

government is unable to fully implement UNSCRs related to terrorist financing. Since 2010, FATF has identified Yemen as a risk to the international financial system because of its strategic AML/CFT deficiencies.

The government has committed with the STC to enhance management of state revenues and announced in December the formation of a committee authorized to inspect and audit customs and tax collection points to ensure that funds were not diverted from government coffers.

Countering Violent Extremism: There were no significant changes in 2019.

International and Regional Cooperation: Yemen joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in 2019. The Republic of Yemen Government continued to cooperate with the GCC, the United States, and other donor countries as it concentrated on working toward a political solution to the conflict. Despite the challenges, the Republic of Yemen Government remained a dependable international partner as it worked to reestablish the rule of law within the territory it holds. Yemen, with the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, participates in the Yemen Security Working Group, which includes military and diplomatic representatives from its three member states, and develops several cooperative capacity-building initiatives for Yemeni military and security forces. For example, in July, 15 Yemen Coast Guard personnel participated in a two-and-a-half week ship boarding and inspection course held in Aden and delivered by the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime's Global Maritime Crime Program. In addition, around 150 Yemen Border Guard members participated in five Export Control and Related Border Security-funded iterations of Yemen Border Interdiction Training in Riyadh. Yemen also belongs to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League.

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

Overview: In addition to continued terrorist activity in Afghanistan and Pakistan, South Asia in 2019 saw a volatile mix of insurgent attacks punctuated by major incidents of terrorism in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (now known as the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir) and in Sri Lanka. A February 14 suicide bombing attack against an Indian paramilitary convoy in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir led to military hostilities and heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. Although ISIS lost the last remnants of its territory in Syria in March, it announced new branches in Pakistan and India in May and claimed responsibility for the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka in April.

Although al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been seriously degraded, key figures among AQ's global leadership, as well as its regional affiliate al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), continued to operate from remote locations in the region that historically served as safe havens.

Afghanistan continued to experience aggressive and coordinated terrorist attacks by ISIS's branch in the region, ISIS Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), and by the Afghan Taliban, including the affiliated Haqqani Network (HQN). Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) retained full responsibility for security in Afghanistan and, in partnership with NATO's Resolute

Support Mission, took aggressive action against terrorist elements across Afghanistan. In offensives in late 2019, the ANDSF and the Taliban significantly degraded ISIS-K in Nangarhar province, denying ISIS territory, but the group continues to operate and regroup.

While Pakistan continued to experience terrorist attacks, there were fewer attacks and casualties than in 2018, continuing an overall decline. Pakistani military and security forces undertook CT operations against groups that conducted attacks within Pakistan, such as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ISIS-K, and the Balochistan Liberation Army. Pakistan took modest steps in 2019 to counter terror financing and restrain India-focused militant groups from conducting large-scale attacks following the February attack on a security convoy in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir linked to Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). Pakistan took action against some externally focused groups, including indicting Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT) founder Hafiz Saeed and associates in three separate terrorism financing cases.

However, Pakistan remained a safe harbor for other regionally focused terrorist groups. It allowed groups targeting Afghanistan, including the Afghan Taliban and affiliated HQN, as well as groups targeting India, including LeT and its affiliated front organizations, and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), to operate from its territory. It did not take action against other known terrorists, such as JeM founder and UN-designated terrorist Masood Azhar and 2008 Mumbai attack “project manager” Sajid Mir, both of whom are believed to remain free in Pakistan. Pakistan, however, did make some positive contributions to the Afghanistan peace process, such as encouraging Taliban reductions in violence. Pakistan made some progress toward meeting the Action Plan requirements for the FATF, allowing it to avoid being blacklisted, but did not complete all Action Plan items in 2019.

In August, India amended the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act of 1967 to authorize the designation of individuals as terrorists – which it did a month later by designating four terrorists, including the leaders of LeT and JeM. The Indian Parliament also amended the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act of 2008 to provide the NIA the ability to investigate terrorism cases overseas. The United States continues to build its strategic partnership with the Government of India, including through the bilateral Counterterrorism Joint Working Group meeting in March and the second 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in December.

In April, ISIS-inspired terrorists conducted sophisticated suicide bombing attacks against churches and hotels across Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, resulting in hundreds of deaths. It was a vivid example of ISIS’s determination, after the loss of its so-called “caliphate” in Syria and Iraq, to continue the fight from its global branches and networks and by inspiring attacks.

In Maldives, the Solih administration continues to make progress bolstering its CT efforts. In July, President Solih announced Maldives’ intent to facilitate the return and prosecution of Maldivian FTFs and families in Syria. The Maldivian government also passed an amendment strengthening its 2015 Anti-Terrorism Act and designated 17 terrorist organizations in September. In October, Maldivian police arrested Specially Designated Global Terrorist and ISIS recruiter Mohamad Ameen on “suspicion of spreading extremist ideology.”

In Bangladesh, ISIS-affiliated terrorists claimed six IED attacks, five of which were directed against Bangladesh police. ISIS's At-Tamkin media outlet released a Bangla-language propaganda video outlining its campaign against the Bangladesh government and other declared enemies.

Central Asian countries remained concerned about the potential spillover of terrorism from Afghanistan, as well as the potential threat posed by the return of their citizens who traveled to Iraq or Syria to fight with terrorist groups, including ISIS. Between January and June, the Kazakhstan government led the world in FTF repatriations by bringing back 595 Kazakhstani fighters and family members from Syria, prosecuting those suspected of participating in terrorist activity abroad, and providing rehabilitation and reintegration services to the remainder. Also in 2019, the Uzbekistan government repatriated 220 FTF family members from Iraq and Syria, mostly women and children, while the Tajikistan government repatriated 95. The Kyrgyz Republic saw the return of about 300 FTFs and family members.

In November, ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack on the Tajik-Uzbek border. Through the C5+1 (the United States plus the Central Asian countries), officials from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated in the associated C5+1 Security Working Group focused on regional cooperation on CT.

AFGHANISTAN

Overview: The United States partners with Afghanistan in a bilateral CT effort through Operation Freedom's Sentinel. The U.S. military, along with 38 other Coalition nations, also supports the ANDSF through the NATO Resolute Support "Train, Advise, and Assist" mission. In 2019, the Taliban and the affiliated HQN increased terrorist attacks targeting Afghan civilians, government officials, and members of the international community. Additionally, ISIS-K continued to attack civilians and especially targeted religious minorities. The enemy-initiated attack trend in 2019 defied its usual seasonal pattern; while in most years, such attacks decrease in cold-weather months, they remained consistently high following the summer fighting season. ISIS-K, elements of al-Qa'ida, including affiliate AQIS, and terrorist groups targeting Pakistan, such as TTP, continued to use the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region as a safe haven. Afghanistan is also the only member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS from South and Central Asia.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: Attacks attributed to terrorist activity continued to increase in 2019. While the majority of attacks occurred in Kabul, Jalalabad, and other major population centers, incidents also targeted Highway 1 (Afghanistan's national Ring Road highway). Militants conducted high-profile attacks through complex assaults involving multiple attackers wearing suicide vests to target ANDSF, Afghan government buildings, foreign governments, and soft civilian targets to include international organizations. According to Resolute Support Mission reporting, between January 1 and September 30, insurgent and terrorist attacks were responsible for 1,618 civilians killed and an additional 4,958 wounded. Among the significant terrorist incidents in 2019 were:

- On May 8, the Taliban attacked USAID-funded, U.S.-based aid organization Counterpart International in Kabul, killing four civilians and a policeman, and wounding 24 others. All attackers were killed after a six-hour battle with Afghan security forces.
- On July 1, a Taliban attack against the Afghan National Army Logistic and Armory Directorate involved a VBIED and five gunmen attacking the compound. The attack killed 40 civilians and wounded more than 100, including men, women, and children, in an adjacent school.
- On August 17, ISIS-K conducted a suicide bombing that targeted Shi'ite celebrants in a wedding hall in Kabul, killing at least 80 people and injuring more than 140.
- On September 2, the Taliban detonated a suicide car bomb at a facility in Kabul that housed numerous international organizations, killing 16 people and injuring more than 119. Those killed included five Nepalis, two Britons, and a Romanian diplomat.
- On September 5, the Taliban detonated a suicide car bomb in Kabul killing 12 people, including an American paratrooper and a Romanian soldier. The explosion also injured more than 40.
- On December 11, the Taliban conducted an attack on a hospital adjoining Bagram Airfield killing two and wounding 80 others, mostly civilians. No Coalition fatalities were reported.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Afghan Attorney General's Office investigates and prosecutes violations of the laws prohibiting membership in terrorist or insurgent groups, violent acts committed against the state, hostage taking, murder, and the use of explosives against military forces and state infrastructure. These laws were codified into one Afghan Penal Code for national security crimes on May 15, 2017, in Official Gazette #1260. These laws include Crimes against the Internal and External Security of the State (1976 and 1987), Combat Against Terrorist Offences (2008), and Firearms, Ammunition, and Explosives (2005).

Specialized police Crisis Response Units located in the Afghan cities of Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif, and Herat continue to thwart and successfully respond to militant attacks.

Afghanistan continued to face significant challenges in protecting its borders, particularly those with Pakistan and Iran. Under the bilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), which met for the first time in July 2018, Afghan and Pakistani officials agreed in principle to create a mechanism for communication between security forces on each side of the border. On June 10 at the APAPPS Review Session in Islamabad, the Afghan and Pakistani deputy foreign ministers met to discuss trade, transit, the peace process, refugees, and closer border security coordination. Despite this review and discussions between the two governments to utilize APAPPS, progress through this forum remains slow.

Afghanistan continued to process traveler arrivals and departures at major ports of entry using U.S.-provided PISCES border security management system, which currently operates at 13 ports of entry, including the airports of Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif. The most recent implementation of PISCES was in October at the Gulum Khan border crossing of Khost province.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Afghanistan is a member of the APG. In line with FATF recommendations, Afghanistan's FIU, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Center of Afghanistan (FinTRACA), conducted a money laundering and terrorist-financing risk assessment in 2019. On May 15, the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee designated ISIS-K as the first ISIS affiliate to be designated by the UN.

Afghan Peace Process: Throughout 2019, the United States sought to negotiate an agreement with the Taliban that would commit the Taliban to take action against international terrorist groups, including not allowing those groups to recruit, train, or raise funds on Afghan territory, and to not host those groups. In return for these commitments and for the start of intra-Afghan negotiations that would include the Afghan government, other Afghan leaders, and the Taliban, the United States would agree to a timeline for the conditions-based withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan. Although the United States suspended talks following Taliban attacks in early September that were inconsistent with multiple rounds of serious negotiations, these talks were restarted in December following a series of goodwill gestures by the Taliban and Afghan government, including the release of one American and one Australian hostage, the release of Taliban-held ANDSF hostages, and the release of Afghan-held Taliban prisoners.

Countering Violent Extremism: A landmark July 6-8 intra-Afghan dialogue, hosted in Doha, Qatar, and organized by Germany, brought together representatives of the Afghan government, other Afghan leaders, civil society groups (including women's groups), and the Taliban. Participating in their personal capacities, the attendees agreed on the conditions necessary to reach a sustainable peace, and a roadmap for achieving peace.

From April 28 to May 3, a Loya Jirga chaired by Mujahedin leader and Islamic scholar Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf included 3,200 religious leaders, politicians, and representatives who met to discuss peace and called for an immediate ceasefire between the government and militants. The Jirga's 3,200 delegates were divided into 51 committees that developed 23 recommendations urging a cease in violence between Afghan security forces and militants. The Taliban condemned the Jirga as unrepresentative of the Afghan people.

International and Regional Cooperation: Afghanistan is a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. In May, Afghan President Ghani agreed to participate in a trilateral meeting with Pakistan and the United States to discuss not only security but also prospective cooperation on economic growth and regional connectivity.

BANGLADESH

Overview: Bangladesh experienced a small increase in terrorist activity in 2019. ISIS claimed six IED attacks, five of which were directed at Bangladesh police. ISIS's At-Tamkin media outlet released a Bangla-language propaganda video outlining its campaign against the Bangladesh government and other declared enemies. As in prior years, the Bangladesh government denied that Bangladesh-based terrorists have meaningful ties to transnational terror groups, including ISIS or AQIS. In November, the Bangladesh government formally granted operational authority to a national Antiterrorism Unit. Also in November, the CT Special Tribunal in Dhaka sentenced seven individuals to death for their supporting roles in the 2016

Holey Artisan Bakery attack, in which attackers claiming allegiance to ISIS killed 20 people, including one American. However, ongoing deficits in Bangladesh's judicial system contribute to a decade-long backlog of terrorism cases and a conviction rate estimated at less than 15 percent. The Bangladesh government continued to articulate a "zero tolerance" policy toward terrorism and the use of its territory as a terrorist safe haven. In December, the Bangladesh government, in concert with the U.S. Embassy, the UN, and other partners, hosted its inaugural National CVE Conference aimed at producing a national CVE strategy.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: From April to November, Bangladeshi militants detonated six IEDs. Five were directed against the Bangladesh police, while one detonated at an Awami League office in Khulna. ISIS claimed responsibility for these attacks, which caused several injuries but no deaths.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In 2019, Bangladesh's criminal justice system was still in the process of fully implementing the Antiterrorism Act of 2009 as amended in 2012 and 2013. A CT Special Tribunal authorized under the Act sentenced seven men to death for their supporting roles in the 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery attack. Although Bangladesh's Antiterrorism Act does not outlaw recruitment and travel in the furtherance of terrorism, the broad language of the Act provides several mechanisms by which Bangladesh can implement UNSCR 2396 on addressing FTFs. Despite lacking laws specific to FTFs, Bangladesh arrested suspected FTFs or facilitators of such fighters on other charges under existing law.

Bangladesh cooperated with the United States to strengthen control of its borders and ports of entry. The international community remains concerned about security procedures at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. In February, a man attempted to hijack a passenger aircraft in flight, having smuggled what authorities reported was a fake gun onto the aircraft. There were several subsequent incidents in which passengers defeated screening protocols. U.S.-trained explosive detection K9 teams are available to patrol Dhaka's international airport but are not a permanent presence. Bangladesh shared law enforcement information with INTERPOL but does not have a dedicated terrorist watchlist, though the United States and Bangladesh are collaborating on the development of a national level Alert List of known or suspected terrorists. Bangladesh also does not systematically review or analyze API/PNR.

Elements of the Bangladesh Police continued a campaign of arrests and raids against suspected militants. Many suspects died in these operations, sometimes described as the result of "shootouts" or "crossfire" – often euphemisms for extrajudicial killings. Observers questioned the veracity and significance of some of the reported CT operations, describing them as either staged by law enforcement or inaccurately portrayed by the media.

In August, ISIS's At-Tamkin media outlet released a Bangla-language video directed against the Bangladesh government, as well as foreign governments, religious minorities, and other alleged enemies of Islam. In September, Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime Unit arrested several individuals who allegedly produced the video.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Bangladesh is a member and current co-chair of the APG. The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit is a member of the Egmont Group. There were no significant updates in 2019.

Countering Violent Extremism: Bangladeshi organizations continued cooperative activities through the Country Support Mechanism under GCERF, a public-private global fund to support local, grassroots CVE efforts in at-risk communities. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the National Committee on Militancy, Resistance, and Prevention work with imams and religious scholars to build public awareness against terrorism. The police engaged religious leaders to counter terrorist propaganda with scripture-based messages and engaged imams to speak to surrendered militants to explain that the Quran does not support terrorist violence. They also continued community policing efforts. Law enforcement authorities worked with local universities to identify missing students and curb terrorist radicalization among university students. Local research institutions, including private think tanks and both public and private universities, continued to engage in CVE-related research. In December, the Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime Unit partnered with the U.S. Embassy, the UN, and various CSOs to draft a national CVE strategy for submission to the Bangladesh government.

The Bangladeshi cities of Dhaka North, Dhaka South, and Narayanganj are members of the SCN.

International and Regional Cooperation: There were no changes in 2019.

INDIA

Overview: In 2019, India suffered terrorist attacks in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the northeastern Indian states, and parts of central India. The Government of India continued to apply sustained pressure to detect, disrupt, and degrade terrorist activities within its borders. Prime Minister Modi and other senior Indian leaders made numerous statements to condemn domestic terrorist attacks and bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorism, in cooperation with the United States and other like-minded countries.

The United States and India increased CT cooperation in 2019. In March, the United States and India held the annual Counterterrorism Joint Working Group in Washington, D.C., meeting concurrently with the second U.S.-India Designations Dialogue. Both countries announced their intent to prevent terrorists from obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction and underscored their respective commitments to the implementation of UNSCR 2396. In December, the United States hosted the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, in which the ministers called for concerted action against all terrorist networks, including AQ, ISIS/Daesh, LeT, JeM, HQN, Hizb-ul Mujahideen, and TTP.

2019 Terrorist Incidents:

- On February 14, a suicide bomber from the terror group JeM, using a VBIED, killed 40 Indian soldiers from the Central Reserve Police Force in Pulwama, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

- On April 9, in southern Chhattisgarh, Maoist terrorists triggered an IED, killing a Bharatiya Janata Party Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly member and four others.
- On May 1, Maoist terrorists used landmines to kill 15 members of Maharashtra state's counter-insurgency commando unit.
- On October 29, suspected terrorists killed five migrant laborers, all from the eastern state of West Bengal, in the southern portion of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The 1967 Unlawful Activities Prevention Act was amended in August 2019 to allow for the designation of individuals as terrorists. The Indian Parliament passed amendments to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act of 2008 to give NIA the ability to investigate terrorism cases overseas. The newly amended NIA Act can further improve bilateral law enforcement cooperation. The efficacy and impact of the newly amended laws will likely be tested in ongoing terrorism cases in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as cases involving what India characterizes as “left-wing extremists,” and cases involving insurgencies in Northeast India.

India's state governments continue to be responsible for law and order. India's state-level law enforcement agencies play a significant role in detecting, deterring, and preventing acts of terrorism. These state agencies have varying degrees of capability. State antiterrorism squads were created after 2008 for rapid first response.

At the central government level, NIA is the lead law enforcement investigative agency. The National Security Guard (NSG) retains the mandate for nationwide response as the sole federal contingency force. However, despite rigorous training, NSG's rapid response capability is challenged relative to India's geography and the NSG's independent logistics capacity. In addition, the NSG may not testify in judicial proceedings.

Indian security agencies are effective in disrupting terror threats despite some gaps in intelligence and information sharing. In 2016, India and the United States signed an arrangement to exchange terrorism screening information, and India continues to work on implementation. Larger Indian states have established their own state-level Multi Agency Centers and provided near-real-time information on terrorism to Indian law enforcement agencies.

The U.S. government engaged with the Indian government to improve border security and information-sharing capabilities. India is in the process of improving its ability to detect and deter terrorist travel by using watchlists, implementing biographic and biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry, and expanding information sharing. Owing to resource constraints, Indian security forces have a limited capacity to conduct maritime security, although India's ability to patrol its land border improved because of better coordination between border security forces and Indian law enforcement agencies. Bilateral capacity building is ongoing with Indian government personnel. Outreach training programs are ensuring Indian border security officials are collecting and using API and PNR to help identify malafide travelers.

Indian CT forces, at the federal and state levels, were active in detecting and disrupting transnational and regional terrorist groups, such as ISIS, its local affiliate ISIS-Bangladesh, and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). Between February and June 2019, Indian security

forces detained nine suspected JMB and ISIS-Bangladesh terrorists from sites across India. The arrested individuals were allegedly planning attacks, ranging from jailbreaks to freeing imprisoned JMB and ISIS-Bangladesh members to attacking Indian security forces in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Following the April 2019 Easter bombings in Sri Lanka, the NIA conducted searches in Tamil Nadu and Kerala to investigate a suspected ISIS cell. One person was arrested in Palakkad, Kerala, on April 29 and admitted he was planning a suicide attack in Kerala.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: India is a member of the FATF and of two FATF-style regional bodies: the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG) and APG. India's FIU is a member of the Egmont Group. There were no significant updates in 2019.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2019, four Indian states (Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Telangana) formulated CVE strategies. Indian programs continued to target disaffected sectors of Indian society that were at the highest risk of vulnerability for terrorist radicalization and recruitment. Indian government officials remain concerned about the use of the internet for terrorist purposes – including social media and messaging apps such as WhatsApp – as well as for fomenting inter-religious tension. India's law enforcement officers discussed emerging threats and steps to prevent online terrorist recruitment and radicalization with representatives from global social media companies on a regular basis. Indian officials reported online terrorist radicalization in conflict-free zones, particularly in southern Indian states, throughout the year. India's approach focused heavily on content removal and even shutting down internet access in certain regions. Mumbai remains the only Indian participant in the SCN.

International and Regional Cooperation: India is a founding member of the GCTF and participated in the GCTF, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and other UN fora on counterterrorism in 2019. India continued to use multilateral fora and bilateral visits to highlight terrorism concerns and impacts. India also continued to lead efforts to condemn terrorism and urge tangible steps against the threat in meetings of ASEAN. In November, India hosted the first Counterterrorism Table-top Exercise in the Quad country format (the United States, Australia, India, and Japan). U.S. Special Forces continued an annual exercise in Washington State alongside Indian Special Forces, which focused on CT operations in an urban environment, and also conducted a Joint Combined Exercise Training with the NSG in Hyderabad.

KAZAKHSTAN

Overview: Kazakhstan remained on guard against the potential for attacks by FTFs returning from war zones in the Middle East and Afghanistan, as well as homegrown terrorist attacks. Between January and June, the government repatriated 595 Kazakhstani FTFs and family members from Syria, prosecuting those suspected of participation in terrorist activity abroad and providing rehabilitation and reintegration services to the remainder. The government continued to implement its five-year (2018-2022) program against “religious extremism and terrorism;”

however, the strategy's continued restrictions on religious practice have prompted concerns among some outside experts that the government's efforts may be counterproductive.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in Kazakhstan in 2019.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Kazakhstan has a comprehensive CT legal framework. The country's lead agency for counterterrorism is the Committee for National Security (KNB), which coordinates efforts among multiple state agencies and at the local level. In 2018, the government approved an ambitious five-year, \$900 million program to counter "religious extremism and terrorism." Law enforcement officers and prosecutors continued to have wide discretion to determine what qualifies as "terrorism" or "extremism," leaving political opponents and promoters of unsanctioned religious groups vulnerable to prosecution.

Kazakhstani law bans citizens from fighting in foreign wars. In 2017, the president signed a law that allows the government to deprive Kazakhstanis of citizenship if they are convicted of a range of "grave terrorism and extremism-related crimes." The government has not yet deprived anyone of citizenship in connection with such cases. The government takes a two-pronged approach to citizens returning from Iraq and Syria, offering rehabilitation services to some and arresting and prosecuting others. Between January and June, Kazakhstan carried out "Operation Zhusan," which repatriated 595 Kazakhstani citizens from Syria, including 33 male FTFs. In November, the government facilitated the return of 14 Kazakhstani children from Iraq, where their mothers were serving sentences on terrorism-related charges. The same month, KNB publicly estimated that more than 90 Kazakhstani citizens remained in Syria, in addition to six women imprisoned in Iraq.

Law enforcement units demonstrated a strong capacity to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents. The government's CT plan allowed for enhanced interagency cooperation, coordination, and information sharing, but the extent to which this occurred remained unknown.

In January, KNB reported the arrest of Tajik citizens accused of planning a terrorist attack in Almaty; in September, seven individuals received prison terms ranging from 12 to 18 years in connection with the plot. In June, the Penitentiary Committee reported that approximately 600 people were serving sentences for terrorism and "extremism." Courts continued to deliver harsh sentences for the promotion of "extremism" online. For example, in August an Almaty court sentenced eight men to prison terms ranging from five to eight years on charges of promoting terrorism and religious hatred for sharing religious content that the government considered inflammatory in a WhatsApp group. In many cases, the nature of such charges is difficult to verify and, in some cases, appeared to be connected to political opposition activity. Local researchers estimate that as many as 90 percent of charges filed under laws against terrorism and "extremism" do not involve violent acts or planned violent acts.

Kazakhstan's Border Guard Service (BGS), part of the KNB, uses specialized passport control equipment, allowing officers to check for fraudulent documents. Through the first 10 months of 2019, BGS officers detected approximately three dozen cases of foreign travelers attempting to enter or transit Kazakhstan with fake documents, such as two Iranian women with fraudulent Italian passports detained at Almaty airport in October. In recent years, Kazakhstan has

strengthened security on its southern border by adding radar systems, inspection equipment and vehicles, and specialized mobile inspection groups. The government proactively worked to prevent Kazakhstanis from traveling to fight abroad in Syria and Iraq in keeping with UNSCR 2178.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Kazakhstan belongs to the EAG. The Crime Statistics Committee of the Prosecutor General’s Office reported that three terrorist financing cases were transferred to the court system during the first 10 months of 2019.

Countering Violent Extremism: Kazakhstan’s five-year strategy places a heavy emphasis on law enforcement. The strategy focuses on teaching government sanctioned versions of Islam to youth and providing alternatives to “radicalism” through social programs and economic opportunities. The government’s Committee on Religious Affairs conducted direct outreach in communities across the country. The government continued to implement rehabilitation and reintegration programs for individuals convicted of “extremism”-related offenses and their relatives. To assist with the rehabilitation and reintegration of Kazakhstani women and children repatriated from Syria, the government established 17 centers throughout the country to provide mental health services, religious instruction, and other services.

The Government of Kazakhstan censored online content to reduce “extremist” messaging. Religious experts associated with government institutions created groups on social networks, where they posted information and answered user questions about “religious extremism.” Committee on Religious Affairs officials provided training for local imams, NGOs, and the media. On December 10-11, the government hosted a regional SCN workshop in Almaty on terrorist rehabilitation and reintegration.

International and Regional Cooperation: Kazakhstani agencies partnered with the United States and international organizations such as UNDP, UNODC, and the OSCE on a variety of CVE and terrorist travel prevention projects. As a member of the C5+1 diplomatic platform, Kazakhstan participates in the associated C5+1 Security Working Group, which focuses on regional CT cooperation. In December 2019, KNB agreed to work with the United States to establish a National Intelligence Fusion Cell in Nur-Sultan. With U.S. training and equipment assistance, the cell will consolidate intelligence from the Ministry of Defense, BGS, KNB, and international sources to enhance regional CT efforts. Kazakhstan also hosted a UNODC-administered regional workshop on detection and prevention of terrorist travel in Almaty in April 2019. Kazakhstan also participates in CT-related exercises and training through membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

During the 2019 CIS Summit, Kazakhstan signed a cooperative agreement between the CIS members to jointly combat terrorism, including preventive measures for “countering extremism, radicalization of the population,” financing terrorism, as well as involving civil society and mass media, holding special trainings, and the use of modern technologies for timely response to potential threats.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Overview: The Kyrgyz Republic's CT efforts continue to focus on rooting out "extremists," CVE, limiting the flow of Kyrgyz FTFs, and preventing those returning from conflicts abroad from engaging in terrorist activities. While the Kyrgyz Republic is concerned about ISIS, ISIS-K, and other terrorist groups, including from Afghanistan, it has not contributed to Defeat-ISIS Coalition efforts or U.S. CT operations, due in part to a lack of resources. Terrorist attacks in the country remain rare, but the August 2016 suicide bombing against the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek and continued reports of terrorism-related arrests in 2019 – primarily FTFs returning from conflict zones – underscore the potential threat facing the country. The Kyrgyz government restricts public information on national security issues, making it very difficult to assess the efficacy of its CT operations and the true extent of the threat. The country remains vulnerable to transnational threats, especially in the remote South, where ill-defined and porous borders allow for the relatively free movement of people and illicit goods in and out of the country. According to government statistics, approximately 850 Kyrgyz citizens have left the country to join ISIS or other terrorist groups. Most experts believe the true number is higher. The Kyrgyz government faces limitations on its ability to prosecute and rehabilitate returning FTFs due to a lack of expertise, resources, and potential shortcomings in the legal framework. The country has seen the return of approximately 300 FTFs and family members.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2019.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: As a part of ongoing criminal justice reform, the new criminal code entered into force on January 1, which decreased criminal penalties for several terrorism-related crimes. The updated law governing "extremist materials" now requires that law enforcement agencies demonstrate an intent to distribute "extremist materials" to justify the arrest of a suspect. Prior to the changes to the law, police were authorized to arrest suspects based on simple possession. Arrests have dropped sharply, and local media reported a total of only six prosecutions under the new law. There were no reports in 2019 of the government using CT laws to prosecute political opponents.

In 2018, the government reportedly installed three sets of electronic gates at the Manas Airport in Bishkek and two at the Osh airport for verification of biometric passports of Kyrgyz citizens. There is no information indicating that the government is utilizing these e-gates to scan passengers against a terrorist watchlist. The government has expressed interest in acquiring an API/PNR system for commercial flights, but this initiative would require significant donor support. International organizations and host country contacts have expressed concerns that the Prosecutor General's Office and State Committee for National Security (GKNB) lack the adequate tools or legal framework to properly prosecute citizens suspected of committing terrorist acts abroad. There were no other changes to border security since 2018.

Authorities continued to report a slow but steady stream of terrorism-related arrests in 2019, many of which involved Kyrgyz and foreign citizens who reportedly fought in Syria. According to media reports, there are 44 people currently in prison after returning from fighting in Syria.

During the year, security services reportedly arrested several FTFs upon their return from Syria as they attempted to cross the border. These suspects reportedly planned to receive instructions on the organization of terrorist activities in Kyrgyz or in the Commonwealth of Independent States region. In October, the GKNB reported to the Kyrgyz parliament that 16 people involved in terrorist organizations had been detained – 11 on terrorism charges and five for “religious extremism.” The GKNB reported that, during the first nine months of the year, the government seized 399 pieces of “extremist materials” but, due to the recent changes to the “extremism” law, did not initiate criminal cases. In November, local media reported that authorities uncovered an ISIS sleeper cell established by a Kyrgyz citizen who was recruiting compatriots to carry out terrorist attacks in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In September, the U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security, as well as ODNI, conducted a joint review of the Kyrgyz Republic’s compliance with U.S. identity-management protocols and information sharing procedures as outlined in Executive Order 13780 and Presidential Proclamation 9645. The review identified a number of key areas that did not sufficiently meet the outlined standards, including lack of a documented process for regularly and proactively providing information to the U.S. government about Known or Suspected Terrorists (KSTs); failure to issue electronic passports for Ordinary/Regular and for other major classes of passport, such as Diplomatic, Official, and Service passports; and failure to report lost and stolen travel documents to INTERPOL on an average of at least once a month (every 30 days), among other shortcomings.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The Kyrgyz Republic is a member of the EAG. There were no significant changes to the Kyrgyz government’s efforts and capacity related to CFT in 2019. In 2019, the FIU lodged 169 money laundering reports and 118 terrorism financing reports and sent 558 financial investigative requests to relevant law enforcement bodies.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Kyrgyz government’s national program and action plan on countering terrorism was in its second year of implementation in 2019. Approval of the program and action plan was considered a positive first step in establishing a coordinated national strategy, but as year two comes to a close, the government has done little to counter terrorist radicalization and recruitment. Civil society has routinely expressed concerns that the government is using the national program and action plan to muzzle free speech and to stigmatize ethnic minorities.

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the State Commission for Religious Affairs (SCRA), started implementing a new curriculum for high school-aged students on “moderate” Islam and identifying terrorist recruitment tactics. The Ministry of Interior and the SCRA, often in cooperation with local religious leaders and civil society, continue to host CVE roundtables and seminars and produce public awareness and counter-messaging material distributed across a range of media platforms, with much of the focus on preventing radicalization among youth and women. The Prosecutor General’s Office reported in October that the Kyrgyz courts, in coordination with security agencies, blocked at least 64 websites and 233 social media accounts that were spreading “extremist material,” though a local NGO reported the government has blocked 359 websites, including relatively large domains. The Kyrgyz government cooperates

with the UN, OSCE and other international organizations and foreign governments to facilitate CVE training and other CVE-related assistance programs.

UNODC continues to support the Kyrgyz Prison Service in the development of strategies to manage the spread of extremism among prisoners and prevent radicalization, in line with international norms. The UNODC is now implementing a program to prepare the Kyrgyz prison service for the eventual return of FTFs. The program will include training, security upgrades, and the implementation of internationally recognized best practices for the incarceration of terrorists.

International and Regional Cooperation: In 2019, the Kyrgyz Republic participated in a variety of CT activities and trainings organized by the U.S. government, UNODC, the OSCE, Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), CIS, and SCO. The Kyrgyz military allocated the vast majority of its CT training resources to exercises dominated by Russia. The Kyrgyz Republic participated in seven international CT training events for military or law enforcement in 2019. These exercises included bilateral CT training exercises with Russia, India, Kazakhstan, and – for the first time ever for the Kyrgyz Republic – China. During the 2019 CIS Summit, the Kyrgyz president signed a cooperative agreement between CIS members to jointly combat terrorism, including through preventive measures for “countering extremism, radicalization of the population,” and financing terrorism, as well as involving civil society and mass media, holding special trainings, and the use of modern technologies for timely response to potential threats.

MALDIVES

Overview: In 2019, the Government of Maldives’s CT efforts concentrated on CVE and limiting the flow of FTFs. Those within the penal system or involved in criminal gangs are at a heightened risk of terrorist radicalization. The government claims that 188 cases related to “religious extremism” were reported between January 1, 2014, and October 31, 2019. Of these, 14 were brought forward for prosecution.

In October, Maldivian police arrested ISIS-K recruiter Mohamad Ameen on “suspicion of spreading extremist ideology.” Ameen recruited for ISIS in Syria, Afghanistan, and Maldives. Media reports also alleged that Ameen was suspected of involvement in the September 2007 Sultan Park bombing in Malé.

In October, Maldives passed an amendment strengthening its 2015 Anti-Terrorism Act. The amendment clarified the definition of terrorism, expanded the number of chargeable offenses related to terrorism, and introduced a monitoring mechanism to prevent politically motivated prosecutions.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in Maldives in 2019.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Anti-Terrorism Act is the primary legislation for preventing and prosecuting terrorism. In October, the government passed an amendment strengthening the ATA. This amendment authorizes the Maldives Police Service

(MPS) to make warrantless arrests for criminal acts defined as terrorism; criminalizes supporting “extremist” ideologies, departing for a war zone without government authorization, assisting individuals attempting to join militant groups, and withholding information regarding terrorism from authorities; and introduces longer prison sentences for terrorism. The amendment requires the establishment of a rehabilitation and reintegration center for returning Maldivian FTFs, including a separate space for women and children deemed victims who did not commit acts of terrorism. The law also creates a new CT risk assessment committee to assess whether repatriated individuals engaged in acts of terrorism or might be inclined to do so in the future. Parliament was given oversight authority through a monitoring mechanism in the amendment to prevent politically motivated prosecutions such as those that occurred in 2018 and previously.

In September, the government designated 17 terrorist organizations under the ATA, criminalizing participation in, or support to, such organizations.

In September, the Presidential Commission on Deaths and Enforced Disappearances released its findings regarding the 2014 disappearance of Maldivian journalist Ahmed Rilwan, concluding he was abducted and killed by a Maldivian terrorist group linked to al-Qa’ida. The commission asked the Prosecutor General’s Office (PGO) to appeal the acquittal of two suspects accused of involvement in the killing and determine whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute additional individuals suspected of involvement.

In November 2018, the Criminal Court ordered the conditional release of two Maldivians charged in November 2017 with conspiring with ISIS to launch a suicide attack in Malé, based on their treatment during detention. The Maldivian High Court reversed this decision in April and ordered the two individuals detained for the duration of their trials.

The MPS is responsible for CT investigations. It transfers cases to the PGO for the duration of trials. Responsibility for CT operations, including investigations, primarily rests with MPS. The Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF), including the marines and coast guard, are responsible for CT response. The MNDF conducts routine Subject Matter Expert Exchanges and Joint Combined Exercise and Training engagements with U.S. forces focused on CT operations. The engagements also enhance maritime security capabilities to increase Maldives domain awareness and security. Maldives and the United States partnered in 2019 to upgrade the U.S.-provided PISCES integrated border management system. Information sharing on potential security threats between Maldivian security agencies has improved but remains a challenge.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Maldives is a member of the APG. There were no significant updates in 2019.

Countering Violent Extremism: In July, President Solih announced Maldives’ intent to facilitate the return and prosecution of Maldivian FTFs and families in Syria. According to MPS Commissioner Hameed’s December 16 public remarks, there are approximately 1,400 “religious extremists” located in the Maldives. The Maldives’ National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) held numerous regional workshops and capacity building exercises with both public and private sector groups, to include counter-narrative creation, the role of educators in countering “extremism,” and aviation security. In October, President Solih announced a five-year CVE

strategic action plan, designating the NCTC as the national coordination body for these efforts. Malé is a member of the SCN.

International and Regional Cooperation: Government officials participated in and jointly hosted multiple international and regional workshops on CT efforts. In February 2019, a joint report was issued by the NCTC, UNDP, and Government of Japan on youth vulnerability in the Maldives. This report highlighted concerns over the increasing use of religion as a political weapon and the increasing influence of Salafism. It also highlighted concern about the number of foreign preachers present in the Maldives and their role in recruitment for terrorist organizations. In October, CTED conducted a visit to examine issues relating to CVE. The NCTC, in conjunction with CTED, hosted a three-day regional workshop on obtaining electronic evidence in CT investigations. Additionally, in October, the government concluded an agreement with the Government of Japan for \$4.6 million in Japanese aid to bolster CT efforts.

NEPAL

Overview: Nepal experienced no acts of international terrorism in 2019. Political violence in Nepal remained small in scale and involved attacks on large-scale infrastructure, government offices, or locations affiliated with political parties or officials. Violence occurring on or around the 2019 by-elections focused on voter intimidation and, in some cases, political extortion. The Government of Nepal attributed the majority of the attacks to the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN), a political faction better known as “Biplav,” led by Netra Bikram Chand. The CPN split from the former Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center) in 2015. Nepal’s security services continue to monitor the Biplav Group, an insurgent group that sometimes engages in terrorism to attempt to achieve its goals. Due to the open border with India and insufficient security protocols at the country’s sole international airport in Kathmandu, Nepal could be used as a transit or staging point for international terrorists.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: Domestic incidents included small bombings in various locations throughout the country, for which authorities blamed the Biplav Group. The attacks employed small, real, or hoax IEDs. In total, Embassy Kathmandu, with assistance from Nepali law enforcement contacts, attributed an estimated 34 IEDs, 5 hoaxes, and 29 arson attacks to Biplav in 2019.

- On February 22, a series of 15 IED or arson attacks on cell phone towers owned by telecommunications service provider Ncell took place across Nepal, killing one person and injuring two others.
- Throughout the year, Biplav organized numerous nation-wide protests, which were frequently accompanied by IED attacks and other forms of violence. One notable protest began on May 27 and lasted two days. The protests resulted in a series of three IED explosions targeting government offices and Nepal Communist Party (NCP, not to be confused with the Community Party of Nepal) headquarters in Kathmandu, killing four and injuring seven. The Home Ministry announced that 15 Biplav members had been arrested in connection with the May 27 and 28 explosions.

- On July 30-31 Biplav again targeted Ncell, carrying out a number of arson and IED attacks in the central region of Nepal as part of a nation-wide protest. The attacks destroyed 22 cell towers.
- During the by-elections on November 30, there were approximately nine instances of IEDs, including one hoax, primarily targeting polling station locations. It is widely assessed that the attacks were intended to intimidate political candidates, convince voters to stay home, and undermine the elections.
- Most recently, on December 14 an IED exploded in Dhanusha, killing three people and injuring four.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: There were no changes in Nepal in 2019.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Nepal is a member of the APG. There were no significant updates in 2019.

Countering Violent Extremism: Nepal does not employ strategic communications to counter terrorist radicalization and recruitment. There are no government or civil society programs in Nepal to counter terrorist recruitment or rehabilitate former terrorists. The government generally does not view terrorism, specifically “extremist” ideology originating from conflict or instability in the Middle East, as a significant threat in Nepal. Nepal appears to be largely infertile soil for terrorism propagated by international terrorist organizations. A more significant threat is non-Nepali international terrorist groups using Nepal as a transit or staging point or soft target.

International and Regional Cooperation: Nepal is a signatory of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. INTERPOL hosts an annual regional CT seminar to which the Nepal Police sends two to three officers.

PAKISTAN

Overview: Pakistan continued to serve as a safe haven for certain regionally focused terrorist groups. It allowed groups targeting Afghanistan, including the Afghan Taliban and affiliated HQN, as well as groups targeting India, including LeT and its affiliated front organizations, and JeM, to operate from its territory.

Pakistan took modest steps in 2019 to counter terror financing and to restrain some India-focused militant groups following the February attack on a security convoy in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir claimed by Pakistan-based JeM. Thus far, however, Islamabad has yet to take decisive actions against Indian- and Afghanistan-focused militants who would undermine their operational capability. The Pakistani government also played a constructive role in U.S.-Taliban talks in 2019. Pakistan’s progress on the most difficult aspects of its 2015 National Action Plan to counter terrorism remains unfulfilled – specifically its pledge to dismantle all terrorist organizations without delay and discrimination. While Pakistani authorities indicted LeT co-founder Hafiz Saeed and 12 of his associates on December 11, they have made no effort to use domestic authorities to prosecute other terrorist leaders such as JeM founder Masood Azhar and

Sajid Mir, the mastermind of LeT's 2008 Mumbai attacks, both of whom are widely believed to reside in Pakistan under the protection of the state, despite government denials.

Pakistan experienced significant terrorist threats in 2019, although the number of attacks and casualties was lower than in 2018, continuing an overall year-on-year decline. Major terrorist groups focused on conducting attacks in Pakistan included Tehrik -e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP or Pakistani Taliban) and ISIS-K. Separatist militant groups conducted terrorist attacks against varied targets in Balochistan and Sindh provinces. Terrorists used a range of tactics to attack individuals, markets, police checkpoints, and places of worship, including IEDs, VBIEDs, suicide bombings, and targeted assassinations.

In June 2018, the FATF placed Pakistan on its “gray list” and issued an Action Plan directing Pakistan to take specific steps by September 2019 to address strategic deficiencies in its CFT efforts. The FATF expressed serious concern at its October 2019 plenary about Pakistan's continued deficiencies but noted it had made some progress and extended the deadline for full Action Plan implementation to February 2020.

In 2018, Pakistan was designated as a “Country of Particular Concern” (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. It was re-designated as a CPC in 2019.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: Pakistan experienced numerous terrorist attacks in 2019. The following examples include some of the more destructive and high-profile attacks and demonstrate a variety of methods, targets, and perpetrators:

- On May 8, a suicide bomber killed at least 10 (including police officers and security guards) and wounded at least 24 others in an attack at Lahore's Data Darbar Sufi shrine. Hizbul Ahrar, a faction of TTP, claimed responsibility for the attack, specifying that the target was law enforcement officers and not civilians.
- On May 11, three militants killed five (including a Pakistani Navy officer) and injured six in an attack on the Pearl Continental Hotel in Gwadar. The Balochistan Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack, stating the targets were Chinese and other foreign investors.
- On July 21, two back-to-back attacks in Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, killed 10 and injured 30. Unidentified gunmen on motorbikes opened fire on a police checkpoint killing two police officers. A suicide bomber later detonated an explosive device at the hospital where first responders transported victims of the first attack. TTP claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On August 16, a timed explosive at Quetta's Al-Haj mosque detonated, killing four (including the brother of Afghan Taliban chief Mullah Haybatullah) and injuring 25 others. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Pakistani government continued to implement the Antiterrorism Act of 1997, the National Counterterrorism Authority (NACTA) Act, the 2014 Investigation for Fair Trial Act, and 2014 amendments to the Antiterrorism Act (ATA), all of which give law enforcement, prosecutors, and courts enhanced powers in terrorism cases.

Military, paramilitary, and civilian security forces conducted CT operations throughout Pakistan against anti-state militants. Pakistani law allows for preventive detention, permits the death penalty for terrorism offenses, and authorizes special Anti-Terrorism Courts to try terrorism cases. Military courts established in 2015 under the National Action Plan to try civilians accused of terrorism ceased operation March 31.

Pakistan collects biometric information at land crossings through its International Border Management Security System. Authorities had limited ability to detect smuggling by air travel. The Customs Service attempted to enforce anti-money laundering laws and foreign exchange regulations at all major airports, in coordination with other agencies. Customs managed the entry of dual-use chemicals for legitimate purposes through end-use verification, while also attempting to prevent their diversion for use in IEDs. Consistent with UNSCR 2178, returning FTFs may be prosecuted under Pakistani law. NACTA is responsible for compiling and verifying data on these individuals.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Pakistan is a member of the APG. Since June 2018, FATF has identified Pakistan as a jurisdiction with strategic deficiencies in its CFT system. In 2019, Pakistan made some progress toward meeting the action plan requirements for the FATF, allowing it to avoid being blacklisted, but did not complete all action plan items. In early 2019, Pakistan issued, inter alia, a statutory regulatory ordinance directing immediate implementation of sanctions against individuals and entities designated under UNSCR 1267. In October 2019, APG published a Mutual Evaluation Report that reviewed Pakistan's compliance with FATF standards and the effectiveness of Pakistan's AML/CFT system.

Countering Violent Extremism: The government operated five de-radicalization camps offering "corrective religious education," vocational training, counseling, and therapy. A Pakistani NGO administered the juvenile-focused Sabaoon Rehabilitation Center in Swat Valley, which it founded in partnership with the Pakistani military.

Some madrassas reportedly continued to teach "extremist" doctrine. The National Action Plan directs increased government supervision of madrassas, and there was evidence of continued government efforts to increase regulation. Security analysts and madrassa reform proponents observed, however, that many madrassas failed to register with the government or provide documentation of their sources of funding or to limit their acceptance of foreign students to those with valid visas, a background check, and the consent of their governments, as required by law.

The Pakistani cities of Nowshera, Peshawar, and Quetta are members of the SCN.

International and Regional Cooperation: Pakistan participated in several multilateral fora where CT cooperation was discussed, including the GCTF, the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, and the ASEAN Regional Forum. Pakistan has been slated to host the next summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the first since 2016, when all other SAARC member states boycotted the planned Islamabad summit following terrorist attacks on Indian security personnel committed by Pakistani groups.

SRI LANKA

Overview: ISIS-inspired terrorists conducted a series of suicide attacks against churches and hotels across Sri Lanka on Easter Day, resulting in hundreds of casualties. Then ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi publicly praised the attacks, illustrating that ISIS remains determined, following its defeat in Syria and Iraq, to continue the fight from its global branches and networks and by inspiring attacks. The attacks led to isolated outbreaks of anti-Muslim violence, which the government made efforts to stop, though some observers deemed these efforts insufficient. Sri Lanka also conducted prosecutions against members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a terrorist insurgent group that fought the government for 26 years until its defeat in 2009.

Following the Easter attacks, Sri Lanka sought to improve its CT efforts by engaging the United States on improving border security and soliciting assistance for the Attorney General's office, which is charged with prosecuting the attack perpetrators. Sri Lanka is not a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, but participated as an observer at the Political Directors meeting in June. The country's secretary of defense and inspector general of police at the time of the April 21 attacks were both arrested for failing to act on available intelligence, which warned of pending attacks.

2019 Terrorist Incidents:

- On Easter Sunday, Sri Lankan citizens who pledged allegiance to ISIS detonated backpack suicide bombs in four hotels and three churches in the greater Colombo area and Batticaloa, killing more than 260 people, including five Americans.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Government of Sri Lanka continued to use the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), enacted in 1979 as a wartime measure, which gives the police broad powers to search, arrest, and detain individuals. After the Easter attacks, the government issued a four-month state of emergency, which also gave search, detain, and arrest powers to the military. More than 1,000 individuals were arrested under the PTA in wake of the attacks, although just more than 100 remained in custody at year's end. A draft Counter Terrorism Act (CTA) set to repeal and replace the PTA remained under debate in parliament at year's end. According to international and domestic legal experts, the CTA would clarify the definition and punishment for terrorist activities and provide a current schedule of designated terrorist organizations. The first version of the schedule designated three domestic terrorist organizations, all of which had been connected to the Easter attacks. In August, parliament passed the "Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Amendment) Act, No. 24 of 2018 (MACMA)," which made a number of improvements to Sri Lanka's processing of mutual legal assistance requests, which could help in prosecuting terrorism cases.

The Special Task Force is a paramilitary unit of the Sri Lanka Police specializing in CT and counterinsurgency operations and charged with ensuring security of top government and foreign government officials, protecting sensitive targets, and suppressing activities that pose a threat to national security. Within the regular police structure, there is a Counter-Terrorism Investigation

Division, which was moved under the Criminal Investigation Division in May. The police remained under the Ministry of Defense at year's end. The Easter attacks highlighted gaps in information sharing among Sri Lanka's security sector agencies. Reforms to address these issues were underway at year's end. Sri Lanka Police cooperated extensively with the FBI on the investigation into the Easter attacks. All suspects related to these attacks are currently in custody. Indictments for these attacks were pending at year's end.

Sri Lanka's border and maritime security remained vulnerable. The government is working with the UN, along with Japan, to enhance border management systems at Colombo's international airport. The Sri Lankan government also expanded its partnership with the United States to secure its maritime border. The U.S. Coast Guard, under the Department of State's EXBS (Export Control and Related Border Security) program, continued to train Sri Lankan Coast Guard and Navy personnel on maritime law enforcement and security operation, and the Government of Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Energy through the container security initiative, "Megaports Initiative." The U.S. Department of Defense continues regular engagements with the Sri Lankan Navy Special Boat Squadron and Fast Attack Flotilla to enhance maritime security through the expansion of vessel board, search, and seizure capabilities.

Sri Lanka concluded two major trials of terrorist attacks from the LTTE period. On January 10, the North Central Provincial High Court sentenced two former LTTE members to 185 years' rigorous imprisonment for shooting down a Sri Lankan Air Force plane in March 2000, which killed 37 people. On January 23, the Anuradhapura High Court sentenced two former LTTE members to 25 years' rigorous imprisonment for the murder of eight people, including an Army officer, in 2007. Throughout the year, police arrested several people who are alleged to have had ties to the LTTE for possession of weapons and ammunition.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Sri Lanka belongs to APG, a FATF-style regional body. Sri Lanka's FIU is a member of the Egmont Group. In October, FATF removed Sri Lanka from its grey list after Sri Lanka completed an action plan to address the strategic deficiencies in its AML/CFT system.

Countering Violent Extremism: Following the April attacks, the Sri Lankan government established a new office under the Ministry of Defense to create new CVE policies to counter violent extremism. Discussions of education reforms and other measures were underway at year's end.

International and Regional Cooperation: Sri Lanka has actively sought assistance on CT issues from the United Nations after the attacks, as well as from key donor countries. The EU, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, and India have all pledged CT assistance – with India offering \$50 million to the newly-elected Rajapaksa administration. Sri Lanka is a partner nation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

TAJIKISTAN

Overview: The Tajik government continues to make efforts to improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to combat terrorism, enhance border security, and detect terrorist financing. The government maintains that northern Afghanistan is a primary source of terrorist activity, and Tajik security officials allege that thousands of militants, including FTFs, are present in Afghanistan's northern provinces. The Tajik government reported on May 19 that prison guards and inmates were killed in a riot that broke out at the Kirpichniy high-security correctional facility on the outskirts of Dushanbe. On November 6, ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack on a remote border post along the Tajik-Uzbek border. The Tajik government cooperates with international organizations, such as the EU, the OSCE, and UN on combating terrorism. Tajikistan is willing to engage with the United States on CT and border security issues.

2019 Terrorist Incidents:

- On May 19 the Tajik government reported that three prison guards and 29 inmates were killed in a riot that broke out at the Kirpichniy high-security correctional facility in Vahdat on the outskirts of Dushanbe. Tajik authorities blamed the uprising on inmates serving time for alleged ties to terrorist or "extremist" groups. The Tajik Ministry of Interior Affairs also claimed that the ringleader of the riot was Behruz Gulmurod, the son of Gulmurod Halimov, the former Tajik special forces commander who defected to ISIS in 2015. ISIS claimed responsibility for the riot, as well as the release of prisoners affiliated with the Islamic State.
- On November 6, ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack on a remote border post along the Tajik-Uzbek border that Tajik authorities claim killed at least 17 people. The State Committee for National Security (GKNB) affirmed that the attackers were ISIS loyalists and that the attack occurred near the small town of Esanboi, in Tajikistan's southwest Rudaki region.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Tajikistan's lower house of Parliament ratified an agreement in October that authorized border agencies of Commonwealth of Independent States to assist with rapid response to external border threats. OSCE's Transnational Threats Department convened a CT seminar in Dushanbe that provided Tajik law enforcement officials with a platform to share best practices for criminal justice responses for combatting terrorism. Tajikistan repatriated 84 children of FTFs using its own resources in April. The Tajik government continues to unilaterally designate political opposition groups such as the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, or religious affiliations, such as Salafi Muslims, as terrorist groups.

Travel document security and biographic and biometric screening capabilities are still lacking at ports of entry, particularly at land crossings. Major entry points have access to INTERPOL data and other lists, but connectivity issues at smaller border posts remain unresolved.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Tajikistan is a member of the EAG. Tajikistan's FIU is also a member of the Egmont Group.

In January, the EAG published a Mutual Evaluation Report that reviewed Tajikistan's compliance with FATF standards and the effectiveness of Tajikistan's AML/CFT system. In May, Tajikistan hosted the second annual high-level conference dedicated to addressing regional terrorism trends, "International and Regional Cooperation on Countering Terrorism and its Financing through Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime." High-ranking delegates from former Soviet bloc countries, Afghanistan, Japan, the United States, and multilateral organizations including the UN, the OSCE, and CSTO member states participated.

On December 1, the National Bank of Tajikistan (NBT) announced that it will launch a national money transfer center that will centralize the receipt of remittances from abroad. The NBT will be able to monitor and regulate alternative remittances services, collect data on wire transfers, and monitor non-profit organizations to prevent misuse of financing to sponsor terrorist activities.

Countering Violent Extremism: Tajikistan amended its criminal laws in 2015, allowing authorities to pardon Tajik FTFs who voluntarily return home from Iraq or Syria, express remorse for their actions, and renounce ties to foreign militant groups. The Tajik government continues to place heavy restrictions on groups it classifies as "extremist," including those groups' political and religious expression. In 2019, Tajikistan was again designated a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

International and Regional Cooperation: Tajikistan is a strong supporter of the C5+1 framework in the region and serves as a co-chair of the C5+1 Security Working Group. In May, Tajikistan hosted the most recent Security Working Group, with the participation of the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), where participants discussed efforts to repatriate, rehabilitate, and reintegrate FTFs.

The Tajik government coordinated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to prepare for the potential influx of Afghan refugees and/or civil unrest in Afghanistan. Twenty-eight government agencies participated in the June exercise to prepare a government response to the potential influx of Afghan refugees in case of widespread unrest in northern Afghanistan.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China arrived in Badakhshon's Ishkashim district for joint Tajik-Chinese anti-terrorism exercises in August. The joint exercises took place along the border with Afghanistan and involved one PLA company and a Tajik mobile forces battalion. The two militaries trained against terrorist infiltration from Afghanistan into China via Tajik territory.

Tajikistan also participated in UNODC-administered training on detecting and preventing terrorist travel to enhance compliance with UNSCR 2396. Tajikistan is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. During the 2019 CIS Summit, Tajikistan's president signed onto a cooperative agreement between the CIS members to jointly combat terrorism. The agreement included preventive measures for

“countering extremism, radicalization of the population,” and financing terrorism, as well as involving civil society and mass media, holding special trainings, and the use of modern technologies for timely response to potential threats.

TURKMENISTAN

Overview: The Government of Turkmenistan continued its efforts to improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to combat terrorism, ensure border security, and detect terrorist financing. The government continued to cooperate with international organizations and participated in the C5+1 regional framework to counter international terrorism. Turkmen authorities continued to maintain close surveillance on its population and borders.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in Turkmenistan in 2019.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: There were no reported changes in 2019.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Turkmenistan belongs to the EAG, and the government continued to express interest in gaining admission to the Egmont Group. During 2019, the Government of Turkmenistan cooperated with and attended trainings offered by international organizations such as the UN and the OSCE on responding to CT threats, combating money laundering, and other CFT issues. The Turkmen government continued to monitor and regulate alternative remittance services, collected data on wire transfers, and monitored non-profit organizations, purportedly to prevent misuse of financing to sponsor terrorist activities

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2019, the Government of Turkmenistan cooperated with international organizations and participated in the C5+1 regional CVE framework. Turkmen government officials also participated in the C5+1 regional framework, held in August in Nur-Sultan and September in New York, to counter international terrorism. Officials also participated in a C5+1 regional workshop in Tajikistan in May, with the participation of USIP, and met with CVE experts from USIP in Ashgabat in July.

International and Regional Cooperation: Turkmenistan continued to cooperate with international and regional organizations such as the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the UNODC, the UN Counter-Terrorism Center, the EU, the OSCE, and others.

In May 2019, a delegation from Turkmenistan met with CTED leadership during the High-Level Conference on International and Regional Cooperation on Countering Terrorism in Dushanbe. During the Commonwealth of Independent States summit in Ashgabat on October 11, the heads of state adopted and signed a Program of Cooperation among the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Fight against Terrorism and Other Violent Extremism for 2020-2022.

Consultations of CIS countries on combatting terrorism were held in Ashgabat on November 14. Participants discussed widening collective actions on combatting terrorism, the role of the UN in combatting terrorism and its financial backing, and rendering the required legal assistance among the CIS partners. The parties also discussed preventive measures for “countering extremism, radicalization of the population,” and financing terrorism. They also addressed the necessity of involving civil society and mass media, holding special trainings, and the use of modern technologies for timely response to potential threats.

As a member of the C5+1 diplomatic platform, Turkmenistan participates in the associated Security Working Group, which focuses on regional CT cooperation.

UZBEKISTAN

Overview: The Government of Uzbekistan remained concerned about the potential spillover of terrorism from Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbors, the return of ISIS fighters from Iraq and Syria, and terrorist radicalization of Uzbekistanis abroad. The government has actively worked to improve its implementation of existing laws, including the development of a comprehensive national CT strategy and action plan, but there were no changes to the legislative framework in 2019. Uzbekistan continued to improve relations with its neighbors in many areas, including security cooperation. Uzbekistan remains an active participant in the C5+1 diplomatic platform, which supports CVE programming. Uzbekistan also signed a bilateral agreement with India on CT cooperation and a separate agreement with CIS states in 2019.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in Uzbekistan in 2019.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: There were no significant changes to terrorism-related legislation and law enforcement practices in 2019. The Law on Combating Terrorism governs terrorism-related investigations and prosecutions and identifies the State Security Service (SSS) as the lead CT law enforcement agency. The SSS and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) have dedicated CT units. Uzbekistan also criminalizes terrorism under its criminal code, and the National Development Strategy for 2017-2021 targets corruption, “extremism,” and terrorism.

The government reported an additional removal of 402 people from its watchlist of alleged “extremists” in 2019. The government facilitated the return of 156 individuals mostly women and children from Iraq and Syria and continued to explore options on the potential repatriation of FTFs from Syria throughout 2019.

Uzbek law enforcement maintains its own terrorist watchlist and contributes to INTERPOL databases. Most border posts and airports are equipped with biometric data scanners. Uzbekistan has mostly completed the conversion of all passports to a new biometric version and has introduced international biometric passports for travel abroad.

Uzbekistan has not reported specific actions to implement UNSCRs 2309 and 2396.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Uzbekistan belongs to the EAG. There were no updates in the passage or implementation of laws pertaining to CFT in 2019. Government officials received INL-funded training in 2019 that will support the ability to conduct financial investigations, improve interagency coordination on AML/CFT, and prepare for the upcoming EAG assessment of Uzbekistan's compliance with international FATF standards. In addition, the Commission on Combatting Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, headed by the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) is preparing a new resolution to introduce joint financial investigations by MIA, SSS, PGO, and FIU.

Countering Violent Extremism: Uzbekistan remains concerned about the terrorist radicalization of Uzbekistanis, particularly labor migrants in Russia and other countries. Local government organizations continued to educate citizens about the dangers of "religious extremism." The government has developed advertisements and funded other projects specifically targeting migrants deemed to be at high risk of terrorist radicalization. Official media and Tashkent Islamic University produced public messages about the dangers of terrorism and posted them on social media platforms and messaging apps.

The Government of Uzbekistan has publicly endorsed rehabilitation and reintegration of citizens previously engaged or suspected of being engaged in terrorist activities. In 2019, the government repatriated 220 FTF family members from Iraq and Syria, mostly women and children. The government has worked to reintegrate them into their home communities and has expeditiously identified suitable family for unaccompanied minors or placed them in orphanages. In close cooperation with UNICEF, the government has provided a mix of national and local-level social services to help reintegrate the returnees and has continuously monitored their progress.

In 2019, with support from the OSCE, an interagency working group coordinated by the Uzbekistani National Security Council developed a national strategy on "preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism." That working group participated in a State Department-funded trip to the United States in late 2019 as part of a plan to finalize the strategy and action plan. Formal adoption of the strategy is expected in early 2020. The government also participated in the Central Asia + United States (C5+1) regional CVE framework. This included the hosting of a C5+1 regional workshop on CVE in May in Tashkent and a separate event in Samarkand in November focused on FTF reintegration and rehabilitation.

International and Regional Cooperation: Uzbekistan is a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In 2019, Uzbekistan continued its participation in the UN Counter Terrorism Committee and the OSCE Action against Terrorism Unit. During the 2019 CIS Summit, Uzbekistan became a signatory to a cooperative agreement between CIS members to jointly combat terrorism. The agreement included preventive measures for "countering extremism, radicalization of the population," financing terrorism, as well as involving civil society and mass media, holding special trainings, and the use of modern technologies for timely response to potential threats. In addition, Uzbekistan has sought bilateral agreements with other countries related to CT issues and signed an agreement with India in November on enhanced CT cooperation.

In 2019, Uzbekistan continued its active engagement in the C5+1 diplomatic platform and its associated C5+1 Security Working Group, which focuses on regional CT cooperation and participated in a Strong Cities regional workshop in Almaty in December that focused on reintegration and rehabilitation of FTFs and their families. Uzbekistan also participated in UNODC-administered training on detecting and preventing terrorist travel to enhance compliance with UNSCR 2396.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Overview: In 2019, the Lebanon-based and Iran-backed terrorist group Hizballah continued its long history of activity in the Western Hemisphere, including its use of supporters and financiers who operate in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of South America, where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet. The United States continues to be vigilant about individuals affiliated with international terrorist groups, including al-Qa'ida and ISIS, who have made attempts to exploit the region. These include a suspected AQ operative in Brazil, about whom the FBI issued a public notice in August, as well as ISIS supporters and sympathizers in a number of countries including Canada and Trinidad and Tobago. Meanwhile, regional terrorist groups, such as the National Liberation Army (ELN) and Shining Path, were active in the hemisphere, including in Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru. In Colombia, an estimated 2,600 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) dissidents who never demobilized, left the peace process, or are new recruits, continued violent attacks, primarily to enable narcotics trafficking and other criminal activities. While travel of FTFs from the Western Hemisphere to conflict zones was limited in 2019, the potential return of these battle-tested terrorists remained a concern.

Many Latin American countries have porous borders, limited law enforcement capabilities, and established smuggling routes. Commercial hubs in the TBA and Panama remained regional nodes for money laundering and vulnerable to terrorist financing. Corruption, weak government institutions, insufficient interagency cooperation, weak or non-existent legislation, and a general lack of resources likewise remained obstacles to improving security. Nevertheless, some Western Hemisphere countries made significant progress in their counterterrorism efforts in 2019 and strengthened regional cooperation against terrorism.

Cuba and Venezuela continued to provide permissive environments for terrorists. In Venezuela, individuals linked to FARC dissidents (who remain committed to terrorism notwithstanding the peace accord) and the ELN, as well as Hizballah sympathizers, were present in the country. Nicolas Maduro has openly welcomed former FARC leaders who announced a return to terrorist activities. Members of the ELN who were in Havana to conduct peace talks with the Colombian government since 2017 also remained in Cuba. Cuba, citing peace negotiation protocols, refused Colombia's request to extradite 10 ELN leaders after that group claimed responsibility for the January 2019 bombing of a Bogota police academy, which killed 22 and injured 87 others. Multiple fugitives who committed or supported acts of terrorism in the United States also continued to live freely in Cuba.

Several countries in the region took steps in 2019 to designate Hizballah as a terrorist organization. Argentina developed a new sanctions regime and used it to designate the entirety of Hizballah and individuals specifically connected to the 1992 and 1994 bombings of the Israeli