

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	466
Land:	Bangladesh
Kilde:	US. Departement of State
Titel:	Country Report on Terrorism 2022 Chapter 1 Bangladesh
Udgivet:	30. november 2023
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	5. august 2024



Document #2101538

USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 1 - Bangladesh

Overview: In 2022, Bangladesh experienced few instances of terrorist violence as authorities continued to pursue militants rigorously, particularly al-Qa'ida-affiliated groups, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB), and an ISIS-affiliated JMB offshoot, Neo-JMB. PM Sheikh Hasina and other Bangladeshi government officials frequently emphasized Bangladesh's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism, though Bangladesh continued to deny the presence of globally organized jihadist militant groups such as al-Qa'ida and ISIS. In October, Bangladesh authorities announced operations to disrupt Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya (JAHS), an allegedly al-Qa'ida inspired group. U.S.-trained Bangladesh police units arrested dozens of terrorist suspects. However, other elements of the security forces have conducted extrajudicial killings and committed other human rights violations.

2022 Terrorist Incidents: Terrorist incidents in 2022 included:

- In October the Bangladeshi counterterrorism Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) announced operations to disrupt JAHS, an allegedly al-Qa'ida-inspired group training in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to carry out attacks elsewhere, according to Bangladeshi authorities. Authorities alleged that JAHS cooperated with the Kuki-Chin National Front, an ethnic separatist militant organization. Authorities announced the arrest of dozens of JAHS members throughout the rest of the year.
- On November 20, militants freed Moinul Hasan Shamim and Abu Siddiq Sohel, both convicted for their role in the 2015 murder of Bangladeshi publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan, in an attack on the Dhaka Chief Judicial Magistrate building. Authorities charged 20 suspected members of banned al-Qa'ida-affiliate Ansar al-Islam with helping

plan and/or execute the escape. The freed convicts remained at large at the end of 2022.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Antiterrorism Act of 2009, as amended, remained the basis for the arrest and detention of terrorist suspects. Under the 2018 Digital Security Act (DSA), police can arrest “extremists” propagating, funding, radicalizing, recruiting, or distributing hate speech online. Domestic and international critics asserted the DSA is used predominantly to target, harass, and arrest perceived government critics.

The Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime Unit (CTTCU) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, the Antiterrorism Unit (ATU) of the National Police, and the RAB continued raids against and arrests of suspected terrorists. The CTTCU investigated 27 cases, conducted 27 operations, and made 61 arrests, mostly in Dhaka. The Chattogram Metropolitan CT police responded to multiple incidents and made several arrests. The ATU, though continuing to develop its nationally mandated CT capabilities, increased its performance, completing 27 investigations and carrying out 42 operations that resulted in 45 arrests. Other CT-related units included the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence’s Counterterrorism Investigation Bureau, Border Guards, Special Branch, Aviation Security, the Airport Immigration Police, and the Airport Armed Police Battalion. Each worked independently.

Bangladesh cooperated with the United States to strengthen its internal security and response to terrorism. The U.S. government provided various forms of assistance to CTTCU, the ATU, and other police units around the country. The U.S. government also provided training to Antiterrorism Tribunal (ATT) judges and prosecutors courses on handling evidence, conducting investigations, and prosecuting terrorists and terrorist financing cases. RAB and CTTCU’s Special Weapons and Tactics Division are ineligible for assistance, because of Leahy -related restrictions.

Bangladesh has the capacity to patrol land and maritime borders and has improved cargo and passenger screening with updated equipment, procedures, and increased staff. Bangladeshi authorities implemented notable improvements in port security, particularly at Bangladesh’s principal port in Chittagong. Bangladeshi authorities also undertook planning to implement effective security measures at a new international airport terminal currently under construction in Dhaka and procured appropriate high-quality equipment. Both airport and port authorities were enthusiastic about cooperation with the U.S. government to improve port and airport security.

The country shares information with INTERPOL but has no national terrorist watchlist. Special Branch has its own internal watchlist that provides read-only privileges to the Directorate General of Forces

Intelligence and the Directorate General of National Security Intelligence. A U.S. "Alert List" project remains under government consideration, which would be led by Special Branch in coordination with ATU, CTTCU, and Metropolitan Police. Bangladesh does not systematically use API or PNR data to screen travelers before flights arrive.

Bangladesh is host to more than one million Rohingya refugees. Though violence in the camps remained a concern and Bangladeshi officials publicly highlighted the potential of refugee radicalization to increase terrorist group recruitment and violence, no information emerged about significant terrorist threats from the camps in 2022.

In 2019 the ATT sentenced seven terrorists to death for their supporting roles in the 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery attack. The Supreme Court still has not ruled on their appeal. The seven ATTs carried a caseload of about 680 cases, a slight decrease from 2021. A National Intelligence Agency court on June 3 sentenced Mohammed Masiuddin, aka Abu Musa — an ISIS and JMB member — to life in prison for involvement in a 2014 IED explosion in Khagragarh, India.

In March, ATT in Sylhet sentenced four men to death for the 2015 murder of blogger and writer Ananta Bijoy Das, who had promoted secularism in the Muslim-majority country. In August, ATT in Chattogram sentenced five members of banned militant outfit JMB to death for the 2015 Chattogram naval base bomb blasts.

Counter Terrorist Financing: Bangladesh is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering. Its FIU, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group. There were no significant changes in 2022.

Countering Violent Extremism: Police, academics, civil society organizations, and others reportedly continued drafting a National Counterterrorism Coordination Strategy, but the process may have stalled, according to UN observers. The CTTCU, think tanks, the United Nations, and universities cooperated to conduct CVE-related research on such topics as terrorist organization mapping, social profiling, motivating factors, and radicalization of women. Bangladeshi organizations continued cooperative activities through the Country Support Mechanism under the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, though activities likely will wind down soon.

Radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment in the prison system remained a serious concern. The CTTCU and Dhaka University began to develop a unified deradicalization from violence program to be implemented in select Bangladeshi prisons in 2023. Dhaka North, Dhaka South, and Narayanganj are members of the Strong Cities Network.

International and Regional Cooperation: Bangladesh was active in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's activities in the CT arena.

Associated documents

Document ID 2101538 Chapter

30 November 2023 | [USDOS – US Department of State](#) (Author)

Bangladesh

Brief description of ISIS - Bangladesh (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2022)

[Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - ISIS-Bangladesh](#)
(Periodical Report, English)

en

[ID 2101642](#)

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Bangladesh, India

Brief description of the Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami/Bangladesh (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2022)

[Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - Harakatul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh](#) (Periodical Report, English)

en

[ID 2101654](#)

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Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan

Brief description of Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2022)

[Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent](#) (Periodical Report, English)

ecoi.net description:

Annual report on terrorism (covering 2022)

Country:

Bangladesh

Source:

[USDOS – US Department of State](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2022/bangladesh>

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

30 November 2023

Available on ecoi.net since:

1 December 2023

Document ID:

2101538

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Documentation
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