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Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - 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.

2022 Terrorist Incidents: On September 26, at least 15 people were killed and 24 injured when a gunman opened fire on a school building in central Izhevsk. The gunman, 34-year-old Artem Kazantsev, was a former student; he wore a shirt with a Nazi symbol and held references to U.S. school massacre perpetrators. He killed himself after the attack.

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) — perform counterterrorism functions. The FSB is a 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 right, in some cases, to command army units, including the right 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 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.

Russia's state-centric approach to addressing terrorism differs from whole-of-society approaches to the prevention of terrorism, which include the participation of civil society. The government increased use of counterterrorism 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 legal code allows the government to silence individuals who express dissent toward the government and to prevent them from participating in public life by targeting Russians who support civil society and religious organizations that have been declared "extremist" or "terrorist" under the law that designates organizations as "undesirable." 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. Those who have been designated as affiliates of "undesirable" organizations can face criminal charges. And citizens can be banned from participating in activities of these organizations. 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 barred from participating in civic life and educational activities. New legal amendments entered into force on December 1, which allowed the government to declare any individual or entity a foreign agent if it finds "foreign influence."

In 2022 the Duma passed a law raising the minimum age for purchasing firearms to 21 years old.

In February the Supreme Court upheld its December 2021 decision to shut down the human rights organization Memorial's two primary bodies, Memorial Human Rights Center and International Memorial, for ostensibly "justifying terrorism and extremism" and violating the foreign agents law.

In October the Russian government repatriated 38 children from camps in Syria for families of suspected ISIS fighters; most of the children were orphans, according to *Agence France-Presse*.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: In 2022, Russia was a member of FATF, MONEYVAL (the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism), and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. Russia was suspended from the Council of Europe in March and by consequence, from MONEYVAL, because of its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. In June, FATF members voted to restrict Russia's ability to participate in FATF. Russia's FIU, the Federal Financial Monitoring

Service (*Rosfinmonitoring*), is a member of the Egmont Group, but its ability to participate was limited in December.

Countering Violent Extremism: Russian government authorities, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs's 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 2022 the government pursued baseless charges against opposition leader Aleksey Navalny and the former leader of his campaign office in Ufa, Lilia Chanysheva, for "organizing an extremist organization." It charged citizens with "extremism" for displaying pictures of Navalny, and symbols of his "Smart Voting" electoral project and the Anti-Corruption Foundation. Those with extremism-related convictions are prevented from running for political office. The government also designated Meta, a social media company, as an extremist organization and outlawed the use of social media sites Facebook and Twitter. It continued to ban certain peaceful religious groups as extremist.

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 OSCE. The country was excluded from the Council of Europe (the CoE) on March 16. Russia remains a member of select partial agreements that are open to global accession, including the CoE's Counterterrorism Committee.

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Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for
Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
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(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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F.A.Q.
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