



Country Reports on Terrorism 2008

Released by Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism

April 30, 2009

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 their three countries meet. In the early 1990s, they established a mechanism to address these illicit activities. In 2002, at their invitation, 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 potential 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

Argentina cooperated well with the United States at the operational level, and addressed many of the legal and institutional weaknesses that previously hindered its counterterrorism efforts. With U.S. support, the Government of Argentina continued to build law enforcement capacity along its eastern and its remote northern borders, dealing with challenges of drug trafficking, contraband, and other international crime. The United States government also provided equipment donations for chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear first responder operations and training to high level government officials to create more awareness about the potential threat from terrorists or terrorist organizations operating in the hemisphere. In 2007, the National Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights became fully functional, managing the government's anti-money laundering and counterterrorist finance efforts and representing Argentina to the Financial Action Task Force, Financial Action Task Force of South America, and 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 terrorism finance cases, began operations in 2007. 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.

On November 9, 2006, an Argentine judge 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 over 150 people.¹ Despite Iranian objections, on November 7, 2007, the INTERPOL General Assembly voted to uphold the Executive Committee's decision and the Red Notices were issued. At the 2008 UN General Assembly, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner called on Iran to surrender the suspects to face charges in Argentina.

Read the full report at: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/index.htm>