

Opérationnel Conjoint) with Mali, Mauritania, and Niger to promote security cooperation in the region; and hosted CEMOC's Liaison and Fusion Center for information sharing. Algeria also provides significant funding to the AU's Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa.

Algeria sits on the UN Counter-Terrorism Center's Advisory Board and hosts the headquarters of AFRIPOL, a pan-African organization to foster police training and cooperation. As a founding member of the GCTF, Algeria served as co-chair of the SWG, which promotes regional and international cooperation and provides a venue for experts to discuss capacity-building gaps specific to the Sahel region and identify solutions. Under the auspices of the SWG, Algeria hosted a regional workshop on the role of the criminal justice system in countering terrorism and on developing and implementing national plans of action to prevent violent extremism. In 2016, Algeria also convened international workshops on the role of democracy in countering terrorism, and on Terrorists' Use of the Internet.

In 2016, Algeria continued strong diplomatic engagement to promote regional peace and security. Algerian officials reported that security cooperation along the Algeria-Tunisia border had prevented several terrorist attacks. On the diplomatic front, Algeria chaired the implementation committee for the peace accord in Mali. Algeria continued to press publicly and privately for groups and stakeholders to support the UN political process in Libya. Algeria also participated in various Sahel-Saharan fora to discuss development and security policies, the evolution of regional terrorism, and donor coordination.

Algeria is an active member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), a U.S. multi-year interagency regional program aimed at building the capacity of governments in the Maghreb and Sahel to confront threats posed by violent extremists. Both Morocco and Algeria participate in the TSCTP; the 5+5 Defense Initiative, which brings together five European and five North African countries to address security issues in the Mediterranean; and the GCTF; however, political disagreement over the status of Western Sahara remained an impediment to bilateral and regional counterterrorism cooperation in 2016.

BAHRAIN

Overview: During 2016, the Bahraini government continued to make gains in detecting, neutralizing, and containing terrorist threats from violent Shia militants and ISIS sympathizers. Shia militants remained a key threat to security services, and their attacks in 2016 resulted in the death of one police officer and one civilian. The government also continued implementing counterterrorism laws the legislature approved in 2013, including revoking the citizenship of suspected and convicted terrorists. Opposition-leaning activists asserted at least some of these revocations were politically motivated, however. The government also offered diplomatic support to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, participating in the October Counter-ISIS conference in Washington and other working-level meetings – such as those of the Political Directors, Small Group, and Communications Committee – although Bahrain has not contributed substantively to coalition military efforts since 2014. Bahrain also indirectly supports coalition operations through hosting the Fifth Fleet and Naval Central Command.

In December, ISIS affiliates released a video in which the operatives called for attacks against the Bahraini government and U.S. interests in the region.

2016 Terrorist Incidents: The number of terrorist attacks against security forces declined in 2016 after several high-profile strikes the previous three years. At least three attacks resulted in casualties or injuries; only one of which involved explosives. Suspected Shia militants continued to instigate low-level violence against security forces using real and fake improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Bahrain regularly experiences low-level violence between Shia youth – using Molotov cocktails and other homemade devices – and predominantly Sunni security forces in mostly-Shia villages. Attacks in 2016 included:

- On April 16, youth used Molotov cocktails to attack a police patrol vehicle in the predominantly Shia village of Karbabad, resulting in the death of a police officer and injuries to two others.
- On May 22, the Mukhtar Brigades Shia militant group claimed credit for the shooting of a police officer in the predominantly Shia village of Sitra. The officer survived the attack.
- On June 30, an IED in the village of East Eker killed a Bahraini woman and injured her three children. The woman was likely collateral damage and not the intended target; no one claimed responsibility for the attack and militants have not previously targeted civilians.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Antiterrorism Law of 2006, and amendments in 2013, as well as Articles 155 and 168 of the penal code, form the bulk of Bahrain’s terrorism legislative framework. A 2004 legislative decree created a new division within the Public Prosecutor’s Office that specializes in terrorism cases. In 2013, the government amended the Charity Fundraising Law of 1956 to tighten terrorist finance monitoring and penalties and strengthen the government’s ability to monitor and impede the use of social media to promote terrorism.

Bahrain did not offer any significant adjustments to its legal regime in 2016, although in April it labeled 68 groups as terrorist entities, including three domestic Shia militant organizations and ISIS. Activists alleged that the government has used the 2013 amendments to the Antiterrorism Law, particularly portions related to citizenship revocations, to pursue politically motivated cases against the mainstream, nonviolent opposition and Shia Community.

The Ministry of the Interior is the lead government agency that detects and prevents terrorism, and arrests suspects in terrorism-related acts, with the Bahrain National Security Agency providing intelligence support. The Bahraini Coast Guard monitors and interdicts seaborne weapons and terrorists. The major deterrents to more effective law enforcement and border security are the lack of interagency coordination and limited training opportunities to develop requisite law enforcement skills. Police regularly plan and mobilize large-scale security operations to prepare for and enhance security during major events.

Bahrain has attempted to upgrade its border security and screening procedures at its two primary points of entry: the Bahrain International Airport and the King Fahd Causeway. Bahrain’s third

point of entry is the Khalifa bin Salman Port, where there is also appropriate screening. Bahrain cross-checks biographic information of incoming and outgoing travelers and can prevent individuals from entering or leaving the country. It is able to work with airlines for advance passenger information protocols, but usually not until incoming flights are airborne. Bahrain works with international organizations such as INTERPOL to identify and apprehend wanted persons; activists and NGOs have asserted that the government has used the INTERPOL red notice system to pursue politically motivated cases against the mainstream opposition and Shia activists without a history of involvement in violent acts. In 2016, Bahrain and the United States enhanced their abilities to share terrorism screening information.

Bahrain has initiated and continued to pursue numerous high-profile terrorism cases related to Sunni and Shia violent extremists. In 2016, a court convicted 24 citizens, with 16 tried in absentia, of forming an ISIS cell and revoked their citizenships. Most citizenship revocations and other prosecutions based on terrorism charges involved Shia militant individuals and organizations. Notable examples included the cases of the “Imam Army” and “Basta” terrorist organizations, where suspects are accused of conspiring with Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps–Qods Force and other terrorist entities to launch domestic attacks.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Bahrain is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, the Anti-Money Laundering Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units. Bahrain is also a member of the Coalition’s Counter-ISIS Finance Group (CIFG) and hosted a U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Counter-Hizballah Workshop in 2016. Bahrain participated in three CIFG meetings in 2016 with delegations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, and Central Bank of Bahrain.

Bahrain did not pass any significant counterterrorist financing legislation in 2016, but the Public Prosecutor’s Office (PPO) signed an MOU with counterparts in the United Kingdom to increase information sharing and capacity building. One of the end goals of the project is to develop a financial crimes division within the PPO, which the office aims to implement after several of its members complete training in London.

Bahrain criminalizes terrorist financing in accordance with international standards and has the ability to immediately freeze suspicious financial assets. The Central Bank has implemented regulations stipulating that financial institutions and other relevant authorities do not have any dealings with UN-sanctioned entities, and financial institutions must screen all account activity against the Office of Foreign Assets Control Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list as well as applicable UN Security Council resolutions. The government routinely distributes the UN Security Council lists of designated individuals and entities to financial institutions. The government also obliges non-profit organizations to file suspicious transaction reports and regulates and monitors them to prevent misuse and terrorist financing.

In Bahrain, the potential politicization of terrorist finance and money laundering issues threatens to conflate legitimate prosecutions of militants with politically-motivated actions against the mainstream, nonviolent opposition and Shia community, including Shia clerics. The lack of trust

between the government and opposition after several years of political paralysis may continue to complicate any government efforts to prosecute legitimate financial crimes, including the financing of terrorism.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2016, the government began drafting a National Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy in line with the UN Secretary-General's Preventing Violent Extremism Plan of Action. Additionally, numerous officials from the government, legislature, and non-governmental organization (NGO) community have put together programming targeting youth and other vulnerable populations, including a May conference that focused on protecting youth from extremist influences.

A sense of economic and political disenfranchisement has persisted among sectors of the Shia community for years and remained a primary driver of violent extremism in 2016. Many Shia leaders claimed discrimination in government employment and awarding of government scholarships has worsened since the Arab Spring-inspired protests of 2011.

There is little support for violent anti-government activity in the Sunni community, but a limited circle of individuals has become radicalized in the past several years and either joined local violent extremist factions or left to fight with ISIS and other terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. In December, ISIS said 14 Bahrainis had died fighting in Iraq and Syria.

Within the Sunni community, a small number of extremist religious preachers have helped radicalize these individuals, although Bahraini Sunnis looking to join violent extremist groups are also motivated by regional events and a desire to counter what they perceive to be growing Iranian influence.

The government has attempted to dilute the influence of religious leaders in political life and has forced both Sunni and Shia clerics to sign a document, originally authored in 2009, that commits them to certain standards when delivering Friday sermons. The government has rationalized several of the actions it took in 2016, including the dissolution of the country's preeminent opposition group, as attempts to dilute the influence of actors who incited violence and radicalization in the Shia community. Some activists and NGOs have claimed, however, that the government wants to silence peaceful dissent.

The government has also attempted to build outreach through initiatives such as the community police, which recruits mostly Shia Bahrainis to bridge the divide between predominantly Shia villages and the regular – mostly Sunni (and non-Bahraini origin) – police force. The community police program emerged as one of several initiatives after the 2011 unrest, but the government has not published statistics on the force's composition or track record. Additionally, many in the Shia community continue to view anyone who works directly or indirectly for the security services with suspicion.

The government says it is working to establish a National Rehabilitation Center to reintegrate prisoners with extremist views back into society, but has not given a timetable for its implementation. There is also no overall strategic messaging campaign to counter terrorist narratives, although government leaders often publicly speak about tolerance and reducing sectarian rhetoric.

International and Regional Cooperation: In 2016, Bahrain and other GCC members led efforts with both the Arab League and Organization for Islamic Cooperation to designate Hizballah as a terrorist group. Also in 2016, Bahrain deepened its security cooperation with other GCC members, engaging in a largescale multilateral counterterrorism exercise (“Arab Gulf Security 1”) that featured joint drills between police forces of several states. The Bahraini government frequently attends conferences related to multilateral counterterrorism cooperation.

EGYPT

Overview: In 2016, the Egyptian government continued to confront active terrorist groups that conducted deadly attacks on government, military, and civilian targets throughout the country. While the overall number of attacks against civilian targets declined through the middle of the year, several high-profile attacks at the end of the year indicate the threat level remains high. Two ISIS affiliates, ISIL-Sinai Province (ISIL-SP) and a distinct group calling itself Islamic State Egypt (IS Egypt), continued to pose a threat. Egypt also faced anti-regime violence from groups, including Liwa al-Thawra and the Harakat Sawa’d Misr (HASM) organization; both have claimed responsibility for attacks in Egypt. The Revolutionary Punishment and Popular Resistance organizations were less active than they had been in the past. While ISIS-affiliated groups likely received some external support and direction, there is no evidence of a significant presence of foreign terrorist fighters in Egypt.

President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi remained focused on counterterrorism efforts in Egypt. The Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) continued the counterterrorism campaign against ISIL-SP in North Sinai (known as Operation “Right of the Martyr”) to defeat the terrorist threat and prevent the establishment of a terrorist safe haven. The Egyptian government claimed to have killed thousands of terrorists. Rights groups and international media reported allegations that the armed forces used indiscriminate force during military operations that targeted widespread terrorist activity in the northern Sinai Peninsula, resulting in killings of civilians and destruction of property. The government did not report any civilian casualties during operations in the Sinai. (There is no independent confirmation of these allegations as northern Sinai remains closed to U.S. officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the press.)

Further, the EAF sustained efforts to seize and destroy tunnels used for smuggling on the border between Egypt and Gaza but at a slower rate compared to last year due to the establishment of a border buffer zone, which significantly reduced tunnel activity in this area.

On August 4, ISIL-SP leader Mohamed Fereij Zeyada (aka Abu Doaa Al-Ansary) was killed in an operation south of Sheikh Zoweid. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continued to be the largest threat facing Egyptian security forces in North Sinai. To circumvent EAF