yazne, a region close to the Gaza border. The rocket was the first mid-range rocket fired at Israel since the August 2014 ceasefire. In August, four militants, including one PIJ operative, were arrested in conjunction with what Israel's domestic security agency Shin Bet described as a PIJ plot to attack Jewish worshippers at Joseph's Tomb in the West Bank. That same month, Israel's Defense Force claimed PIJ operatives in Syria fired four rockets at the Golan Heights and Upper Galilee.

Strength:PIJ has fewer than 1,000 members.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily Gaza, with minimal operational presence in the West Bank and Israel. Other leadership elements reside in Lebanon and official representatives are scattered throughout the Middle East.

Funding and External Aid: PIJ receives financial assistance and training primarily from Iran. PIJ has partnered with Iranian- and Syrian-sponsored Hizballah to carry out joint operations.

PALESTINE LIBERATION FRONT – ABU ABBAS FACTION

akaPLF; PLF-Abu Abbas; Palestine Liberation Front

Description: The Palestinian Liberation Front – Abu Abbas Faction (PLF) – was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. In the late 1970s, the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) splintered from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC); it later split into pro-Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), pro-Syrian and pro-Libyan factions. The pro-PLO faction was led by Muhammad Zaydan (a.k.a. Abu Abbas) and based in Baghdad prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Activities: The PLF was responsible for the 1985 attack on the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* and the murder of U.S. citizen Leon Klinghoffer. The PLF was suspected of supporting terrorism against Israel by other Palestinian groups into the 1990s. In April 2004, Abu Abbas died of natural causes while in U.S. custody in Iraq. After not claiming an attack for 16 years, the PLF claimed responsibility for the March 14, 2008 assault against an Israeli military bus in Huwarah, Israel, and the shooting of an Israeli settler. Following the attacks, a PLF Central Committee member reaffirmed the PLF's commitment to using "all possible means to restore" its previous glory and to adhering to its role in the Palestinian "struggle" and "resistance" through its military. On February 18, 2010, the PLF claimed responsibility for an IED attack against an Israeli Defense Forces patrol, which caused minor injuries to a soldier; another IED was discovered during a search of the area. The group did not publicly claim any attacks in 2015, but continued to maintain a strong presence in many refugee camps in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.

Strength: Estimates have placed membership between 50 and 500.

Location/Area of Operation: PLF leadership and membership are based in Gaza, Lebanon, and the West Bank.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

aka PFLP; Halhul Gang; Halhul Squad; Palestinian Popular Resistance Forces; PPRF; Red Eagle Gang; Red Eagle Group; Red Eagles; Martyr Abu-Ali Mustafa Battalion

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist group founded by George Habash, broke away from the Arab Nationalist Movement in 1967. The group earned a reputation for large-scale international attacks in the 1960s and 1970s, including airline hijackings that killed at least 20 U.S. citizens.

Activities: The PFLP increased its operational activity during the Second Intifada, illustrated by at least two suicide bombings since 2003, multiple joint operations with other Palestinian terrorist groups, and the assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001. In 2008 and 2009, the PFLP launched several rockets, primarily from Gaza against Israel, and claimed responsibility for numerous attacks on Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza. In 2010, the PLFP claimed responsibility for numerous mortar and rocket attacks fired from Gaza into Israel, as well as an attack on a group of Israeli citizens. In October 2011, the PFLP claimed responsibility for a rocket attack that killed one civilian in Ashqelon. In 2012, the Israeli Security Agency arrested several members of the PFLP for plotting to carry out attacks on Israeli Defense Forces checkpoints and planning to conduct kidnappings.On November 18, 2014, two Palestinians reportedly affiliated with the PFLP entered a synagogue and attacked Israelis with guns, knives, and axes, killing five people, including three American citizens, and injuring 12. In May, Jerusalem police arrested three suspects, one of whom was affiliated with the PFLP, on suspicion of plotting an attack in East Jerusalem, and in December the PFLP claimed responsibility for several rocket attacks along the Lebanese-Israeli border.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Gaza, Israel,Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE-GENERAL COMMAND

akaPFLP-GC

Description: The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. The PFLP-GC split from the PFLP in 1968, claiming it wanted to focus more on resistance and less on politics. Originally, the group was violently opposed to the Arafat-led Palestinian Liberation Organization. Ahmad Jibril, a former captain in the Syrian Army, has led the PFLP-GC since its founding. The PFLP-GC is closely tied to both Syria and Iran.

Activities: The PFLP-GC carried out dozens of attacks in Europe and the Middle East during the 1970s and 1980s. The organization was known for cross-border terrorist attacks into Israel using unusual means, such as hot-air balloons and motorized hang gliders. Since the early 1990s, the group has primarily focused on supporting Hizballah's attacks against Israel, training members of other Palestinian terrorist groups, and smuggling weapons. The PFLP-GC maintained an armed presence in several Palestinian refugee camps, at its own military bases in Lebanon, and along the Lebanon-Syria border. In recent years, the PFLP-GC has been implicated by Lebanese security officials in several rocket attacks against Israel. In 2009, the group was responsible for wounding two civilians in an armed attack in Nahariyya, Northern District, Israel. In 2011, the PFLP-GC targeted Israeli communities in a March 20 rocket attack by its Jihad Jibril Brigades in the city of Eshkolot, Southern District, Israel. The attack caused no injuries or damage.

In November 2012, PFLP-GC claimed responsibility for a bus bombing in Tel Aviv that injured 29 people, although four Palestine Islamic Jihad and Hamas operatives were later arrested for being behind the attack. In 2015, the PFLP-GC reportedly began fighting alongside the Asad regime in Syria, while also receiving logistical and military aid from Hizballah and Iran. Separately, in December 2015, the PFLP-GC took responsibility for rocket fire aimed at Israeli territory. The attack, in which at least three rockets were fired from Lebanon into northern Israel, landed near Shlomi, a small town near the Lebanese border.

Strength: Several hundred

Location/Area of Operation: Political leadership is headquartered in Damascus, with bases in southern Lebanon and a presence in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria. The group also maintains a small presence in Gaza.

Funding and External Aid: The PFLP-GC received safe haven and logistical and military support from Syria and financial support from Iran.

AL-QA'IDA

akaal-Qa'eda; Qa'idat al-Jihad (The Base for Jihad); formerly Qa'idat Ansar Allah (The Base of the Supporters of God); the Islamic Army; Islamic Salvation Foundation; The Base; The Group for the Preservation of the Holy Sites; The Islamic Army for the Liberation of the Holy Places; the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders; the Usama Bin Laden Network; the Usama Bin Laden Organization; al-Jihad; the Jihad Group; Egyptian al-Jihad; Egyptian Islamic Jihad; New Jihad

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1999, al-Qa'ida (AQ) was established in 1988. The group helped finance, recruit, transport, and train Sunni Islamist extremists for the Afghan resistance against the Soviet Union. AQ's strategic objectives are to eliminate Western influence and presence from the Muslim world, topple "apostate" governments of Muslim countries, and establish a pan-Islamic caliphate governed by its own interpretation of Sharia law that would ultimately be at the center of a new international order. These goals remain essentially unchanged since the group's 1996 public declaration of war against the United States. AQ leaders issued a statement in February 1998 under the banner of "The World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders," saying it was the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens – civilian and military – and their allies everywhere. AQ merged with al-Jihad (Egyptian Islamic Jihad) in June 2001. Many AQ leaders have been killed in recent years, including Usama bin Laden in May 2011. AQ's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri remained at-large in 2015.

Activities:AQ and its supporters conducted three bombings targeting U.S. troops in Aden in December 1992, and claimed responsibility for shooting down U.S. helicopters and killing U.S. soldiers in Somalia in 1993. AQ also carried out the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, killing up to 300 individuals and injuring more than 5,000. In October 2000, AQ conducted a suicide attack on the USS Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen, with an explosive-laden boat, killing 17 U.S. Navy sailors and injuring 39 others.

On September 11, 2001, 19 AQ members hijacked and crashed four U.S. commercial jets – two into the World Trade Center in New York City, one into the Pentagon, and the last into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 civilians, police, and first responders were killed. The dead included Americans and foreign citizens from at least 77 countries.

In a December 2011 video, al-Zawahiri claimed AQ was behind the kidnapping of American aid worker Warren Weinstein in Pakistan. Weinstein remained in captivity until his death in January 2015.

In February 2014, AQ removed the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant(ISIL) as an affiliate. In September 2014, al-Zawahiri and other AQ leaders announced the establishment of Pakistan-based al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Two days after the announcement, two Pakistani warships were attacked in Karachi; AQIS took responsibility for the plot, which included commandeering missile systems to attack nearby American warships. AQIS claims the orders came from al-Zawahiri.

In September 2015, five senior AQ leaders were released from Iranian custody in exchange for an Iranian diplomat kidnapped in Yemen. Of the five, Saif al Adel and Abu Mohammed al Masri are wanted for the August 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania; al Adel

was a senior lieutenant to al-Qa'ida in Iraq founder Abu Musab al Zarqawi and Abu Mohammed al Masri was AQ's most experienced operational planner.

In September 2015, with the announcement of Mullah Omar's death, new Taliban emir Mullah Mansour described AQ's leaders as the "heroes of the current jihadist era" and bin Laden as the "leader of mujahideen."

Strength: In South Asia, AQ's core has been seriously degraded. The death or arrest of dozens of mid- and senior-level AQ operatives, including bin Laden in May 2011, have disrupted communication, financial support, facilitation nodes, and a number of terrorist plots. AQ, however, serves as a focal point of "inspiration" for a worldwide network of affiliated groups – AQAP, AQIM, al-Nusrah Front, and al-Shabaab – and other violent Sunni Islamist extremist groups, including the IMU, IJU, Lashkar i Jhangvi, HUM, and JI. The TTP and the Haqqani Network also have ties to AQ. In addition, supporters and associates worldwide "inspired" by the group's ideology may operate without direction from AQ central leadership.

Location/Area of Operation: AQ was based in Afghanistan until Coalition Forces removed the Afghan Taliban from power in late 2001. Since then, the group's core leadership is largely based in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. AQ affiliates – al-Nusrah Front, AQAP, AQIM, and al-Shabaab – operate in Syria and Lebanon, Yemen, the Trans-Sahara, and Somalia, respectively.

Funding and External Aid: AQ primarily depends on donations from like-minded supporters, as well as from individuals who believe that their money is supporting a humanitarian cause. Some funds are diverted from Islamic charitable organizations.

AL-QA'IDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

akaal-Qa'ida in the South Arabian Peninsula; al-Qa'ida in Yemen; al-Qa'ida of Jihad Organization in the Arabian Peninsula; al-Qa'ida Organization in the Arabian Peninsula; Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Jazirat al-Arab; AQAP; AQY; Ansar al-Shari'a

Description: Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on January 19, 2010. In January 2009, the now-deceased leader of al-Qa'ida in Yemen (AQY), Nasir al-Wahishi, publicly announced that Yemeni and Saudi al-Qa'ida (AQ) operatives were working together under the banner of AQAP. The announcement signaled the rebirth of an AQ franchise that previously carried out attacks in Saudi Arabia. AQAP's self-stated goals: to establish a caliphate and Sharia law in the Arabian Peninsula and the wider Middle East.

Activities: AQAP has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist acts against both internal and foreign targets since its inception in January 2009, including: a March 2009 suicide bombing against South Korean tourists in Yemen, the August 2009 attempt to assassinate Saudi Prince Muhammad bin Nayif, and the December 25, 2009 attempted attack on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit, Michigan. In October 2010, AQAP claimed responsibility for a foiled plot to send explosive-laden packages to the United States via cargo planes. The parcels were intercepted in the UK and in the United Arab Emirates.

AQAP, operating under the alias Ansar al-Shari'a (AAS), carried out a May 2012 suicide bombing in Sana'a that killed 96 people. Also in May 2012, press reported that AQAP allegedly planned to detonate a bomb aboard a U.S.-bound airliner using an IED. Although there was no imminent threat to U.S. jetliners, the device, acquired from another government, was similar to devices AQAP had used in previous attempted terrorist attacks.

In September 2014, AQAP launched a rocket attack against Yemeni security forces around the perimeter of the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a. The attack did not cause any casualties, but was followed two months later by an IED attack at the northern gate of the embassy that injured multiple embassy security guards. Also in November 2014, AQAP attempted to detonate explosives targeting the U.S. and British Ambassadors to Yemen. In December, AQAP claimed responsibility for an attack against the Iranian ambassador's residence in Sana'a that killed one guard and two pedestrians.

In January 2015, brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi carried out an attack in Paris, France, against the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* that left 12 people dead. One of the brothers, who had traveled to Yemen in 2011 and met with now-deceased Anwar al-Aulaqi, claimed the attack on behalf of AQAP. AQAP later formally claimed responsibility.

Also in 2015, AQAP took advantage of Yemen's deteriorating political and economic environment after the Yemeni government was overthrown by Houthi rebels in January. The United States and several other countries closed their embassies in February amid the violence. In April, AQAP stormed the city of Al Mukalla, seizing control of government buildings, releasing terrorists from prison, and stealing millions from the central bank. AQAP has since consolidated its control over Al Mukalla and has expanded its reach through large portions of Yemen's south.

Strength: AQAP is estimated to have up to four thousand members.

Location/Area of Operation: Yemen

Funding and External Aid:AQAP's funding has historically come from theft, robberies, and kidnap for ransom operations; and donations from like-minded supporters. Since seizing Al Mukallah, it has had access to additional sources of revenue, including the millions it stole from the central bank.

AL-QA'IDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB

akaAQIM; GSPC; Le Groupe Salafiste Pour la Predication et le Combat; Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat; Salafist Group for Call and Combat; Tanzim al-Qa'ida fi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islamiya

Description: The Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 27, 2002. After the GSPC officially joined with al-Qa'ida (AQ) in September 2006 and became known as al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Department of State amended the GSPC designation on February 20, 2008 to reflect the change. Although AQIM remains largely a regionally-focused terrorist group, it has adopted a more anti-Western rhetoric and ideology, and has aspirations of overthrowing "apostate" African regimes

and creating an Islamic state. Abdelmalek Droukdel, aka Abu Mus'ab Abd al-Wadoud, is the group's leader.

Activities: Following AQIM's 2007 bombing of the UN headquarters building and an Algerian government building in Algiers, which killed 60 people, AQIM's northern leadership was largely contained to the mountainous region of northeastern Algeria; the group's southern battalions focused mostly on its kidnapping for ransom efforts. In 2011 and 2012, however, AQIM took advantage of the deteriorating security situation across Tunisia, Libya, and Mali, to plan and conduct expanded operations. Militants with ties to AQIM were involved in the September 11, 2012 attack on U.S. facilities in Benghazi that killed U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens and three other Embassy staff members. In 2013, AQIM attacked regional security forces, local government targets, and westerners in the Sahel, including a suicide bombing that killed two Malian civilians and injured six Malian soldiers. In April 2014, AQIM killed 14 Algerian soldiers in an ambush on a convoy in mountains to the east of Algiers, one of the deadliest attacks on the Algerian military in several years. AQIM also claimed responsibility for the May 27, 2014 attack on the house of Tunisia's interior minister, Lotfi Ben Jeddou.

In January 2015, AQIM claimed responsibility for an attack on a UN vehicle in Kidal, which wounded seven peacekeepers. Also in 2015, AQIM twice attacked UN convoys near Timbuktu with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades; three peacekeepers were killed in a May attack and six in a July attack. In November 2015, AQIM, jointly with other terrorist groups, attacked the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako and took multiple hostages, 20 of whom died during the attack.

AQIM has also continued to conduct kidnapping for ransom operations. The targets were usually Western citizens from governments or third parties that have established a pattern of making concessions in the form of ransom payments for the release of individuals in custody. In November 2014, AQIM released a video of two Western hostages, a Dutch and a French national, who were later released in December 2014.

In June 2015, AQIM released a video featuring one Swedish and one South African hostage who continued to be held captive through the end of 2015. In November, the group was reportedly involved in the attack on the Bamako/Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, Mali, which was likely planned by al-Mulathamun Battalion (aka al-Murabitoun). More than 170 people were taken hostage in the attack, some of whom were American.

Strength:AQIM has several hundred fighters operating in Algeria and the Sahel. Since the French intervention in northern Mali, AQIM's safe haven in northern Mali is less tenable for the organization and elements have moved to remote regions of northern Mali or to southwestern Libya. AQIM is attempting to reorganize in the wake of setbacks inflicted upon it by the combined French and African forces.

Location/Area of Operation: Northeastern Algeria (including but not limited to the Kabylie region), Libya, Tunisia, northern Mali, and Niger.

Funding and External Aid: AQIM members engage in kidnapping for ransom and criminal activities to finance their operations. AQIM also successfully fundraises globally, including limited financial and logistical assistance from supporters residing in Western Europe.

REAL IRA

akaRIRA; Real Irish Republican Army; 32 County Sovereignty Committee; 32 County Sovereignty Movement; Irish Republican Prisoners Welfare Association; Real Oglaigh Na hEireann

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on May 16, 2001, the Real IRA (RIRA) was formed in 1997 as the clandestine armed wing of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, a "political pressure group" dedicated to removing British forces from Northern Ireland and unifying Ireland. The RIRA has historically sought to disrupt the Northern Ireland peace process and did not participate in the September 2005 weapons decommissioning. In September 1997, the 32 County Sovereignty Movement opposed Sinn Fein's adoption of the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence. Despite internal rifts and calls by some jailed members, including the group's founder Michael "Mickey" McKevitt, for a ceasefire and disbandment, the RIRA has pledged additional violence and continues to conduct attacks.

Activities: Many RIRA members are former Provisional Irish Republican Army members who left the organization after that group renewed its ceasefire in 1997. These members brought a wealth of experience in terrorist tactics and bomb-making to the group. Targets have included civilians (the most notorious example: the Omagh bombing in August 1998), British security forces, and police in Northern Ireland. The Independent Monitoring Commission, which was established to oversee the peace process, assessed that RIRA members were likely responsible for the majority of the shootings and assaults that occurred in Northern Ireland.

In 2013, two alleged RIRA members were arrested by Irish police while attempting to carry out the assassination of a local drug dealer. Police searched the van they were traveling in and found two loaded handguns and facemasks. In May 2015, Irish police carried out 20 searches aimed at known dissident republicans across Ireland. Six individuals with links to RIRA and Continuity IRA were arrested after police discovered explosive devices and components.

Strength: According to the Irish government, the RIRA has approximately 100 active members. The organization may receive limited support from IRA hardliners and Republican sympathizers who are dissatisfied with the IRA's continuing ceasefire and with Sinn Fein's involvement in the peace process.

Location/Area of Operation: Northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the Republic of Ireland.

Funding and External Aid: The RIRA is suspected of receiving funds from sympathizers in the United States and of attempting to buy weapons from U.S. gun dealers. The RIRA was also reported to have purchased sophisticated weapons from the Balkans and to have occasionally collaborated with the Continuity Irish Republican Army.

REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA

aka FARC; Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is Latin America's oldest, largest, most violent, and best-equipped terrorist organization. The FARC, founded in the 1960s, is responsible for large numbers of kidnappings for ransom in Colombia and, in past years, has held as many as 700 hostages. The FARC's capacity has been degraded by a continuing Colombian military offensive targeting key FARC units and leaders that has, by most estimates, halved the FARC's numbers – estimated at approximately 7,000 in 2015 – and succeeded in capturing or killing a number of FARC senior and mid-level commanders. In August 2012, the Colombian President announced that exploratory peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC were underway. The formal talks began in Norway and moved to Cuba, where they continued through 2015. These talks are the first such peace negotiations in more than a decade, and the fourth effort in the last 30 years. Although the government and the FARC reached tentative, partial agreements on land reform, political participation, drug trafficking, and victims' rights (including transitional justice), no overall bilateral peace agreement had been concluded by the end of 2015.

Activities: Over the years, the FARC has perpetrated a large number of high profile terrorist acts, including the 1999 murder of three U.S. missionaries working in Colombia, and multiple kidnappings and assassinations of Colombian government officials and civilians. In July 2008, the Colombian military conducted a dramatic rescue of 15 high-value FARC hostages including U.S. Department of Defense contractors Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Thomas Howe— held captive for more than five years, along with former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt.

While peace negotiations were ongoing, the FARC remained active in carrying out acts of terrorism in 2015. On April 15, the FARC attacked a Colombian Army brigade in Cauca; 11 soldiers were killed and 20 wounded. Throughout May and June, FARC bombings of electricity towers in Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca, and Nariño left almost a million people without power for days. A June 1 FARC attack on electrical infrastructure in the city of Buenaventura left approximately 400,000 without power, while the group's June 2 attack on electrical pylons in the southwestern city of Tumaco left approximately 200,000 people without electricity. Another June attack on Tumaco affected an additional 260,000 people.

On June 7, the FARC forced 19 oil tankers to dump their contents, estimated at 222,000 gallons of crude oil, on a roadway near Puerto Asis, Putumayo, which caused a significant environmental hazard. Throughout June and July, the FARC attacked oil pipelines, hitting the Transandino Pipeline five times and bombing the Cano Limon-Covenas Pipeline. The Colombian Environment Minister announced the damage caused by the Transandino attacks as "the worst oil spill in Colombia in the last decade."

In November, FARC member Diego Alfonso Navarrete Baltran was sentenced to 27 years in prison by a U.S. District Court for his role in the 2003 kidnapping of the three U.S. defense contractors held hostage by the FARC for five years.

Strength: Approximately 7000 members, with several thousand additional supporters.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily Colombia; FARC leaders and combatants have however been known to use neighboring countries for weapons sourcing and logistical planning. The

FARC often uses Colombia's border areas with Venezuela, Panama, and Ecuador for incursions into Colombia; and has used Venezuelan and Ecuadorian territory for safe haven.

Funding and External Aid: The FARC is primarily funded by extortion, ransoms from kidnapping, and the international drug trade.

REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S LIBERATION PARTY/FRONT

akaDHKP/C; Dev Sol; Dev Sol Armed Revolutionary Units; Dev Sol Silahli Devrimci Birlikleri; Dev Sol SDB; Devrimci Halk Kurtulus Partisi-Cephesi; Devrimci Sol; Revolutionary Left

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) was originally formed in 1978 as Devrimci Sol, or Dev Sol, a splinter faction of Dev Genc (Revolutionary Youth). It was renamed in 1994 after factional infighting. "Party" refers to the group's political activities, while "Front" is a reference to the group's militant operations. The group advocates a Marxist-Leninist ideology and opposes the United States, NATO, and Turkish establishments. It strives to establish a socialist state and to abolish Turkish prisons.

Activities: Since the late 1980s, the group has primarily targeted current and retired Turkish security and military officials, although since 1990 it has conducted attacks against foreign interests, including U.S. military and diplomatic personnel and facilities. The DHKP/C assassinated two U.S. military contractors and wounded a U.S. Air Force officer in the 1990s, and bombed more than 20 U.S. and NATO military, diplomatic, commercial, and cultural facilities. DHKP/C added suicide bombings to its repertoire in 2001, with attacks against Turkish police in January and September of that year. Since the end of 2001, DHKP/C has typically used IEDs against official Turkish targets and U.S. targets of opportunity.

The DHKP/C was dealt a major ideological blow when its leader, Dursun Karatas died in August 2008. After the loss of its leader, the DHKP/C reorganized in 2009 and was reportedly in competition with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) for influence in Turkey and with the Turkish diaspora in Europe.

The group was responsible for a number of high profile attacks in 2012 that included a suicide bombing of a police station in Istanbul. This tactic continued in 2013 when, on February 1, a DHKP/C operative exploded a suicide vest inside the employee entrance to the U.S. Embassy in Ankara. The explosion killed a Turkish guard and seriously wounded a visiting Turkish journalist. In March 2013, three members of the group attacked the Ministry of Justice and the Ankara headquarters of the Turkish Justice and Development political party using grenades and rocket launchers. The DHKP/C claimed a similar attack in September 2013, when two members of the group fired rockets at the Turkish National Police headquarters and a police guesthouse. In March 2014, the DHKP/C also claimed a shooting at a protest that left one man dead.

In 2015, DHKP/C claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed a police officer and wounded another. In March, Turkish prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz, was taken hostage and killed from multiple gunshot wounds by the DHKP/C after police attempted to rescue him. In

August, two women opened fire on the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul; one woman was identified as a member of the DHKP/C.

Strength: Membership includes an estimated several dozen members inside Turkey, with a support network throughout Europe.

Location/Area of Operation: Turkey, primarily in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Adana. Other members live and plan operations in European countries.

Funding and External Aid: The DHKP/C finances its activities chiefly through donations and extortion. It raises funds primarily in Europe.

REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

akaRS; Epanastatikos Aghonas; EA

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on May 18, 2009, Revolutionary Struggle (RS) is a radical leftist group with Marxist ideology that has conducted attacks against both Greek and U.S. targets in Greece. RS emerged in 2003 following the arrests of members of the Greek leftist groups 17 November and Revolutionary People's Struggle.

Activities:RS first gained notoriety when it claimed responsibility for the September 5, 2003 bombings at the Athens Courthouse during the trials of 17 November members. From 2004 to 2006, RS claimed responsibility for a number of IED attacks, including a March 2004 attack outside of a Citibank office in Athens. RS claimed responsibility for the January 12, 2007 rocket propelled grenade (RPG) attack on the U.S. Embassy in Athens, which damaged the building; and the March 2009 bombing of a Citibank branch in Athens. In September 2009, RS also claimed responsibility for a car bomb attack on the Athens Stock Exchange, which caused widespread damage and injured a passerby.

The Greek government has made significant strides in curtailing RS' terrorist activity. On April 10, 2010, Greek police arrested six suspected RS members, including purported leader Nikos Maziotis. In addition to the arrests, the Greek raid resulted in the seizure of a RPG launcher, possibly the one used against the U.S. Embassy in Athens in the 2007 attack. On April 3, 2013, five members of RS were convicted by an Athens appeals court, three of them receiving maximum prison sentences. Maziotis and another accused RS conspirator, Paula Roupa, were convicted in absentia. Prior to Maziotis' recapture (following a gunfight with police on July 16, 2014), RS conducted a bomb attack outside a Bank of Greece office in Athens in April 2014; the blast caused extensive damage to surrounding structures but no casualties. There were no known RS attacks in 2015.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Athens, Greece

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

AL-SHABAAB

aka The Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin; al-Shabab; Shabaab; the Youth; Mujahidin al-Shabaab Movement; Mujahideen Youth Movement; Mujahidin Youth Movement

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 18, 2008, al-Shabaab was the militant wing of the former Somali Islamic Courts Council that took over parts of southern Somalia during the second half of 2006. Since the end of 2006, al-Shabaab and associated militias have undertaken a violent insurgency using guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics against the transitional governments of Somalia. In 2015, the group continued to fight to discredit and destabilize the Federal Government of Somalia.

Al-Shabaab is an official al-Qa'ida (AQ) affiliate and has ties to other AQ affiliates, including al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb. The group's leader is Ahmed Diriye aka Ahmed Umar aka Abu Ubaidah, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

Al-Shabaab is composed of a mixture of Somali recruits and foreign fighters. Since 2011, al-Shabaab has seen its military capacity reduced due to the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali forces, and clashes – some violent – within the group itself. Despite al-Shabaab's loss of urban centers since 2012, the group was able to maintain its hold on large sections of rural areas in south-central Somalia in 2015 and conducted multiple attacks in Somalia and Kenya.

Activities: Al-Shabaab has used intimidation and violence to exploit divisions in Somalia and undermine the Federal Government of Somalia, recruit new fighters, and kill activists working to bring about peace through political dialogue and reconciliation. The group has claimed responsibility for several high profile bombings and shootings throughout Somalia targeting AMISOM troops and Somali officials. Al-Shabaab fighters and others claiming allegiance to the group have claimed responsibility for the assassination of numerous civil society figures, government officials, journalists, international aid workers, and members of NGOs.

Al-Shabaab was responsible for the July 11, 2010 suicide bombings in Kampala, Uganda – its first attack outside of Somalia. The attack, which took place during the World Cup, killed nearly 76 people, including one American citizen. In 2013, al-Shabaab again expanded its area of operations when it staged a significant attack in September against the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya. The siege resulted in the death of at least 65 civilians, including foreign nationals from 13 countries outside of Kenya and six soldiers and police officers; hundreds of others were injured.

In February 2015, al-Shabaab conducted a suicide attack at the Central Hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia, killing 25 people, including the city's deputy mayor and two legislators. During 2015, the group also claimed responsibility for a March siege at the Maka Al-Mukarramah Hotel in Mogadishu, which killed at least 24 people, including six militants, and an April raid with small arms and suicide vests on Kenya's Garissa University College that left nearly 150 people dead. In June, al-Shabaab carried out a suicide attack against a military intelligence base in Mogadishu and a suicide attack on a diplomatic convoy departing the United Arab Emirates embassy in Mogadishu, in which at least six people were killed. In July, the group assaulted an Ethiopian convoy and base predominantly held by Burundian soldiers in Leego, Somalia, killing dozens of AMISOM troops and in September, conducted an attack on a remote AMISOM base in Janaale,

Somalia, which killed 37 AMISOM soldiers. Al-Shabaab also claimed responsibility for the November attack on Mogadishu's Sahafi hotel, where government officials and lawmakers stay. The attack left 13 dead.

Strength: Al-Shabaab is estimated to have several thousand members, including a small cadre of foreign fighters.

Location/Area of Operation: Al-Shabaab has lost full control of significant areas of territory. In September 2012, al-Shabaab lost control of Kismayo, a vital port it used to obtain supplies and funding through taxes. In October 2014, al-Shabaab lost another strategic port in Baraawe to AMISOM and Somali troops. In 2015, an AMISOM offensive forced the group out of two of its strongholds and killed up to 100 personnel. Despite these losses, al-Shabaab continued to control large sections of rural areas in the middle and lower Juba regions, as well as the Bay, Shabelle, and Bakol regions. The group also maintained its presence in northern Somalia along the Golis Mountains and within Puntland's larger urban areas, and launched several attacks against targets in Kenya.

Funding and External Aid: While al-Shabaab has seen its income diminish due to the loss of the strategic port cities of Kismayo, Merka, and Baraawe, it has received enough income to launch multiple attacks per week in Mogadishu, launch complex attacks against AMISOM bases, and expand operations against civilian aviation targets. Al-Shabaab obtained funds through illegal charcoal production and exports, and taxation of local populations and businesses.

Because al-Shabaab is a multi-clan entity, it reportedly receives donations from individuals in the Somali diaspora; the donations are not always intended to support terrorism, however, but also to support family members.

SHINING PATH

aka SL; Sendero Luminoso; Ejercito Guerrillero Popular (People's Guerrilla Army); EGP; Ejercito Popular de Liberacion (People's Liberation Army); EPL; Partido Comunista del Peru (Communist Party of Peru); PCP; Partido Comunista del Peru en el Sendero Luminoso de Jose Carlos Mariategui (Communist Party of Peru on the Shining Path of Jose Carlos Mariategui); Socorro Popular del Peru (People's Aid of Peru); SPP

Description: The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso or SL) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. The SL was formed by former university professor Abimael Guzman in Peru in the late 1960s; Guzman's teachings created the foundation of SL's militant Maoist doctrine. The SL strives to destroy existing Peruvian institutions and replace them with a communist peasant revolutionary regime; the group also opposes any influence by foreign governments. In the 1980s, SL was one of the most ruthless terrorist groups in the Western Hemisphere. In 1992, the Peruvian government captured Guzman who remains, along with key accomplices, in prison serving a life sentence.

In 2015, SL constituted a localized and declining threat and maintained a low profile with dwindling membership. SL's area of activity and influence was confined to the special military emergency zone known as the Apurimac, Ene, and Mantaro River Valley (VRAEM). SL is involved in all logistical aspects of drug trafficking in this area.

Activities:SL committed 13 terrorist attacks in 2015, in comparison to 20 terrorist acts in 2014 and 49 in 2013. In 2015, SL attacks and operations resulted in the deaths of two soldiers and three civilians; seven members of the security forces were also wounded in action. In two separate operations, security forces rescued 54 people, including 37 children, held by SL.

Strength: Estimates of SL's strength vary, but most experts and the Peruvian military assess SL to number 250 to 300 combatants, of which 60-100 are hardcore fighters.

Location/Area of Operation: Peru, with most activity taking place in rural areas, specifically the Huallaga Valley and the Apurimac, Ene, and Montaro River Valley of central Peru.

Funding and External Aid: SL is primarily funded by the illicit narcotics trade.

TEHRIK-E TALIBAN PAKISTAN

aka Pakistani Taliban; Tehreek-e-Taliban; Tehrik-e-Taliban; Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan; Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan; TTP

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on September 1, 2010, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is a Pakistan-based terrorist organization formed in 2007 to oppose Pakistani military efforts in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Previously disparate tribal militants agreed to cooperate and eventually coalesced into TTP under the leadership of now deceased leader Baitullah Mehsud. TTP was led by Hakimullah Mehsud from August 2009 until his death in November 2013. Since Hakimullah Mehsud's death, TTP has been led by Mullah Fazlullah, former leader of TTP's chapter in the Swat area of Pakistan, and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. Since Fazlullah became TTP's leader, the group has been engaged in violent infighting. A rival faction led by Khan Said – a former TTP commander who previously clashed with Hakimullah – publicly split from TTP in May 2014. Separately, TTP entered into peace talks with the Pakistani government in early 2014, but the talks collapsed in June 2014. In October 2014, the chief spokesman and five regional commanders defected from TTP and publicly pledged allegiance to ISIL.

TTP's goals include waging a terrorist campaign against the Pakistani military and state, against NATO forces in Afghanistan, and overthrowing the Government of Pakistan. TTP uses the tribal belt along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to train and deploy its operatives, and has ties to al-Qa'ida (AQ). TTP draws ideological guidance from AQ, while AQ relies on TTP for safe haven in the Pashtun areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistani border. This arrangement gives TTP access to both AQ's global terrorist network and the operational experience of its members.

Activities:TTP has carried out and claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist acts against Pakistani and U.S. interests, including a December 2009 suicide attack on a U.S. military base in Khowst, Afghanistan, which killed seven U.S. citizens; and an April 2010 suicide bombing against the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan, which killed six Pakistani citizens. TTP is suspected of involvement in the 2007 assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. TTP directed and facilitated the failed attempt by Faisal Shahzad to detonate an explosive device in New York City's Times Square on May 1, 2010.

Between 2011 and 2013, TTP carried out attacks against the Government of Pakistan and civilian targets, as well as against U.S. targets in Pakistan. Attacks in 2011 targeted civilians, Pakistani government and military targets, and an American consulate convoy in a series of suicide bombings and attacks. In 2012, TTP carried out attacks targeting a mosque, police checkpoint, a Pakistani Air Force base, and a bus carrying Shia Muslims. In 2013, TTP attacked churches, the home of a government minister in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, and a Shia neighborhood in Karachi, Pakistan. TTP's attacks in 2013 killed and wounded hundreds of civilians and Pakistani government and law enforcement officials.

In 2014, TTP carried out attacks targeting military and police convoys, bazaars, buses, and schools. In June 2014, TTP launched two consecutive attacks against Karachi's international airport, one on June 8 and the second followed two days later. In the June 8 attack, carried out in conjunction with Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a squad of commandos – disguised as government security forces – stormed the airport. The ensuing fight between security forces and the TTP, which lasted through the night, killed at least 36 people. The second attack, in which at least two gunmen opened fire on a guard post at the airport perimeter, caused no casualties. In December, TTP laid siege to a primary school in Peshawar, Pakistan. The eight-hour assault on the school killed 145 people, 132 of whom were children.

Throughout 2015, TTP continued attacking government targets. TTP focused many of its small-scale attacks on Pakistani government and law enforcement officials by targeting convoys, government buildings, motorcades, and police checkpoints. In September, TTP stormed an air force station near Peshawar, resulting in a firefight with officials that killed at least 29 people, including security officers and civilians. In December, TTP claimed responsibility for three separate, coordinated attacks across Pakistan that killed a Frontier Corps official in Quetta and a retired major of the Pakistani Army in Karachi, and wounded a deputy superintendent of police in Peshawar.

TTP also attacked civilian targets during the course of 2015. In February, more than 20 people were killed in a bombing targeting a Shia mosque near Peshawar, and at least 15 were killed when suicide bombers struck two churches in Lahore in March. An anti-polio worker was also killed and a second injured in a March shooting in Bajaur Agency, Pakistan. In May, one person was killed and five injured when TTP attacked a group of civilians celebrating their victory in a cricket match.

Strength: Several thousand

Location/Area of Operation: Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan

Funding and External Aid: TTP is believed to raise most of its funds through kidnapping ransoms, criminal activity, and extortion.

Chapter 7
Legislative Requirements and Key Terms

Legislative Requirements and Key Terms

Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 is submitted in compliance with Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f (the "Act"), which requires the Department of State to provide Congress a full and complete annual report on terrorism for those countries and groups meeting the criteria of the Act. Statutory excerpts relating to the terms used in this report and a discussion of the interpretation and application of those terms in this report are included below.

Excerpts and Summary of Key Statutory Terms:

Section 2656f(a) of Title 22 of the United States Code states as follows:
(a) … The Secretary of State shall transmit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, by April 30 of each year, a full and complete report providing -

(1) (A) detailed assessments with respect to each foreign country -

(i) in which acts of international terrorism occurred which were, in the opinion of the Secretary, of major significance;

(ii) about which the Congress was notified during the preceding five years pursuant to Section 2405(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979; and

(iii) which the Secretary determines should be the subject of such report; and

(B) detailed assessments with respect to each foreign country whose territory is being used as a sanctuary for terrorist organizations;

(2) all relevant information about the activities during the preceding year of any terrorist group, and any umbrella group under which such terrorist group falls, known to be responsible for the kidnapping or death of an American citizen during the preceding five years, any terrorist group known to have obtained or developed, or to have attempted to obtain or develop, weapons of mass destruction, any terrorist group known to be financed by countries about which Congress was notified during the preceding year pursuant to section 2405(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979, any group designated by the Secretary as a foreign terrorist organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189), and any other known international terrorist group which the Secretary determines should be the subject of such report;

(3) with respect to each foreign country from which the United States Government has sought cooperation during the previous five years in the investigation or prosecution of an act of international terrorism against United States citizens or interests, information on -

(A) the extent to which the government of the foreign country is cooperating with the United States Government in apprehending, convicting, and punishing the individual or individuals

responsible for the act; and

(B) the extent to which the government of the foreign country is cooperating in preventing further acts of terrorism against United States citizens in the foreign country; and

(4) with respect to each foreign country from which the United States Government has sought cooperation during the previous five years in the prevention of an act of international terrorism against such citizens or interests, the information described in paragraph (3)(B).

Section 2656f(d) of Title 22 of the United States Code defines certain key terms used in Section 2656f(a) as follows:

(1) the term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country;

(2) the term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents; and

(3) the term "terrorist group" means any group practicing, or which has significant subgroups which practice, international terrorism.

Interpretation and Application of Key Terms. For purposes of this report, the terms "international terrorism," "terrorism," and "terrorist group" have the definitions assigned to them in 22 USC 2656f(d) (see above). The term "non-combatant," which is referred to but not defined in 22 USC 2656f(d)(2), is interpreted to mean, in addition to civilians, military personnel (whether or not armed or on duty) who are not deployed in a war zone or a war-like setting.

It should be noted that 22 USC 2656f(d) is one of many U.S. statutes and international legal instruments that concern terrorism and acts of violence, many of which use definitions for terrorism and related terms that are different from those used in this report. The interpretation and application of defined and related terms concerning terrorism in this report is therefore specific to the statutory and other requirements of the report, and is not intended to express the views of the U.S. government on how these terms should be interpreted or applied for any other purpose. Accordingly, there is not necessarily any correlation between the interpretation of terms such as "non-combatant" for purposes of this report and the meanings ascribed to similar terms pursuant to the law of war (which encapsulates the obligations of states and individuals with respect to their activities in situations of armed conflict).

Statistical Information. Pursuant to 22 USC § 2656f(b), this report should contain "to the extent practicable, complete statistical information on the number of individuals, including United States citizens and dual nationals, killed, injured, or kidnapped by each terrorist group during the preceding calendar year." This is satisfied through the inclusion of a statistical annex to the report that sets out statistical information provided by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), a Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence, based at the University of Maryland. The statistical annex includes a discussion of the methodology employed by START in compiling the relevant data. This report does not contain statistical information specifically concerning combatants. The

focus of the terrorism report, as is clear from the definition of terrorism, is on violence against noncombatant targets.

Contextual Reporting.Adverse mention in this report of individual members of any political, social, ethnic, religious, or national population is not meant to imply that all members of that population are terrorists. Indeed, terrorists rarely represent anything other than a tiny fraction of such larger populations. It is terrorist groups--and their actions--that are the focus of this report.

Furthermore, terrorist acts are part of a larger phenomenon of violence inspired by a cause, and at times the line between the two can become difficult to draw. This report includes some discretionary information in an effort to relate terrorist events to the larger context in which they occur, and to give a feel for the conflicts that spawn violence.

Thus, this report will discuss terrorist acts as well as other violent incidents that are not necessarily "international terrorism" and therefore are not subject to the statutory reporting requirement.