

IN THIS SECTION /

CHAPTER 3 -- THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, OR NUCLEAR TERRORISM

Chapter 4 -- Terrorist Safe Havens (Update to 7120 Report)

Terrorist safe havens described in this report include ungoverned, undergoverned, and ill-governed physical areas where terrorists are able to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, transit, and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will, or both.

Libya. Libya remained politically divided during the year between the Government of National Accord (GNA) and groups aligned with it and groups aligned with the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA). Terrorist groups attempted to exploit a security vacuum in the southern region of the country but were limited in their ability to do so because of tactical gains by the LNA against these groups. Throughout most of 2020, GNA-aligned groups repulsed an LNA attempt to take control of Greater Tripoli, and the two sides signed a nationwide ceasefire on October 23. The GNA and aligned groups maintained control of the Western Mountains and the northwest coastal areas stretching from the Tunisian border to Sirte. LNA-aligned groups controlled the remainder of Libya, including Cyrenaica, and the central and southern districts of Jufra, Kufra, Sabha, and Murzuq. Libya's vast, sparsely populated desert areas, particularly in central and southern Libya, remain safe havens for al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Libya (ISIL-Libya). The GNA, although the internationally recognized government, lacked the capacity and reach to exercise control in most of Libya and relied on militias and other armed groups for security in areas it did not have the ability to effectively control, including the capital Tripoli. The GNA had limited ability to eliminate terrorist safe havens, prevent the flow of FTFs, or ensure effective counter-proliferation efforts. Because of the difficulties of controlling the southern and desert borders and a lack of respect for security procedures at air and seaports of entry by foreign state or Libyan substate groups, the GNA remained unable to effectively track flows of FTFs in and out of its territory. During the year, significant numbers of foreign mercenaries deployed to the country, including Turkey-backed Syrian opposition groups with ties to terrorist groups operating in Syria. Rival factions and political stakeholders outside of the GNA, including in the LNA-aligned forces, also were unable to stem the flow of FTFs.