

# Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

**Aka** al Harakat al Islamiyya (the Islamic Movement).

**Description:** The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) was designated as an FTO on October 8, 1997. ASG split from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the early 1990s and is one of the most violent terrorist groups in the Philippines. The group claims to promote an independent Islamic state in western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. In 2014, an ASG faction pledged allegiance to ISIS and later formed ISIS's Philippines branch in 2016.

**Activities:** Since 2015, ASG has committed kidnappings for ransom (KFR), bombings, ambushes of security personnel, public beheadings, assassinations, and extortion, including KFR operations targeting Canadian, Philippine, German, and Norwegian citizens in 2016 and 2017; a 2018 car bombing at a military checkpoint on Basilan Island, Philippines, killing 10 people, including a Philippine soldier and pro-government militiamen; and the 2019 kidnapping of two British nationals from a beach resort in the Zamboanga Peninsula region.

In 2021, Philippine authorities arrested several ASG members, including an ASG member involved in the abduction of two Canadians who were killed in 2016, an ASG bomb expert linked to the 2019 Jolo cathedral bombings, as well as an ASG member involved in a 2001 kidnapping on Basilan.

In January, ASG killed one Philippine soldier and wounded two in an attack on a Philippine Army truck.

**Strength:** ASG is assessed to have fewer than 200 armed fighters.

**Location/Area of Operation:** Philippines and Malaysia.

**Funding and External Aid:** ASG is funded primarily through its KFR operations and extortion. The group may also receive funding from external sources, including remittances from overseas Philippine workers and Middle East-based sympathizers. In the past, ASG also has received training and other assistance from regional terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiya.