

Country Reports on Terrorism 2015

SPAIN

Overview: Spain was an active partner with the United States in efforts to track and disrupt transnational terrorism in 2015. In addition, Spain continued its deep cooperation with Algeria and Morocco, with a focus on the threat posed by instability in Libya. The domestic terrorist group Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) has not launched any attacks since it announced a “definitive cessation of armed activity” in October 2011, and although the group had not formally disbanded or given up its weapons arsenal, its coherence was further eroded by the arrest of more members of its vestigial leadership, often through cooperative Spain-France law enforcement efforts.

Spain has been an active member and its government an outspoken supporter of the Global Coalition to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since its inception. Spain has a 300-strong military training mission in Iraq, co-located with the United States at Besmaya, south of Baghdad.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Spanish Criminal Code specifically punishes any act of collaboration with the activities or purposes of a terrorist organization. In July, an update to Spain’s criminal code came into effect to improve its legal framework to more effectively counter the movement of foreign terrorist fighters from Spain to conflict zones, better pursue suspected terrorists without clear affiliation to a known criminal organization, and curtail terrorist preparatory activities online. In terms of terrorism prosecution, Spain already boasts a mature legal framework as a result of its long fight against the indigenous terrorist group ETA.

Spain’s counterterrorism capabilities, coordinated by the national Center for Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime Intelligence (CITCO), have proven effective. The National Police and Civil Guard share responsibility for counterterrorism and cooperate well, with strong information sharing and joint threat assessments. Though still developing, Spain is working to implement its cybersecurity strategy to safeguard its critical information systems under the direction of the Cyber Defense Committee, charged with coordinating cybersecurity across the various government departments.

Spain continued to focus on improved security and the detection of false documents at its borders. Spain participated in the U.S. Immigration Advisory Program, which maintains staff at Madrid-Barajas International Airport, and allows for coordination between Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials, airline security personnel, and police regarding high risk passengers traveling to the United States. Spain finished implementation of an automated system to read EU passports with biometric data, and explosive trace detection equipment was also deployed at Spain’s five largest airports at passenger checkpoints. Spain continued to use a network of radar stations, known as the Integrated External Surveillance System, along its maritime borders.

As a founding member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Spain has increased its already proactive efforts to identify and disband terrorist recruitment and foreign terrorist fighter facilitation networks. Spanish law enforcement generally has been proactive in pursuing terrorism-related investigations, arresting about 100 individuals suspected of terrorist recruitment or travel facilitation. Spain is an exceptionally cooperative and capable partner on efforts to

apprehend, convict, and punish terrorists, working closely with the United States, and European and regional partners.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Spain is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Its financial intelligence unit, the Executive Service of the Commission for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Monetary Infractions, is a member of the Egmont Group. Spain continued to demonstrate leadership in the area of anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. Spain enacted its current law on Preventing Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism in 2010; the law entered into force immediately. The related regulations greatly enhance authorities' capacity to counter terrorism financing by placing greater requirements, with stiffer penalties for non-compliance, on financial institutions and other businesses, and by strengthening monitoring and oversight. The government diligently implemented relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and had the legal authority to impose autonomous designations. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 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: Spain passed a National Counter Radicalization Strategy on January 30, managed by the Ministry of Interior's CITCO. The whole-of-government effort has established a national level working group, named local level leaders, and is in the implementation phase. Spain claimed success in preventing prison radicalization, and intends to use the kind of victim-centered messaging model that helped turn public opinion against domestic terrorist group ETA in its efforts to counter violent Islamist extremism. In December, police launched a telephone hotline, email, and mobile application to receive tips on potential radicalization. Security forces also announced the launch of a new ISIL counter-messaging campaign on police websites. With respect to rehabilitation and reintegration, most of Spain's 25 returned foreign terrorist fighters remained in detention.

International and Regional Cooperation: Since 2004, Spain has been part of the informal working group on violent Islamist extremism known as the 5 + 5. The group brings together defense ministers or their designees from five European countries (Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and Malta) and five Maghreb countries (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya). Its mission is to exchange information and discuss the operational implications of the threat from violent Islamist extremists in the European theater, including that posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters. In July, Spain hosted a Ministerial Level Special Meeting of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. It is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and is also a member of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Spain's participation in the G-4 with Portugal, France, and Morocco also has an operational objective. The four countries freely exchange tactics and intelligence on counter-narcotics, counterterrorism and organized crime/illegal immigration. Spain continued its work with the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Spain cites the lingering effects of its economic crisis as an impediment to further regional and international counterterrorism cooperation. All efforts are made to not reduce operational capacity according to the Ministry of the Interior, but resource constraints reduced Spain's ability to take part in international training exercises. Spain believes the EU should supplement the country in terms of counterterrorism and border issues, especially given the uniqueness of Spain's North African exclaves forming the southern border of the EU.