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Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 1 - Morocco

Overview: The United States and Morocco have a long history of strong counterterrorism (CT) cooperation. The Government of Morocco continued its comprehensive strategy, which includes vigilant security measures, regional and international cooperation, and counter radicalization policies. In 2022, Morocco’s CT efforts continued to mitigate the risk of terrorism. The country continued to face sporadic threats from small, independent terrorist cells, the majority of which claimed to be inspired by or affiliated with ISIS. In May, Morocco hosted the 2022 ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and convened the Counter-ISIS Finance and Africa Focus Groups on the margins of the ministerial. Morocco is also a member of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and will take over the GCTF co-chair seat from Egypt in 2023.

2022 Terrorist Incidents: There were no terrorist incidents reported in Morocco in 2022.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Morocco investigates, prosecutes, and sentences defendants under counterterrorism legislation, enacted in 2003 and expanded in 2015, which is in line with UN Security Council resolution 2178.

In 2022, Moroccan law enforcement under the coordination of the Ministry of Interior targeted and arrested at least 20 individuals in 10 CT operations, effectively dismantling cells in the early stages of planning attacks against a range of targets, including public buildings, prominent figures, government security service buildings, and (as reported in local press) foreigners. The number of arrests in 2022 was much fewer than

those made before the COVID-19 pandemic. Moroccan law enforcement leveraged intelligence collection, police work, and collaboration with international partners to conduct CT operations. The Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation (BCIJ) remained the primary law enforcement agency responsible for CT prosecutions. The BCIJ reports to the General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance (DGST) and operates under the supervision of the public prosecutor of the Court of Appeals.

The following offers a snapshot of arrests in 2022:

- In March the BCIJ and the DGST arrested five suspected violent extremists alleged to be affiliated with ISIS. The suspects were arrested in separate security operations in Kenitra, Larache, Souk Sebt Ouled Nemma, Taroudant, and the rural commune of Souihla. The suspects planned to attack high officials and public figures in Morocco.
- In October, authorities arrested five persons in several cities suspected of supporting ISIS and involved in the preparation of “terrorist attacks.” The BCIJ specified that the suspects, aged between 20 and 45, announced their affiliation with ISIS and planned terrorist acts, including sabotage against infrastructure and targeting security and law enforcement personnel.
- In November the BCIJ arrested an ISIS-affiliated suspect near Rabat for planning a terrorist act. The 22-year-old suspect had previously been detained on terrorist charges. Investigations revealed that the suspect had been searching for raw materials necessary to create an explosive device. Security services kept the suspect in custody pending an investigation into possible links with terrorist groups inside and outside Morocco.

Moroccan law enforcement agencies participated in a wide range of U.S.-sponsored programs to improve the country’s technical and investigative capabilities, including financial investigation, intelligence analysis, forensics, and cybersecurity.

Border security remained a top priority for Moroccan authorities. The General Directorate for National Security has primary responsibility for conducting border inspections at ports of entry such as Casablanca’s Mohammed V International Airport. Law enforcement officials and private airline carriers worked regularly with the United States to detect and deter individuals attempting to transit illegally and to address watchlisted travelers. Moroccan airport authorities have excellent capabilities in detecting fraudulent documents. In addition, police, customs officers, and the Royal Gendarmerie operated mobile and fixed checkpoints along the roads in border areas and at the entrances to major municipalities. Moroccan Naval and Coast Guard units monitored and patrolled the

country's extensive coastal waters, including the Strait of Gibraltar, to interdict illicit traffickers.

Morocco did not repatriate any Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) or family members in 2022. The number of Moroccan citizen terrorist fighters and associated family members outside the country is in the hundreds. The eight FTFs whom Morocco repatriated in 2019 from Syria were prosecuted, sentenced, and remain incarcerated.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Morocco is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force. Its FIU, the National Financial Intelligence Authority, is a member of the Egmont Group. Morocco remained on the FATF "gray list" in 2022. During 2022, FATF reported that Morocco took steps toward improving its Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) regime, including by providing additional training and awareness-raising to financial institutions and designated nonfinancial businesses and professions (DNFBPs) to detect and file suspicious transactions, licensing and monitoring the registration of DNFBPs, and addressing technical deficiencies related to targeted financial sanctions. In October, FATF made an initial determination that Morocco had substantially completed its action plan and warranted an onsite assessment to verify that the implementation of Morocco's AML/CFT reforms has begun and is being sustained, and that the necessary political commitment remains in place to sustain implementation in the future.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the [2022 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume 2, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes](#).

Countering Violent Extremism: Morocco is a co-chair for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS's Africa Focus Group. Morocco has a comprehensive CVE strategy that prioritizes economic and human development in addition to countering radicalization to violence and oversight of the religious sphere. To counter what it views as "religious extremism," Morocco promotes an interpretation of the Maliki-Ashari school of Sunni Islam. The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs has developed an educational curriculum for Morocco's nearly 50,000 imams as well as for female Islamic guides (*Mourchidates*). Morocco's imam training center in Rabat trains imams mostly from West Africa. The Royal Mohammedan League of Ulema (*Rabita Mohammedia*) counters radicalization by producing scholarly research, reviewing educational curricula, and conducting youth outreach on religious and social topics. The General Delegation for Prison Administration and Reintegration, in cooperation with other ministries, conducted several training workshops of its deradicalization program, *Moussalaha* (Reconciliation) for both women and men.

International and Regional Cooperation: Morocco is a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and has been co-chair along with Canada. Egypt will be taking over for Morocco as co-chair in 2023, alongside the European Union.

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