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Country Report on Terrorism 2013 - Chapter 2 - Russia

Overview: Russia was willing to work bilaterally with the United States and other governments within multilateral organizations on specific counterterrorism issues, but significant challenges remain. The Boston Marathon bombing led to an uptick in U.S. and Russia counterterrorism cooperation.

A number of terrorist attacks continued to be committed in the volatile North Caucasus region of Russia. Separatism, inter-ethnic rivalry, revenge, banditry, and violent extremist Islamist ideology were the primary motivating factors for terrorism-related violence. Occasionally, violence originating in the North Caucasus spilled into other areas of Russia, as seen most notably in October and December with the suicide bombings in Volgograd, a large city in southeastern Russia. Terrorists not directly related to events in the Caucasus also carried out attacks in 2013, including an unsuccessful rocket attack by separatists in Tatarstan on a Russian petrochemical plant. On December 20, President Putin reported that in 2013, Russian security services prevented 12 terrorist acts in Russia, killed 255 terrorists, and arrested 500 terrorists and their supporters.

The level of cooperation and bilateral operations between the Governments of Russia and the United States showed some improvements in 2013. Specifically, relations between the Russian Federal Security Services (FSB) and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation saw an increase in both frequency and substance of information exchanges. After the Boston Marathon bombing, the FSB provided information aiding the FBI's investigation and approved and facilitated the travel of FBI investigators to Dagestan to conduct follow-up interviews related to the Boston investigation. Russia also continued to cooperate in a yearly conference with the U.S. intelligence community. Additionally, some operational and intelligence information connected to terrorism-related threats was shared among the agencies on a regular basis, with senior leaders meeting in Moscow and in Washington.

The Counterterrorism Working Group (CTWG) of the Bilateral Presidential Commission (BPC) made progress on transportation security issues and law enforcement matters, as well as in other areas. The CTWG also contributed to the cooperation of Russia and the United States in multilateral fora such as the UN, the G-8, the OSCE, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF).

2013 Terrorist Incidents: The North Caucasus region remained Russia's primary area of terrorist activity. The majority of terrorist attacks in the North Caucasus targeted law enforcement and security services with suicide bombing devices and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) placed in vehicles. The largest such attack in the region occurred on May 20, when two explosions struck the town of Makhachkala, Dagestan, killing four civilians and injuring 52. Incidents have also taken

place in neighboring regions, and the Volga region, including Tatarstan. Indeed, three of Russia's most significant terrorist incidents of 2013 occurred in Volgograd:

- On October 21 a female suicide bomber detonated a device on a public bus in Volgograd, killing seven civilians and injuring 32 others.
- On December 29-30, two suicide attacks occurred within the space of 24 hours, at Volgograd's main railway station and on a city trolleybus, killing 34 and injuring at least 65. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the Volgograd attacks.

Terrorists unconnected to fighting in the Caucasus carried out attacks in 2013, as well. On November 16, unknown assailants launched four missiles with the presumed intention to hit an oil chemical plant in Nizhnekamsk, Tatarstan. One missile fell on a penal colony, while the other three missed their target. A Tatar separatist leader later claimed responsibility for the attack, saying his group wanted to attack Russian petrochemical interests as well as "infidels." The same day, also in Nizhnekamsk, security forces found and defused two homemade bombs left by unknown assailants.

The Russian Ministry of the Interior reported 576 crimes of a "terrorist nature" (a reported drop of 1.4 percent from 2012) and 833 crimes of an "extremist nature" from January to November 2013.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The National Antiterrorism Coordinating Committee is the main government body coordinating the Russian government's response to the terrorist threat. In November, Russia enacted the "Compensation for Terrorist Acts Law," which is composed of amendments to counterterrorism legislation with the following provisions:

- Broadens investigations of suspects' assets to include the assets of family members and an undefined circle of "close ones."
- Assets determined to be derived from terrorist activities, including the assets of family members and "close ones," can be forfeited as compensation for victims of terrorism. The legislation is intended to disrupt the ethnic clan system that continued to create problems for law enforcement, but has been criticized by human rights groups as a form of collective punishment.
- Makes punishable the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the sole purpose of committing terrorist acts with a 10-year prison sentence and a fine of approximately \$15,000.
- Increases the prison sentence for the creation of terrorist networks from 10 to 15 years to 15 to 20 years and adds a US \$30,000 fine.
- Introduces a six-year prison sentence for Russian nationals participating in anti-government militias abroad when the activities contradict the interests of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation uses a machine-readable passport for foreign travel, and citizens have the option of purchasing a more expensive biometric passport. The biometric passports contain robust security features and are valid for 10 years. Among Russian applicants for U.S. visas this year, an increasing number used the new Russian biometric passport.

Cooperative relationships continued to develop between the heads of the State Border Guard Service of the FSB and the U.S. Border Patrol. Similarly, the U.S. Coast Guard enjoyed a close working relationship with the Coast Guard of the FSB Border Guard Service. Discussions about the

exchange of information and best practices between Russian border services and U.S. law enforcement with regard to counterterrorism and drug interdiction were ongoing at year's end.

In the lead-up to the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russian media reported that federal and local security organs had intensified counterterrorism operations in the neighboring north Caucasus. These operations, although occurring throughout the Caucasus, were mostly focused in Dagestan, Chechnya, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Operations included roadblocks, raids of public venues such as cafes, and larger-scale military-style operations, especially in rural areas. There was an uptick in law enforcement operations in Tatarstan as well, with several convictions of alleged militants on terrorism charges.

Law enforcement actions and prosecutions included:

- On May 13, the trial of Ali Taziyev began in Rostov-on-Don. Taziyev is a former police officer who allegedly joined North Caucasus militants; he was charged with setting up an armed militant group, illegal arms trafficking, inciting a rebellion, attempted murder of a law enforcement officer, and 24 counts of terrorism.
- On May 21, the Russian National Antiterrorism Committee (NAC) announced that Dzhamaileil Mutaliev, believed to be a leading figure of the Imarat Kavkaz terrorist group, was killed by security forces in Ingushetia.
- On June 6, FSB forces arrested Yulay Davletbayev, alleged leader of a terrorist cell for plotting major attacks in Moscow.
- On July 8, NAC spokesmen announced that security forces had killed Rustam Saliyev, who served as a bodyguard for Imarat Kavkaz leader Doku Umarov, in Chechnya.
- On July 22, two homemade bombs were discovered near a mosque in Khasavyurt, Dagestan.
- On September 3, a cache with ammunition, an explosive device, and a schematic view of a school was found in the Dagestani city of Buinaksk.
- On September 26, the Supreme Court of Russia's Republic of Tatarstan sentenced Taufik Baibekov, 23, to nine-and-a-half years in jail on terrorism charges for an August 2012 incident in which four of Baibekov's associates accidentally detonated explosives they were transporting and were killed.
- On October 4, a Tatarstan court sentenced two Islamist militants on charges of planning to detonate IEDs at a shop selling mobile phones and a local police station in the city of Chistopol, central Tatarstan. The court found that the principal defendant had trained in Pakistan, formed a terrorist network upon his return to Tatarstan, and then recruited his co-defendant.
- On October 15, Russian authorities arrested two men, identified as Islamist radicals from the North Caucasus, for allegedly planning an attack on the Maradykovsky chemical weapons storage and disposal facility in the Kirov region, 620 miles northeast of Moscow.
- On October 26, police in Dagestan destroyed a large bomb-making workshop containing homemade explosives and suicide belts.
- On November 16, the NAC announced security forces had killed Dmitry Sokolov, alleged partner of the female suicide bomber responsible for the October Volgograd bus bombing, and four of his alleged accomplices in Makhachkala.
- On December 31, the government increased police presence in public areas around the country, and police arrested 87 following the December 29-30 attacks in Volgograd. The detainees allegedly had resisted police or could not produce proper identification or registration documents.

Endemic corruption remained a problem that created vulnerabilities within law enforcement, border control officials, and the judiciary. Although Russia has taken some steps to reform its law enforcement structures and cooperates in a variety of international efforts to combat corruption – including being a State Party to the UN Convention Against Corruption and an aspirant to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention – much work remains to address these vulnerabilities.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Russia is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and is serving as FATF president from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. Russia also belongs to two FATF-style regional bodies: the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (Moneyval) and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG), where it is a leading member and primary funding source. Through the EAG, Russia provides technical assistance and other resources towards improving legislative and regulatory frameworks and operational capabilities.

Russian banks must report suspicious transactions to the Financial Monitoring Federal Service (Rosfinmonitoring), a financial intelligence unit whose head reports directly to the President. The Central Bank can access these transaction reports after requesting them from Rosfinmonitoring. Rosfinmonitoring is a member of the Egmont Group.

In 2013, Russia amended its primary anti-money laundering legislation and strengthened its counterterrorist finance framework. One element of this amendment created a system for freezing terrorist assets, bringing Russian legislation in-line with UNSCR 1373 (2001). Financial institutions are obliged to freeze any assets of individuals or entities designated through a newly established interagency system. Any financial institution freezing assets or funds must report their actions to Russia's financial intelligence unit. The amendment also created a mechanism for adjudicating delisting requests, for unfreezing funds of a non-designated individual or entity that inadvertently had their assets frozen, and for implementing freezing designations made in other countries.

Grey markets and the underground economy continued to thrive in Russia. Combined with a significant migrant worker population that sends remittances through a variety of licit and illicit means, there are risks that the country could be exploited by illicit actors. The presence of large-scale organized criminal groups and the large sums of money which they launder could also be vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist groups.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2014 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume 2, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

Regional and International Cooperation: Russia has been an active member of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Terrorist Threat to the Euro-Atlantic Area. Russia also worked with other regional and multilateral groups to address terrorism, including with the EU, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the GCTF, the G-8 Counterterrorism Action Group, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the OSCE. Russia has also engaged with the “Istanbul Process” working group on combating terrorism in Afghanistan.

In July, CSTO member countries in Rostov conducted an exercise to practice skills in disarming and neutralizing criminal armed groups and terrorists. Approximately 500 regular and special police personnel attached to the CSTO's Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF) practiced spotting and neutralizing terrorists in the interoperability drill. The CSTO also conducted the Interaction 2013 counterterrorism training exercise in Belarus from September 20-25, as part of a major bilateral Russia and Belarus military exercise, Zapad-2013. About 600 personnel from the CSTO's CORF, coming from Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, participated in the exercise, which focused on command and control and the use of aviation in special and joint operations.

At its October 30 Ambassadorial meeting, NATO and Russia assessed this year's work on counterterrorism projects and looked at possible new areas of cooperation. Both the Stand-Off Detection of Explosives (STANDEX), an effort by NATO and Russian scientists to develop technology to detect concealed explosives on a suicide bomber from a distance and in a crowd, and the Cooperative Airspace Initiative (CAI), which allows nations to send air traffic information to each other across shared borders in the case of a suspected hijacking of a civilian aircraft, were successfully tested in live exercises this year.

The 2014 Sochi Olympics took place in proximity to the North Caucasus, where ongoing violence and extremist activity created a heightened concern over potential terrorist activity targeting the Games. In July 2013, Doku Umarov, leader of the Caucasus Emirate, called for attacks on the Olympic Games. In response, the Russian security services stated publicly that they would implement necessary security measures to ensure the safety of the Games. The security services have also held a series of working group meetings with foreign law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and with security representatives from Olympic sponsors and National Olympic Committees.

Countering Radicalization to Violence and Violent Extremism: The Russian government continued constructive relations with established Muslim organizations that promote a non-violence dialogue. The United States and Russia continued ongoing dialogue through existing mechanisms to discuss and exchange best practices for combating domestic radicalization to violence and violent extremism issues.
