

Press Releases: State Department Releases Country Reports on Terrorism 2016

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Today the State Department released its annual report, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016*, which provides the Department of State's annual Congressionally-mandated assessment of trends and events in international terrorism that transpired from January 1 to December 31, 2016. The report provides policy-related assessments, country-by-country breakdowns of foreign government counterterrorism cooperation; and contains information on state sponsors of terrorism, terrorist safe havens, foreign terrorist organizations, and the global challenge of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear terrorism. The report is available at www.state.gov/j/ct.

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland noted in its Statistic Annex that the total number of terrorist attacks in 2016 decreased by nine percent and total deaths due to terrorist attacks decreased by 13 percent, compared to 2015. This was largely due to fewer attacks and deaths in Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Yemen. Although terrorist attacks took place in 104 countries in 2016, they were heavily concentrated geographically. Fifty-five percent of all attacks took place in five countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines), and 75 percent of all deaths due to terrorist attacks took place in five countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria, and Pakistan).

In 2016, terrorist groups continued to exploit ungoverned territory and ongoing conflict to expand their reach. ISIS remained the top terrorist threat in 2016, directing and inspiring terrorist cells, networks, and individuals around the world. ISIS was expelled from a significant amount of territory it had controlled at the beginning of 2016, a trend that has accelerated into the first half of 2017 due to coordinated military operations of the 72-member Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Al-Qa'ida also remained a resilient and adaptive threat. Iran continued to be the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Terrorist groups supported by Iran – most

prominently Hizballah – continued to threaten U.S. allies and interests even in the face of U.S.-led intensification of financial sanctions and law enforcement.

The report also summarizes how U.S.-supported and developed multilateral institutions continued to provide platforms for action. In September, the UN Security Council adopted UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2309 (2016) – the first UNSCR focused exclusively on the terrorist threat to civil aviation. The 30-member Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), which the United States founded and co-chaired from 2011 to 2015, endorsed good practices in a number of areas relevant to terrorism prevention under its Initiative to Address the Life Cycle of Radicalization to Violence. With support from the United States, the GCTF also launched an ongoing soft-targets initiative to build political will and increase capacity to prevent soft-target attacks and mitigate their effects. Throughout 2016, the United States and its partners pursued new, more robust counter-messaging initiatives designed to degrade the influence of terrorist organizations online and through social media.

The report's chapter on terrorist safe havens provides further information on U.S. multilateral and regional cooperation and State Department programs and initiatives that build partner capacity and address the conditions that terrorists exploit for recruitment. With the findings of the 2016 *Country Reports on Terrorism*, the State Department will continue to devote resources towards improving the counterterrorism capabilities of key partner countries as well as focusing long-term efforts in addressing the drivers of violent extremism.

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