



## Country Reports on Terrorism 2009

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### Chapter 2. Country Reports: Western Hemisphere Overview

#### Tri-Border Area

The Governments of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay have long been concerned with arms and drugs smuggling, document fraud, money laundering, and the manufacture and movement of contraband goods in the border region where the three countries meet. In the early 1990s, they established a mechanism to address these illicit activities. In 2002, at the invitation of the three countries, the United States joined them in what became the “3+1 Group on Tri-Border Area Security” to improve the capabilities of the three to address cross-border crime and thwart money laundering and terrorist financing activities.

The United States remained concerned that Hizballah and HAMAS sympathizers were raising funds in the Tri-Border Area by participating in illicit activities and soliciting donations from sympathizers in the sizable Middle Eastern communities in the region. There was no corroborated information, however, that these or other Islamic extremist groups had an operational presence in the region.

#### Argentina

During 2009, Argentina continued to focus on the challenges of policing its remote northern and northeastern borders – including the tri-border area where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet – against threats including drug and human trafficking, contraband smuggling, and other international crime.

Argentina and the United States cooperated well in analyzing possible terrorist threat information. Argentine security forces received U.S. government training in terrorism investigations, special operations related to terrorist incidents and threats, and in explosive and drug-sniffing dog handling and dog training. In addition, Argentina hosted U.S. government-financed regional training on the role of police commanders in responding to terrorist threats. Argentina takes seriously its responsibility to protect its nuclear technology and materials; it has begun to provide training to other countries on best practices against illicit trade in nuclear materials.

The National Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights manages the government's anti-money laundering and counterterrorist finance efforts, and represents Argentina at the Financial Action Task Force, the Financial Action Task Force of South America, and the Group of Experts of the Inter-

American Commission for the Control of the Abuse of Drugs (CICAD) of the Organization of American States' CICAD Group of Experts.

The Attorney General's special prosecution unit, set up to handle money laundering and cases, began operations in 2007. That same year, the Argentine Congress criminalized terrorist financing with the enactment of Law 26.268, "Illegal Terrorist Associations and Terrorism Financing." This statute amended the Penal Code and anti-money laundering law to criminalize terrorist financing and established it as a predicate offense for money laundering. To date, Argentina has not filed any charges under the law. In 2008, the Argentine Central Bank's Superintendent of Banks began specific anti-money laundering and counterterrorist finance inspections of financial entities and exchange houses. The Argentine government and Central Bank remained committed to freezing assets of terrorist groups identified by the United Nations in Argentine financial institutions.

An Argentine judge in 2006 issued arrest warrants for eight current and former Iranian government officials and one member of Hizballah, who were indicted in the July 18, 1994 terrorist bombing of the Argentine-Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) that killed 85 and injured more than 150 people. Despite Iranian objections, the INTERPOL General Assembly voted in November 2007 to uphold the Executive Committee's decision and the Red Notices on six were issued. At the 2009 UN General Assembly, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner called on Iran to surrender the suspects to face charges in Argentina. In June, an Argentine judge requested the capture of a Colombian citizen, Samuel Salman El Reda, after the AMIA Special Prosecutor identified him as having helped coordinate the 1994 attack. El Reda had been named previously as a suspect and was presumed to no longer be in Argentina.