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Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Russia

Overview: The Russian Federation continued to prioritize CT efforts in 2019 and remained a target of international terrorist groups, particularly ISIS. Low-level militant terrorist activity remained a problem in Russia's North Caucasus region despite increases in CT activities and political consolidation efforts.

2019 Terrorist Incidents: On January 11, three apparent terrorists attacked officers of Russia's road patrol service near the village of Agachaul, Karabudakhentsky District in the Republic of Dagestan. The suspects opened fire on law enforcement officers with automatic rifles before being killed by the authorities. The authorities reportedly found additional weapons and ammunition in the suspects' car. Additional attacks included:

- On March 13, two suspects in the Shpakov district in Stavropol opened fire with automatic weapons and threw a grenade when stopped by the Federal Security Service (FSB) for questioning. The suspects were killed onsite. Russian authorities reported the perpetrators were affiliated with ISIS and had been planning a terrorist attack.
- On April 8, there was an explosion at Kolomna, near Moscow. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attack, which reportedly did not result in any casualties.
- On July 1, a man killed a police officer with a knife at a checkpoint in the Achkhoy-Martonovsky district of Chechnya. The police shot and killed the attacker as he threw a grenade at them. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On December 19, a Moscow region resident opened fire near the FSB headquarters in Moscow and killed two security officers and wounded four others. The shooter was killed onsite. The attacker was later identified as Yevgeny Manyurov, a 39-year-old former security guard.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Under the coordination of the National Antiterrorism Committee and with aid from the Ministry of Internal Affairs when appropriate, the FSB performs CT functions. Russia increasingly used its counterterrorism and anti-extremism legislation against the political opposition, independent media, and certain religious organizations, including Jehovah's Witnesses, to criminalize the exercise of freedoms of religion or belief, expression, and association.

Russia's FSB Director General Alexander Bortnikov reported in late September that the FSB had identified terrorist cells in 17 regions of the country. He stated that Russian law enforcement had prevented 39 terrorist attacks, killed 32 militants, detained 679 suspects, and dismantled 49 terrorists' cells that were plotting attacks. Notwithstanding those incidents, Bortnikov stated on December 10 that the intelligence services did not allow any terrorist acts in 2019 despite the incidents listed. The Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that those detained in connection to terrorism in 2019 included 14 returning international terrorists.

On November 5, Russian media reported the arrest of a 30-year-old native of Kyrgyz Republic for planning a terrorist attack in Moscow. Media reported the suspect, who confessed to planning an explosion in a crowded area of the nation's capital, was affiliated with a “radical form of Islam.”

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Russia is a member of FATF and two FATF-style regional bodies: MONEYVAL and EAG. Its FIU, the Federal Financial Monitoring Service (Rosfinmonitoring), is a member of the Egmont Group.

In September, Rosfinmonitoring released for public discussion a draft law to amend Article 6.2 of the federal law “On the Prevention of Criminal Proceeds Legalization and Terrorist Financing.” The amendment would establish that legal entities are required to take reasonable measures in specific circumstances to prevent the laundering of criminal proceeds and to cooperate with law enforcement agencies on issues related to combating terrorist financing and money laundering.

In December, FATF published a Mutual Evaluation Report that reviewed Russia's compliance with

FATF standards and the effectiveness of Russia's AML/CFT system.

Countering Violent Extremism: The government has not committed great attention to countering terrorist radicalization and recruitment in 2019. However, according to NGO reports, Russian government authorities, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs Center for Countering Extremism and the FSB, continue to misuse the country's expansive definition of extremism to curtail freedoms of expression, belief, assembly, and association.

International and Regional Cooperation: Russia participated in several joint CT exercises, including the Tsentr 2019 exercise from September 16 to 21, with China, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Russia also promoted the Collective Security Treaty Organization as a forum for international CT cooperation and conducted the Combat Brotherhood-2019 exercise from October 21 to 29. Russia is a member of the GCTF and an active participant in several multilateral organizations, including the UN, OSCE, the East Asia Summit, APEC, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the ASEAN Regional Forum. On September 5 and 6, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the International Conference on Countering Illicit Trafficking in Arms in the Context of Fighting International Terrorism. Russia also hosted the 18th Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies, and Law-Enforcement Organizations in Sochi on October 16 and 17.

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