Overview: The Republic of Korea has strong counterterrorism capabilities and enjoys robust cooperation with the United States and the international community. In 2014, the Republic of Korea did not face any major domestic terrorist threats; however, South Korean citizens serving as tourists and missionaries have in prior years been victims of terrorist attacks in the Middle East and East Africa. Domestically, agencies with counterterrorism responsibilities continued to closely monitor and cooperate with the United States on the prevention of cyberattacks and the mitigation of threats posed by foreign residents with potential ties to terrorist groups. South Korean and U.S. law enforcement agencies have worked closely on information sharing through the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 (HSPD–6) and the Preventing and Combating Serious Crime (PCSC) agreement, and have held joint investigations on known and suspected terrorists. In October, the Republic of Korea conducted a bilateral counterterrorism consultation with the People’s Republic of China.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The National Assembly failed to pass a comprehensive counterterrorism law, first proposed in 2001. As a result, South Korean legal authorities have no legal framework to proactively and consistently investigate individuals with material or ideological ties to terrorism. Therefore, South Korean authorities use criminal statutes for suspected terrorism cases.

The Republic of Korea derives its authority to perform counterterrorist activities from Presidential Directive 309, last revised in 2013. In spring 2014, National Assembly members submitted for deliberation several bills regarding cyberterrorism and compensation for victims of terrorist acts, including medical and recovery assistance. At year’s end, the bills were with the National Assembly Intelligence Committee.

In the lead-up to the 2014 Asian Games, a group of international police prevented sixteen foreign nationals from entering the country due to terrorism suspicions.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The Republic of Korea is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body, and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units. In May,
a law was revised to stipulate that the Republic of Korea implement all international treaties and resolutions related to countering the financing of terrorism (CFT) in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1267, 1988, and 1373. The Korea Financial Intelligence Unit, established by the Ministry of Finance and Economy, works with law enforcement agencies to monitor suspicious transactions and develop CFT policy. 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: The Republic of Korea continued to strengthen bilateral and multilateral counterterrorism efforts in 2014. The Republic of Korea is a member of the UN, APEC, ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit, Asia–Europe Meeting, Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Forum for East Asia–Latin America Cooperation, the OECD, the G–20, and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence–Building Measures in Asia. South Korea is also a partner country of OSCE and NATO. The Republic of Korea remains actively engaged in global efforts to counter the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and participated in the October implementation meeting on UNSCR 2178 on foreign terrorist fighters.