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USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Country Report on Terrorism 2023 - Chapter 1 - Russia

Overview: The Russian Federation continued to use terrorist and "extremist" threats as pretexts to suppress political opposition and the exercise of human rights, or for other objectives in both domestic and foreign policy. In particular, the Kremlin accused Ukraine of conducting terrorist attacks on civilians in Russia as part of the Kremlin's attempts to delegitimize Ukraine's self-defense against Russian aggression.

2023 Terrorism Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in Russia in 2023.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Under the coordination of the National Antiterrorism Committee, the Federal Security Service (FSB) – with aid from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Rosgvardiya (the National Guard) – performs counterterrorism functions. The FSB is the federal body with the authority to implement national security policy in the Russian Federation, including counterterrorism. The FSB Border Guard Service has responsibility for securing Russia's borders, and the FSB has the ability, in some cases, to command army units, including the authority to issue orders to shoot down airplanes, if necessary. The National Guard assists the Border Guard Service in securing borders, administers gun control, combats terrorism and organized crime, protects public order, and guards important state facilities. Russia's Ministry of Transport manages

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the Integrated National Transportation Security Information System to enable prompt detection of individuals involved in terrorist and violent extremist activities traveling on international or domestic airline routes. However, Russian legislation on transport security issues is fragmented and requires systematization, particularly with regard to increasing the level of antiterrorist protection of transport infrastructure.

The government increased use of CT and "anti-extremism" legislation as a tool to stifle political opposition, independent media, and certain religious organizations, and to criminalize the exercise of freedoms of religion or belief, expression, and association. Russia remained concerned about violent extremist Islamist groups, including those with ideological ties to ISIS and al-Qa'ida.

The Russian government routinely designates civil society and religious organizations as variously "extremist," "terrorist," or "undesirable" under Russia's legal code to prevent these groups' expression of dissent. Russian authorities have the power to label any political group or entity as "extremist." Leaders, staff, and supporters of organizations labeled as "extremist" are banned from running for public office and can face imprisonment and penalties. Citizens can be banned from association with organizations so designated. Laws also impose strict measures on finances for organizations that receive money from those who have been labeled as "foreign agents." Those designated as foreign agents are essentially barred from participating in civic life and educational activities. The Russian government can declare any individual or entity a foreign agent if it claims to find "foreign influence."

In 2023 the Ministry of Justice and the Prosecutor General's Office declared more than 50 organizations "undesirable", including the popular news website Meduza.

In October the Russian government repatriated 34 children of ISIS families from camps in northeastern Syria, according to the Russian presidential commissioner for children's rights. To date, Russia has repatriated about 200 displaced nationals from northeast Syria but has declined to repatriate its own detained nationals. There are approximately 175 detained and 1,680 displaced Russian nationals in northeast Syria.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Russia remains a member of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, and its Financial Intelligence Unit is the

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Federal Financial Monitoring Service (Rosfinmonitoring). In February the Financial Action Task Force suspended Russia's membership because of its illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine, after it previously restricted Russia's ability to participate. In October, Rosfinmonitoring was similarly suspended from the Egmont Group.

Countering Violent Extremism: Russian government authorities, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Center for Countering Extremism and the FSB, continued to misuse the country's expansive definition of "extremism" to curtail freedoms of expression, religion or belief, peaceful assembly, and association. In November, Russia arrested three lawyers for jailed opposition politician Aleksey Navalny for belonging to an "extremist group." In December, Russia added the popular novelist and Putin-critic Boris Akunin (real name Grigory Chkhartishvili) to its register of "extremists" for allegedly spreading "fake" information about the Russian Army. In November the Russian Supreme Court also ruled that the so-called international LGBT movement is an "extremist" organization, effectively criminalizing advocacy for the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals. Under Russian law, participating in or financing an extremist organization is punishable by up to 12 years in prison.

International and Regional Cooperation: Russia is a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and a participating state in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The country was excluded from the Council of Europe in 2022, including the Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT). However, Russia remains a member of select conventions within the CoE that are open to global accession.

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