

Document #2088103

USDOS – US Department of State

Country Report on Terrorism 2021 - Chapter 5 - Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)

Aka ETA; Askatasuna; Batasuna; Ekin; Euskal Herritarrok; Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna; Herri Batasuna; Jarrai-Haika-Segi; K.A.S.; XAKI; Epanastatiki Pirines; Popular Revolutionary Struggle

Description: Designated as an FTO on October 8, 1997, Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) was founded in 1959 with the aim of establishing an independent homeland based on Marxist principles in the Spanish Basque provinces of Álava, Guipúzcoa, and Viscaya; the autonomous region of Navarre; and the southwestern French territories of Labourd, Lower Navarre, and Soule.

Activities: ETA primarily has conducted bombings and assassinations against Spanish government officials, businesspersons, politicians, judicial figures, and security and military forces; however, the group also has targeted journalists and major tourist areas. ETA is responsible for killing more than 800 civilians and members of the armed forces and police, as well as injuring thousands, since it formally began its campaign of violence in 1968.

In 2006, ETA exploded a massive car bomb, destroying much of the covered parking garage at Madrid-Barajas International Airport. The group marked its 50th anniversary in 2009 with a series of high-profile and deadly bombings, including an attack on a Civil Guard barracks that injured more than 60 people, including children.

ETA has not conducted any attacks since it announced a “definitive cessation of armed activity” in 2011.

In 2016, authorities seized ETA weapons, including a cache found in a forest north of Paris, and captured the top ETA leader. In 2017, ETA reported that it had relinquished its last weapons caches. In 2018, ETA released a letter announcing the dissolution of its organizational structures. In a 2019 mass trial, a Spanish court accepted a plea deal for 47 ETA members to avoid prison sentences for membership in the group.

Strength: Precise numbers are unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: Spain and France

Funding and External Aid: Sources of funding are unknown.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2021)

Countries:

France, Spain

Source:

USDOS – US Department of State

Original link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2021/#ETA>

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

27 February 2023

Available on ecoi.net since:

2 March 2023

Document ID:

2088103

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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.

