



Document #2101606

USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 1 - Sweden

Overview: The National Center for Terrorist Threat Assessment (NCT) assessed that lone actors from REMVE and Islamist terrorist movements posed the main terrorist threat to Sweden in 2022. Violent "left wing" extremists were active but posed no defined threat. Islamist terrorism had the largest number of adherents, while REMVE played an increasingly prominent role. Quran burnings carried out during 2022 raised Sweden's profile as a potential target for Islamist terrorists. Authorities assessed that a small number of individuals in violent extremist environments could possibly carry out terrorist attacks in Sweden. NCT noted that violent extremism gained ground, and an increasing number of young individuals, including minors, were attracted to online-based REMVE.

The Swedish Security Service reported that the pandemic benefited violent extremist disinformation and the normalization of conspiracy theories. Racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism had coordinating bodies at the national level, unlike Islamist terrorism, which lacked the same level of cohesive leadership and organizational structure. Islamist terrorists received the most funding from abroad and had the greatest capability to generate income. Digital currencies, including crypto, played an important role in violent extremist groups' financing, and Violent Extremist Organizations increasingly used digital platforms rather than meeting in person. The Swedish Security Service regularly received information on firearms and explosives with links to REMVE, Islamist, or violent left-wing extremism. At the end of 2022, the national alert level remained at Level 3 (elevated threat, no evidence of planning) on a scale of 5 (attack imminent, evidence of planning).

2022 Terrorist Incidents: Swedish citizen Theodor Engström fatally stabbed Ing-Marie Wieselgren, national coordinator for psychiatric issues in Sweden's municipalities and regions, on July 6 at Sweden's premier political gathering. The assailant had a history of mental illness and was previously active in the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement. Engström told the court that he had wanted "to hit back at the Swedish people" and added that he had also included Center Party leader Annie Lööf and Hanna Stjärne, the CEO of Sweden's state broadcaster SVT, among hundreds of possible targets. Engström was convicted of murder and preparation to commit terrorism.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In 2022 the government continued efforts to strengthen its counterterrorism laws.

A new Terrorism Offenses Act entered into force in July, replacing three earlier laws relating to terrorism and increasing prison sentences for terrorism offenses.

A new law took effect in July that expanded the authorities' powers to expel foreigners who pose a threat to Sweden's security. The law clarified the conditions for taking foreigners into custody and gave authorities more tools to detain, search, and secretly conduct surveillance of suspects.

In November, Parliament passed a constitutional amendment allowing limitations on freedom of association for groups engaged in terrorism.

Sweden repatriated at least four female FTFs and six children who had previously been in Syrian Democratic Forces-run displaced persons camps in Syria. The Security Service estimated that around 300 Swedish citizens traveled to join ISIS- and al-Qa'ida-linked groups. Around 160 have returned during the last few years. One repatriated female foreign terrorist was convicted in District Court in Stockholm and sentenced to six years in prison after her son became a child soldier in Syria. Other women were being investigated for war crimes. Swedish authorities collaborated closely with the FBI to build criminal cases against Swedish foreign terrorist fighters. The Swedish Center for CVE had a network of nine agencies and organizations to support the rehabilitation and integration of the returnees.

Sweden is party to the EU's identity verification and border management tools, such as the Schengen Information System and the Visa Information System. The country collects and uses Advance Passenger Information, and some Passenger Name Records, and exchanges information with other member states on irregular migration and border control. Sweden used the "serious threat to public policy or internal security" justification permitted under the Schengen Border Code to unilaterally prolong the temporary border controls first introduced in 2015 until midyear 2023.

The Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) and Nordic Strength are the two major neo-Nazi movements in the Nordic countries. The two groups have around 200 active members in Sweden. NRM conducted several acts of harassment and vandalism during 2022, with the Swedish Jewish community as one of the most targeted groups. The neo-Nazi movements continued to integrate into the antivaccine movement.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Sweden is a member of FATF, and its FIU, the National Financial Intelligence Service, is a member of the Egmont Group. There were no significant changes in 2022.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism promotes and coordinates preventive efforts at the national, regional, and local levels. The center supports municipalities, government agencies, and others in preventing violent extremism.

The Security Service, together with other authorities, closed two schools that reportedly had been under the influence of leading figures in the Islamist terrorism environment and had been suspected of receiving funds from organizations with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. Malmö and Stockholm are members of the Strong Cities Network.

International and Regional Cooperation: Sweden is a member of the EU. It supports CT efforts in regional and multilateral organizations, including the European Commission's Radicalization Awareness Network, the EU-9 (focusing on FTFs), the Counterterrorism Group, the Police Working Group on Terrorism, and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation. EU Regulation 2021/784 on measures against the spread of terrorist content online (the so-called TCO regulation) took effect in June.

Sweden engaged in the following efforts to combat terrorism internationally:

- Funding international CT capacity building projects through development assistance
- Funding to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's Terrorism Prevention Branch
- Funding to the OSCE
- Contributing 220 troops (a rifle company and a support unit) to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
- Joining the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL

Extending Sweden's regional crisis strategy for Syria (\$425 million for 2016-23), which includes resilience support for groups affected by ISIS's

ecoi.net description:

Annual report on terrorism (covering 2022)

Country:
Sweden

Source:
USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Original link:
<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2022/sweden/>

Document type:
Periodical Report

Language:
English

Published:
30 November 2023

Available on ecoi.net since:
1 December 2023

Document ID:
2101606

Austrian Red Cross Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)	Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien T +43 1 589 00 583 F +43 1 589 00 589 info@ecoi.net	Contact Imprint & Disclaimer F.A.Q. Data Protection Notice
--	---	---

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

