

## Country Report on Terrorism 2013

### BULGARIA

**Overview:** In 2013, Bulgaria continued its investigation into the 2012 airport bus bombing in Burgas. In September, Gauntlet Challenge, a large, Bulgaria-U.S. interagency counterterrorism exercise, expanded bilateral cooperation to respond to terrorist threats. An influx of asylum seekers from Syria has exacerbated border security challenges, raised interethnic tensions, and challenged underfunded state agencies. There are concerns that this flow of people could allow some foreign fighters to transit in and out of Bulgaria. Bulgaria is slated to receive more than US \$7 million in aid from the EU specifically earmarked to assist with the influx of asylum seekers. The United States, in concert with other regional partners, has maintained a regular dialogue with the Bulgarian government to assess and manage this risk.

**Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security:** Bulgaria prosecutes suspected terrorists under several provisions of its Penal Code. The basic definition of terrorism is provided for in Article 108a of the code. Over the past several years, the Bulgarian government has attempted to fortify its ability to investigate and prosecute terrorists. The Ministry of Justice drafted a new Penal Code in 2012 to replace the outdated 1968 version; the draft code includes more detailed and specific counterterrorism provisions that implement the major international counterterrorism conventions. The draft Code was being debated in Parliament at the end of 2013.

Law enforcement cooperation between U.S. agencies and their Bulgarian counterparts has historically been strong. However, the government has reshuffled and reorganized key police units, with the resulting reassignment of personnel and imposition of new rules slowing joint casework.

The Interior Ministry continued to host operational units responsible for deterring, detecting, and responding to incidents, including the Specialized Unit for Combatting Terrorism, Security Police, and Special Police Forces. Specialized law enforcement units were properly equipped and supported with relevant training.

U.S. law enforcement and the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior have cooperated on the ongoing investigation into the 2012 bus bombing in Burgas, which – initial investigations indicate – was perpetrated by individuals affiliated with Lebanese Hizballah. In July, the Prosecutor General's office invited Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) bomb technicians to Bulgaria to review the evidence, including photos, material, and a video re-creation of the event. The team, which arrived in October 2013, praised Bulgaria's cooperation and the high quality of the re-creation.

The State Department provided Regional Strategic Initiative funding for training to Bulgarian law enforcement in a variety of areas including counterterrorism investigations and explosive countermeasures.

**Countering the Financing of Terrorism:** Bulgaria belongs to the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (Moneyval). Bulgaria is implementing its 2003 Law on Measures Against Terrorism Financing. In December 2012, Parliament adopted legal amendments to this law as well as to the Measures Against Money Laundering act. The changes expand on the definitions of terrorist funds to cover those controlled by designated persons and specify the different forms of control. The amendments also introduced a requirement for financial institutions to monitor complex and unusually large transactions. The country's widescale smuggling and cross-border illicit criminal networks, combined with the free movement of goods and persons as a result of EU

membership, present risks to Bulgaria's financial sector. 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:** Bulgaria is a member and active contributor to counterterrorism initiatives in the UN, EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, Organization for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and NATO. Law enforcement officials benefit from joint investigations and training opportunities with international partners.