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Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 1 - People's Republic of China (Hong Kong and Macau)

Overview: The counterterrorism efforts of the People's Republic of China (PRC) continued to target ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang as so-called extremists for engaging in standard practices of Islam. Beijing considers the "East Turkistan Islamic Movement" (ETIM) the primary source of terrorism in Xinjiang. However, the United States has not seen clear and convincing evidence of ETIM's existence.

The PRC government's counterterrorism measures have included sprawling detainment camps, known officially as "vocational education and training centers," in which more than one million people are believed to have been detained. The PRC also has prosecuted and imprisoned a large but indeterminate number of Xinjiang residents under its campaign to "strike hard" against alleged terrorists and "extremists," which was launched in 2014 and under which the PRC continued new prosecutions through the end of 2022, according to PRC law enforcement reporting. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' August 31 assessment of Xinjiang stated the PRC's imprecise definition of "extremism" and overly broad application of its antiterrorism laws led to a "pattern of large-scale arbitrary detention." The PRC denies its Xinjiang policies involve human rights abuses, claiming its system of "reeducation" camps exist to "combat separatism and Islamist militancy in the region." The PRC continued to expand law enforcement tools and enhance its military and counterterrorism capabilities to justify and improve its ability to carry out this repressive campaign.

Since 1999, the People's Republic of China has been designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act

of 1998. It was redesignated a CPC in 2022.

2022 Terrorist Incidents: PRC officials stated that no violent terrorist incidents occurred in the country. International media reported terrorist-related incidents targeting PRC citizens outside China in 2022, including these two:

- A targeted attack on December 13 of a hotel frequented by PRC citizens by ISIS- Khorasan Province in downtown Kabul, Afghanistan, wounded five PRC citizens.
- A female suicide bomber, working under orders from the Baloch Liberation Army, killed three Chinese teachers from the Confucius Institute in Karachi, Pakistan, on April 27.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The PRC continued to advance and defend its counterterrorism policies, including so-called reeducation camps in Xinjiang. In June 2021, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) issued a revised draft anti-money laundering law for public comment, with the goal of preventing and curbing money laundering and terrorist financing as well as safeguarding national security. As of this report's publication, the legislation has not been passed. The PRC routinely lobbies foreign partners to extradite alleged Uyghur "extremists," and seeks public endorsement of its CT efforts in multilateral forums.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The PRC is a member of FATF, the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. Its FIU is composed of the PBC headquarters' Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Bureau, the China Anti-Money Laundering Monitoring and Analysis Center (or CAMLMAC), and PBC branches' AML divisions. There were no significant changes in 2022.

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: The PRC continued to implement broad repressive campaigns in Xinjiang under the guise of countering what the PRC calls extremism, including mass "reeducation" and "vocational training" of predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. The PRC defended its policies in Xinjiang and, in March, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Spokesperson Xu Guixiang stated the United States and other western countries "stepped up their plan to 'contain China with Xinjiang' and tried their best to politicize, label, and smear the governance measures adopted in Xinjiang." Under the pretext of counterterrorism efforts, the PRC used existing

domestic laws to actively screen, monitor, and censor its citizens on the internet.

International and Regional Cooperation: The 2022 China Military Power Report catalogued PRC diplomatic and military outreach in support of its global counterterrorism aims, stating that the PRC seeks to “garner the assistance of partner governments to prevent terrorist attacks in China and against PRC citizens abroad.” The PRC further leveraged involvement in regional security forums, joint border patrols, and international exercises to press its neighbors into adopting its approach to CT operations. In December, countries from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), including China, announced they would hold a joint “counterterrorism exercise” in Russia’s Chelyabinsk region, scheduled to take place in 2023. The People’s Armed Police (PAP) hosted an international CT forum in August, the first such gathering since 2019 — to focus on international CT cooperation by police and the development of unmanned and intelligent weapons platforms for CT operations. Hosted by the PAP Special Police Academy, military police from 30 countries were invited to the forum, including members of the Beijing Military Attaché Corps.

The PRC also continued efforts to normalize and internationalize its repressive domestic counterterrorism tactics by institutionalizing its approach within the UN system, which the PRC has promoted as the primary international forum for combating terrorism. During a December 15 address to the UN Security Council and the UN Office of Counterterrorism, PRC Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zhang Jun called on all countries to support the “UN’s central coordinating role” on CT issues and emphasized the “major practical significance” of the PRC’s Global Development Initiative (GDI) and Global Security Initiative (GSI) for advancing UN goals to “deepen international CT cooperation, eliminate the root causes of terrorism, and maintain common security and development.” While still ill-defined, both GDI and GSI are major PRC foreign policy initiatives that seek to redefine core tenets of the international system — such as democracy, human rights, and the right to collective security — that the PRC assesses to be in opposition to its counterterrorism, domestic stability, and foreign policy objectives. The PRC also has harnessed the legitimacy provided by its cooperation with UNOCT and other UN agencies to export practical elements of its repressive counterterrorism model when providing training and equipment to governments worldwide, including in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Indo-Pacific.

The PRC is also a member of

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum
- The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
- The East Asia Summit

- The Global Counterterrorism Forum
- The SCO Regional Antiterrorism Structure

Hong Kong

Overview: Historically, Hong Kong has not been a hub or a target for international terrorism groups or violent extremists and has long maintained highly efficient security forces. However, Hong Kong remains an important financial center and transportation hub and is geographically close to countries with known domestic and foreign terrorism issues — including Indonesia and the Philippines — providing a potential nexus for terrorist financing flows or travel. Hong Kong continued security cooperation with the United States through the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department's joint implementation of the Container Security Initiative. Hong Kong refuses to cooperate bilaterally with the U.S. government on counterterrorism issues; however, the government cooperated internationally on counterterrorism efforts through INTERPOL and other security-focused organizations. Despite these multilateral efforts, Hong Kong and its law enforcement apparatus could be a stronger partner on counterterrorism and other security challenges, including by sharing more information related to terrorist financing.

2022 Terrorist Incidents: No terrorist incidents were reported in Hong Kong in 2022.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Counterterrorism remained an operational priority for the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF). The Police Counterterrorism Response Unit provides a strong deterrent presence, assisting police districts with CT strategy implementation and complementing the tactical and professional support of existing police specialist units, such as the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Bureau, the Special Duties Unit, the Airport Security Unit, and the VIP Protection Unit.

In 2018, the HKG set up the Interdepartmental Counterterrorism Unit (ICTU) to strengthen overall counterterrorism efforts by monitoring global trends, reviewing and improving counterterrorism strategies in Hong Kong, developing specialized counterterrorism training, and optimizing emergency response plans. The ICTU held its most recent CT exercise in November 2021. It launched a counterterrorism reporting hotline in June, to encourage members of the public to provide intelligence on terrorism or violence-related crimes.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Hong Kong is a member of FATF and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering. Its FIU, the Joint Financial Intelligence Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group.

In December the Hong Kong Legislative Council passed the Anti-Money Laundering and Counterterrorist Financing (Amendment) Bill to enhance Hong Kong's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) regime through the introduction of a licensing requirement for virtual asset services providers and a registration system for dealers in precious metals and stones.

Also in 2022, Hong Kong took disciplinary actions against two foreign banks and a Hong Kong-based prepaid card issuer for major international card organizations. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of AML/CFT measures, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority in 2022 continued to host AML Regtech (regulatory technology) Lab, or AMLab, to allow experimentation with technologies and data analytics for preventing and detecting financial crimes.

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: There were no changes to Hong Kong's CVE programming in 2022.

International and Regional Cooperation: The Presidential Executive Order on Hong Kong Normalization ended U.S. government-sponsored capacity building training programs for Hong Kong law enforcement in 2020.

The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) joined an INTERPOL operation conducted during March to May in combating transnational financial crimes and arrested more than 500 people with about a \$28 million seizure.

Macau

Overview: Historically, the Macau government has not been a proactive partner on counterterrorism matters, including intelligence sharing. Macau is not a known hub or a target for international terrorism groups or violent extremists and maintains highly efficient security services. The strict travel restrictions put in place by the Macau government for much of the last three years because of the COVID-19 pandemic further reduced the likelihood of foreign terrorist threats to the city.

Macau is one of the most popular destinations for gambling globally and is geographically close to countries with known domestic and foreign terrorism issues, including Indonesia and the Philippines. When international travel returns to prepandemic levels, the city could potentially become a location for facilitating terrorist financing activities. The Police Intervention Tactical Unit (UTIP) branch of the Macau Public

Security Police Force is responsible for counterterrorism issues. UTIP's responsibilities include protecting important installations and dignitaries and deactivating IEDs. Macau cooperated internationally on counterterrorism efforts through INTERPOL and other security-focused organizations. Despite these efforts, Macau and its law enforcement apparatus could be a stronger partner on counterterrorism and other security challenges, including by sharing more information related to terrorist financing.

In 2020 the Macau government devised and published Law No. 14/2020 and Administrative Regulation No. 35/2020. The legislation created the Terrorism Crimes Alert Division under the framework of the Judiciary Police (PJ) and empowered the new division with the mission to create an information system for combating terrorism and monitoring, alerting, and communicating information related to terrorism activities.

2022 Terrorist Incidents: No terrorist incidents were reported in Macau in 2022.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: There were no significant changes in 2022.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Macau is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering and its FIU, the Financial Intelligence Office (GIF), is a member of the Egmont Group.

In November the GIF provided training for officials and practitioners on topics such as common money laundering crimes encountered by the financial industry.

Countering Violent Extremism: There were no changes to Macau's CVE programming in 2022.

International and Regional Cooperation: Macau's PJ conducted its annual Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau tripartite "Thunderbolt" policing operation with the Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department and the HKPF in two phases from May to July, and again in September, with AML/CFT being one of the primary emphases of the operation.

In November the GIF held an online exchange meeting with the China Anti-Money Laundering Monitoring and Analysis Center to discuss trends and analysis of cross-border suspicious transactions involving the two regions and raised suggestions for optimizing the execution of financial intelligence exchanges.

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