

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 Extremism in 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 region and 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.

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 from the 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/nrcpt/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.

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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 that terrorist 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. Kidnapping 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

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 Ecuador have led to some increased cooperation on law enforcement issues. Colombia also continued to cooperate and share information with the Panamanian National Border 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.

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

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
