

Country Report on Terrorism 2020 - Chapter 5 - Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

Abu Sayyaf Group

Aka al Harakat al Islamiyya (the Islamic Movement)

Description: The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) was designated as an FTO on October 8, 1997. ASG split from the Moro National Liberation Front in the early 1990s and is one of the most violent terrorist groups in the Philippines. The group claims to promote an independent Islamic state in western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, and elements of the group have ties to ISIS's regional affiliate ISIS-Philippines.

Activities: ASG has committed kidnappings-for-ransom, bombings, ambushes of security personnel, public beheadings, assassinations, and extortion.

Throughout 2015, ASG was responsible for multiple attacks, kidnappings, and the killing of hostages. In 2016 and 2017, the group conducted kidnapping-for-ransom operations targeting Canadian, Filipino, German, and Norwegian citizens. In 2017, ASG members killed nine people and injured others in an attack on Basilan Island. In 2018, ASG detonated a car bomb at a military checkpoint on Basilan Island, killing 10 people, including a Philippine soldier and pro-government militiamen.

ASG continued conducting terrorist attacks and kidnappings in 2019. That year, ASG militants attacked Philippine soldiers on Jolo, resulting in the deaths of two children. That same year, ASG kidnapped two British nationals from a beach resort in the Zamboanga Peninsula region, but they were recovered on Jolo during the following month.

In August, ASG killed more than a dozen persons and injured over 70 in twin suicide bomb attacks in Sulu province.

Strength: ASG is estimated to have hundreds of members.

Location/Area of Operation: Malaysia and the Philippines

Funding and External Aid: ASG is funded primarily through its kidnapping-for-ransom operations and extortion. The group may also receive funding from external sources, including remittances from overseas Filipino workers and Middle East-based sympathizers. In the past, ASG also has received training and other assistance from regional terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiya.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of the Abu Sayyaf Group (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2020)



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