

# 2016 PUBLIC REPORT ON THE Terrorist Threat to Canada

BUILDING A **SAFE** AND **RESILIENT** CANADA



Public Safety  
Canada

Sécurité publique  
Canada

Canada 

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2016

Cat. No.: PS4-200/2016E-PDF

ISBN: 978-0-660-05616-6

2016 PUBLIC REPORT ON THE  
**Terrorist Threat to Canada**



# Table of Contents

1	Ministerial Foreword
3	Executive Summary
5	The Terrorist Threat to Canada
9	The National Terrorism Threat Level for Canada as of August 2016
11	An Evolving Global Environment
16	Emerging Issues
18	Responding to the Terrorist Threat
24	Deepening Our Understanding
26	Looking Ahead



# Ministerial Foreword



Canada is fundamentally a safe and peaceful nation, but we are not naive about the security issues that dominate the world's attention.

As Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, it is my obligation to make Canadians aware of the national security threats that face our country, both at home and abroad. To help build common understanding, this Report provides an assessment of the threat environment in 2015 and early 2016, drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of all departments and agencies of the Government of Canada.

It is a serious and unfortunate reality that terrorist groups, most notably the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), use violent extremist propaganda to encourage individuals to support their cause. This group is neither Islamic nor a state, and so will be referred to as Daesh (its Arabic acronym) in this Report.

The attacks in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Ottawa in October of 2014 painfully demonstrated that Canada is not immune to the threat of terrorism. Two members of the Canadian Armed Forces lost their lives. Two others were injured in an assault on a recruiting office in Toronto in March of this year. While Canada has avoided other direct attacks, the events of August 10, 2016 in Strathroy, Ontario, demonstrate the importance of continued vigilance in responding to threats posed by individuals who have radicalized to the point of violence.

Outside of Canada, events in France, Belgium, Germany, the United States and other countries remind us with terrible regularity of terrorism's senseless and tragic consequences. Last January, Canadians were killed in terrorist violence in Burkina Faso and Indonesia, and more recently, two Canadians were assassinated by a terrorist group in the Philippines. All civilized people strongly condemn these brutal attacks against innocent human beings.

Our National Terrorism Threat Level, which is explained in the Report, serves as a tool that government officials, including law enforcement agencies, may use in determining what responses may be needed to prevent or mitigate a violent act of terrorism in Canada.

As we meet the threat of terrorism, we must also ensure the protection of our rights and freedoms. The establishment of a committee of Parliamentarians with access to classified information will play an important role in strengthening the accountability of all our national security agencies.

We will also strive to make Canada a global leader in countering the insidious influences that draw people—especially young people—into radicalization to violence. As part of this effort, we are launching a new national office for community outreach and engagement to pursue

research, mobilize resources, and help coordinate work at all levels to detect and prevent tragedies before they occur.

In addition, for the first time ever, we are beginning focused consultations with Canadians about our country's national security framework—all in pursuit of two essential goals which must be achieved simultaneously. We need to be effective in keeping Canadians safe. And we need to safeguard our values, our rights and freedoms, and Canada's inclusive, generous, democratic character.

This Report provides useful background information about the threats that need to be confronted, and should help to inform the broader national security consultations about how best to respond. I encourage all Canadians to participate.

**The Honourable Ralph Goodale**

Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness



# Executive Summary

## THREAT ENVIRONMENT

The principal terrorist threat to Canada remains that posed by violent extremists who could be inspired to carry out an attack in Canada. Violent extremist ideologies espoused by terrorist groups like Daesh and al-Qaida continue to appeal to certain individuals in Canada.

As in recent years, the Government of Canada has continued to monitor and respond to the threat of extremist travellers, that is, individuals who are suspected of travelling abroad to engage in terrorism-related activity. The phenomenon of extremist travellers—including those abroad, those who return, and even those prevented from travelling—poses a range of security concerns for Canada. As of the end of 2015, the Government was aware of approximately 180 individuals with a nexus to Canada who were abroad and who were suspected of engaging in terrorism-related activities. The Government was also aware of a further 60 extremist travellers who had returned to Canada.

## THE NATIONAL TERRORISM THREAT LEVEL

This Report, for the first time, includes a description of Canada's National Terrorism Threat Level system. The threat level has been unchanged since October 2014; it is **MEDIUM**, meaning a violent act of terrorism could occur in Canada. The threat level aims to ensure a consistent understanding across the Government of the general terrorism threat to Canada. The threat level serves as a tool for government officials, including those in law enforcement, to identify risks and vulnerabilities from threats and, in turn, determine appropriate responses to prevent or mitigate a violent act of terrorism.

## THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

The threat environment has also evolved beyond Canada's borders. Daesh has continued to dominate the landscape in the Middle East, where other terrorist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and Hizballah also operate. Elsewhere in the Middle East, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has taken advantage of the civil conflict in Yemen to capture territory there and strengthen itself. This past year also saw Daesh's expansion in Africa, and Boko Haram (now rebranded as an Daesh affiliate in West Africa) continues to pose a major threat to regional stability. In South and Southeast Asia, Daesh expansionism and entrenched regional groups shaped the threat environment.

## EMERGING ISSUES

This Report includes a feature on emerging issues in terrorism. These issues—the role of technology in terrorism, the participation of women in terrorist activities, and use of chemical weapons by terrorist organizations—have been widely discussed in the media over the past year. They represent only a fraction of many evolving issues that make terrorism such a complex problem.

## RESPONDING TO THE THREAT

Since 2002, 20 individuals have been convicted of terrorism offences under the *Criminal Code*. Another 21 have been charged with terrorism-related offences (including 16 since January 2015) and are either awaiting trial or have warrants outstanding for their arrest.

Canada is contributing in a robust way, with more than 60 other countries, to the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh. This includes military initiatives and efforts to stem the flow of “foreign terrorist fighters,” cut off Daesh’s funding sources, support stabilization, and expose and counter Daesh’s ideology. More broadly, Canada has maintained a Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program as a key part of its terrorism prevention efforts.

The Government of Canada’s counter-terrorism efforts to address this evolving threat continue to be guided by the twin obligations to both keep Canadians safe and safeguard fundamental Canadian values and liberties.

# The Terrorist Threat to Canada

In October 2014, Canada suffered two terrorist attacks by lone-actors who had been inspired by extremist ideologies and radicalized to the point of violence. The attacks, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Ottawa, left two Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel dead. More recently, the RCMP, working in close collaboration with domestic and international partners, took action in Strathroy, Ontario, to disrupt an imminent terrorist threat and ensure public safety. These incidents reminded Canadians that Canada is not immune to terrorism.

Canada remains the target of direct threats by groups such as Daesh and al-Qaida, and by individuals inspired by the violent extremist ideologies of these groups.

The United States of America (U.S.) and Western Europe experienced multiple attacks in 2015. Some notable incidents included, in the U.S., attacks on police officers in Boston (June, 2015), military facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee (July, 2015) and an office party in San Bernardino, California (December, 2015). European incidents included attacks on the offices of the magazine Charlie Hebdo and a grocery store in Paris (January, 2015), an attack on an Amsterdam-Paris train (August, 2015) and coordinated attacks directed by Daesh at several public spaces in Paris (November, 2015). In 2014 and 2015, Australia experienced three attacks—two targeting law enforcement officers in Melbourne and Sydney (September 2014, October 2015) and another targeting civilians in Sydney (December 2014).

Terrorist incidents continue to occur with terrible regularity. In June 2016, 49 people were killed and 53 injured when a gunman, who may have been inspired by Daesh, opened fire at an Orlando, Florida night club. In July, 85 people were killed and hundreds more were injured when an attacker drove a truck through a crowd in Nice. There have been other attacks in Western Europe as well, for example, in Brussels, Belgium and in Rouen, France. In Turkey this past June, suicide bombers believed to be affiliated with Daesh struck Istanbul's international airport, killing 45 and injuring over 200.

Globally, a few countries bear the heaviest burden of attacks and casualties, particularly during civil conflicts or where terrorist groups have taken part in insurgencies. The Global Terrorism Database for 2015 shows that terrorist activities continue to be highly concentrated. Five countries—Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nigeria—sustained more than 55 per cent of all attacks that year, and five countries—Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria and Pakistan—sustained 74 per cent of all terrorism-related fatalities.<sup>1</sup>

This threat environment worldwide affects Canadians and Canadian interests. CAF personnel, government officials and private citizens are under constant threat in certain regions. In September 2015, two Canadians were kidnapped in the Philippines. Both were killed by their captors in the spring of this year. In January 2016, an al-Qaida-affiliated group based in Mali attacked a hotel in Burkina Faso, killing six Canadians. That same month, attackers linked to Daesh targeted a coffee shop in Jakarta, Indonesia, killing one Canadian. In June 2016, a Somali government minister with Canadian citizenship was killed in an al-Shabaab terrorist attack on

---

1 Source: US Department of State.

a hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia. Also in June, 15 Nepalese security guards who protected the Embassy of Canada to Afghanistan in Kabul were killed when terrorists targeted the bus that was transporting them to work.

## CURRENT THREATS

### The Principal Threat

The principal terrorist threat to Canada remains that posed by violent extremists who could be inspired to carry out an attack. Violent extremist ideologies espoused by terrorist groups like Daesh and al-Qaida continue to appeal to certain individuals in Canada. Some individuals have engaged in terrorism-related activities such as promoting violence online, radicalizing peers, recruiting and fundraising. Others may consider travelling abroad to join a terrorist group or conducting terrorist attacks themselves.

---

#### *“Inspired” and “Directed” Terrorist Attacks*

*In working to counter threats posed by groups such as Daesh and al-Qaida, it is important to distinguish between “inspired” and “directed” attacks. Whether an attack is inspired or directed will help determine appropriate, responsible policy and operational responses.*

**Inspired attack**—*A self-initiated attack by a lone-actor or a small group undertaken in support of a terrorist group or extremist ideology, without the inspiring group’s prior specific direction, financing or knowledge.*

**Directed attack**—*An attack planned and undertaken on the instructions or with the guidance of a terrorist group. The direction can involve some or all details of the target, financing and methodology.*

---

As with the 2014 attacks in Canada, an individual or small group can be **inspired** to carry out an act of violence in Canada with little or no warning. Small arms and improvised explosives might be used, along with more rudimentary methods of attack. Such attacks can target areas with limited or no security, including crowded public places and public transportation. Even small-scale terrorist attacks have significant psychological and economic impacts.

Terrorist attacks can also be **directed** by a terrorist entity. The attacks directed by Daesh in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016 demonstrate how lethal directed attacks can be, especially in unsecured public spaces where large crowds gather.

## The Threat of Extremist Travellers

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, more than 36,500 extremist travellers from over 100 countries, including at least 6,600 individuals from Western countries, have travelled to Syria.<sup>2</sup> While abroad, extremist travellers often use popular social media platforms to glorify their experiences and share radical messages. Among their goals is to influence, attract and facilitate the travel of more recruits. Extremist travellers are contributing to humanitarian crises and further destabilizing the local security situation.

Canada is committed under UN Security Council Resolution 2178 to preventing the recruitment, organization, transport and equipping of “foreign terrorist fighters” who seek to support foreign insurgencies and violent extremist groups.

Canadian extremist travellers represent a small but notable part of the broader international problem. Their numbers fluctuate over time. In 2014, the Government of Canada reported that about 130 individuals with a nexus to Canada were abroad and suspected of engaging in terrorism-related activity. As of the end of 2015, this number had grown to about 180. More than half are believed to be in Turkey, Iraq or Syria. Canadian extremist travellers started going to this conflict zone in significant numbers after Jabhat al-Nusra was founded in January 2012. There was also a marked increase in individuals travelling to this area following Daesh’s declaration in June 2014 that it had created a “caliphate” ruled by Daesh’s leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

---

### *Numbers in Context*

*The number of extremist travellers reflects only one aspect of the terrorist threat to Canada. The number does not take into account other individuals of concern, including those who aspire to travel, those whose travel has been thwarted, those who are abroad but not yet fully identified, and those who do not want to travel but still could pose a threat to Canada’s security. Terrorist propaganda has specifically encouraged extremists without passports or the means to travel to conduct attacks in their home countries.*

---

Returning extremist travellers may also raise serious security concerns for their home countries. As of the end of 2015, the Government of Canada knew of about 60 extremist travellers who had returned to Canada. The experiences and intentions of these individuals vary. They may have skills, experience and relationships developed abroad that could be used to recruit or inspire individuals in Canada. They may also engage in terrorist financing, helping others to travel, or even planning attacks in Canada. The attacks directed by Daesh in Paris and Brussels provide examples. Most of the attackers were returnees linked to Daesh.

---

2 U.S. Director of National Intelligence, Worldwide Threat Assessment of the United States Intelligence Community, Feb. 9, 2016.

The Syrian conflict is not the first to draw extremist travellers from Western countries, including Canada, who later pose threats to their home countries. For example, a Canadian was arrested in Canada in 2010 and subsequently convicted of possessing an explosive substance with intent to endanger life or cause serious damage to property for the benefit of a terrorist group. The individual had left Canada to participate in terrorist training, including firearms and explosives training, at a camp in Afghanistan. He swore an oath of loyalty to al-Qaida and the Taliban and returned to Canada with the expertise and intent to train, finance and equip a terrorist cell in Ottawa. He also maintained contact with terrorists in Iran and Afghanistan while working to recruit other men and raise money to finance a proposed attack. In September 2014, he pleaded guilty to one count of making or having in his possession an explosive substance with intent to endanger life or cause serious damage to property, for the benefit of a terrorist group, a violation of section 83.2 of the *Criminal Code*. He was sentenced to 24 years in prison.

---

### ***The National Security Joint Operations Centre***

*The scope, scale and urgency of the threat of terrorism resulted in the creation of the National Security Joint Operations Centre in October 2014. Led by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), its goal is to enhance the Government of Canada's response to terrorism-related travel abroad and to mitigate the threat posed by "high-risk" travellers. The Centre houses representatives from key agencies, including the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the RCMP, to facilitate near-real-time information exchanges. The Centre also helps coordinate rapid inter-agency responses.*

---

## **Other Terrorist Threats**

The current terrorist threat environment is dominated by Daesh and al-Qaida, and by groups and individuals sharing their ideologies. However, other groups also threaten Canadians and Canadian interests. Hizballah is one example.

Hizballah is an extremist group ideologically inspired by the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79 and supported by the Iranian state. It remains one of the world's most capable terrorist groups. Hizballah has networks around the world, including in Canada, and uses the networks for recruitment, fundraising and procurement. Hizballah terrorist operations abroad represent a threat to Canadian interests. In July 2015, a Canadian citizen who was living abroad and who had joined Hizballah was sentenced to six years in prison in Cyprus after pleading guilty to terrorism charges related to plans to attack targets there.

The Government of Canada listed Hizballah as a terrorist entity under the *Criminal Code* in 2002.

# The National Terrorism Threat Level for Canada as of August 2016

## PURPOSE

The National Terrorism Threat Level for Canada is used to ensure a consistent understanding across the Government of the general terrorism threat to Canada. The threat level serves as a tool for government officials, including those in law enforcement agencies, to identify risks and vulnerabilities from threats and, in turn, determine appropriate responses to prevent or mitigate a violent act of terrorism.

As of August 2016, the National Terrorism Threat Level for Canada was **MEDIUM**, meaning a violent act of terrorism could occur in Canada. For the current threat level, visit [canada.ca/terrorism-threat-level](http://canada.ca/terrorism-threat-level).

## ASSESSING THE TERRORISM THREAT TO CANADA

The Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC) is an independent, expert federal body responsible for assessing terrorism threats to Canada. ITAC constantly examines the terrorism threat environment, relying on information and intelligence from Canadian and international security partners. ITAC provides objective, expert recommendations about the threat level. Responsibility for approving the threat level rests with the Director of CSIS.

The threat level is determined by several factors. These include past trends and current intelligence on the known intentions and capabilities of terrorist entities and the opportunities they have to conduct attacks. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are used.

Information used to determine threat levels may often be incomplete. Regardless of the threat level, a violent act of terrorism may occur with little or no warning.

Canada's threat levels do not require specific responses from the public. Rather, threat levels help law enforcement and government agencies and private sector stakeholders to identify risks and vulnerabilities from threats and, in turn, determine appropriate responses to prevent or mitigate a violent act of terrorism.

## METHODOLOGY

An important factor in determining the threat level is *intention*—whether a terrorist entity has a specific intention to target Canada, Canadians or Canadian interests. Some entities may have no specific interest in Canada, while others may aspire to attack, and still others may have a specific intention to attack.

The *capability* of a terrorist entity is a second important factor. Variables used to assess capability include an entity's known abilities and its access to training or weapons. Some

entities may aspire to attack Canadians but have no capability to do so, while others have the capability but no intention to attack.

A terrorist entity with the intention and capability to attack Canada still requires the *opportunity* to do so. Geography, logistical hurdles or counter-terrorism efforts may limit opportunities. Some entities may have the opportunity to attack, but lack the intention or capability.

CANADA’S NATIONAL TERRORISM THREAT LEVELS

Canada’s National Terrorism Threat Levels and the security response

Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Critical
A violent act of terrorism	A violent act of terrorism	A violent act of terrorism	A violent act of terrorism	A violent act of terrorism
is highly unlikely	is possible but unlikely	could occur	is likely	is highly likely and could occur imminently
Measures are in place to keep Canadians safe.	Measures are in place to keep Canadians safe.	Additional measures are in place to keep Canadians safe.	Heightened measures are in place to keep Canadians safe. Canadians are informed what action to take.	Exceptional measures are in place to keep Canadians safe. Canadians are informed what action to take.

At all times, Canadians will be informed if they need to take actions to stay safe.

Regardless of the threat level, Canadians should always remain alert to the danger of terrorism and report any suspicious activity to the RCMP’s National Security Tip Line (1-800-420-5805) or by contacting the police in their community.



# An Evolving Global Environment

Understanding how the global terrorist threat environment affects the threat to Canada, Canadians and Canadian interests enables the Government to respond more effectively. To improve its understanding, the Government monitors developments associated with various regions and groups to assess potential security implications from a Canadian perspective.

## DAESH

Al-Qaida in Iraq leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi split with al-Qaida and declared the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in April 2013. This group is also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Daesh, its Arabic acronym. While cooperating pragmatically and tactically with al-Qaida elements in, for example, Syria and Lebanon, Daesh and al-Qaida leadership continue to disagree on strategic and doctrinal grounds.

In June 2014, al-Baghdadi declared a “caliphate” that encompasses the eastern part of Syria and the western portions of Iraq. The declaration, coupled with propaganda promoting the virtues of Daesh governance, helped to bolster the group’s claims of success. In November 2014, Daesh announced its intention to “remain and expand” and has since declared additional “provinces” in Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Nigeria and the North Caucasus.

As of late 2015, Daesh controlled territory in Iraq and Syria that is home to millions of people. Daesh is well-financed. Its means to obtain funds include extorting local populations, theft, sale of antiquities, smuggling oil and kidnappings for ransom.

The Government of Canada listed this group (then known as al-Qaida in Iraq) as a terrorist entity under the *Criminal Code* in 2012.

## INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

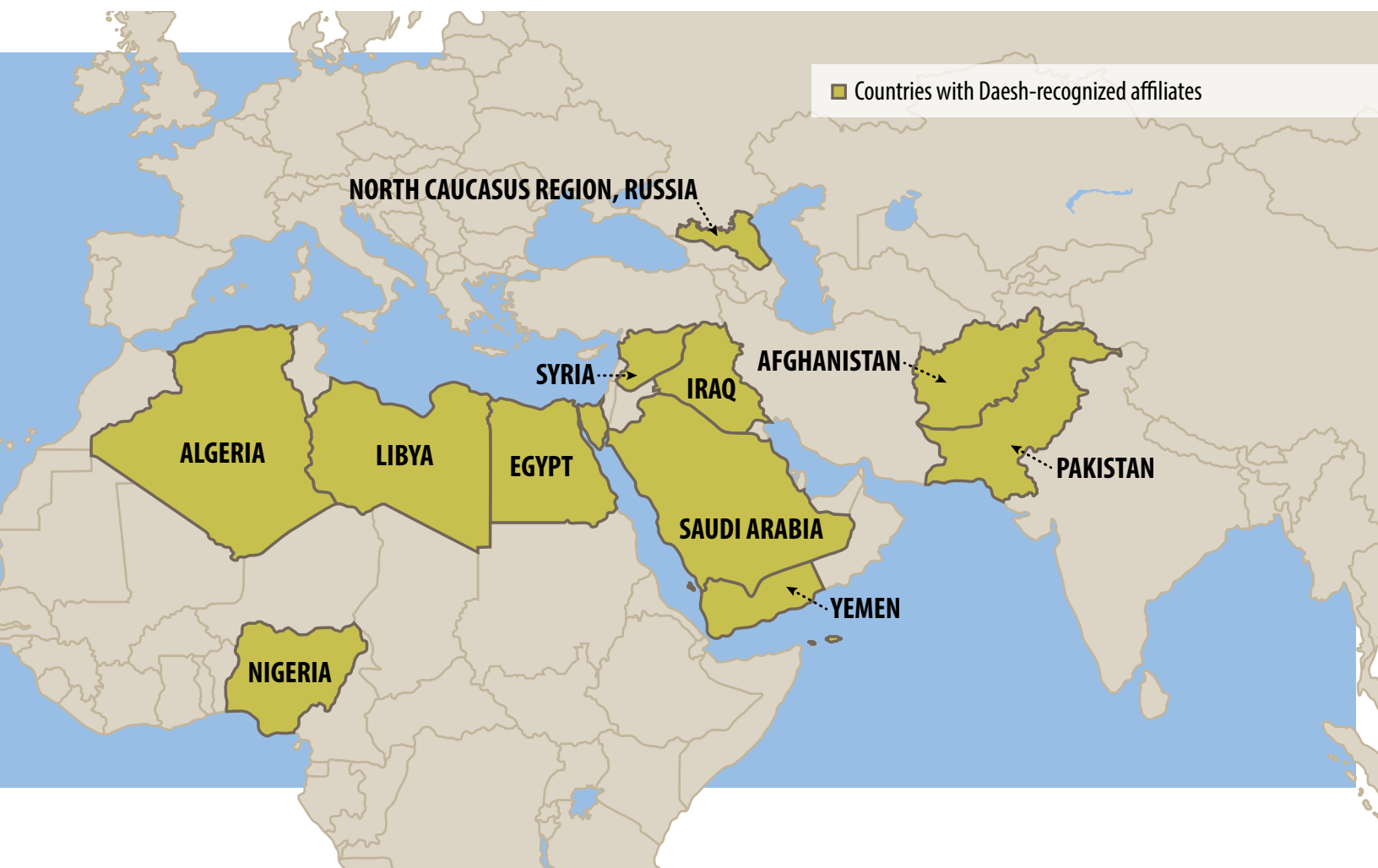
### Middle East

Daesh continues to be the dominant threat in the Middle East. In 2015, Daesh largely maintained its hold on core territory in Iraq and Syria, although it suffered notable losses. It also strengthened its relations with affiliated groups in the Middle East and Africa, many of which later claimed responsibility for attacks in the name of Daesh.

Daesh’s activities and brutal tactics have created conflicts with other extremist groups active in Syria, including Jabhat al-Nusra (JN). JN continues to battle the Syrian regime and its allies, including Hizballah, to strengthen its own extremist base. Canada listed JN as a terrorist entity in 2013.

Elsewhere in the region, al-Qaida’s long-standing affiliate, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), has taken advantage of the ongoing civil conflict in Yemen to capture territory in the country’s south. AQAP has largely focused on fighting Yemeni opponents, but it likely

## DAESH REGIONAL SPREAD



continues to plot against Western interests. It claimed credit for the January 2015 attack at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and frequently threatens Western nations in its propaganda.

### Africa

Daesh continued to expand into Africa, notably into Libya and Egypt, in 2015. Some regional Islamist extremist groups previously aligned with al-Qaida, and some unaligned groups, have pledged allegiance to Daesh. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qaida remain major threats across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Competition between Daesh and al-Qaida continues.

Daesh controls territory along Libya's coast and is drawing recruits from across North Africa and, increasingly, from Iraq and Syria. This poses a regional threat, since Daesh and other terrorist groups are taking advantage of the chaotic political situation in Libya and using it as

---

## SYRIA AND THE MIGRATION CRISIS

*The conflict in Syria is displacing local populations and has given rise to this generation's largest humanitarian crisis.*

*Neighbouring states are straining to support those fleeing their homes. Canada has helped by resettling more than 25,000 Syrian refugees since November 2015, and the Government's commitment to resettle Syrian refugees to Canada continues into 2016. The Government has stated that protecting the safety, security and health of Canadians and the refugees are key factors guiding its actions and that each refugee undergoes a robust, multi-layered screening before departing for Canada. The Government is working with a range of partners to assist the social, cultural and economic integration of Syrian refugees, which in turn supports community resilience.*

---

a safe haven to regroup, resupply, plan and strike out at neighbouring countries. Recent attacks on places frequented by Westerners in Tunisia are examples.

In Egypt, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) pledged allegiance to Daesh in late 2014 and renamed itself the Islamic State – Sinai Province (ISSP). Since 2014, the group's attacks have been growing in size and frequency against Egyptian security forces and Western interests in the northern Sinai Peninsula. Hundreds of Egyptian security personnel have died. Recent attacks targeting Western interests include the July 2015 attack on the Italian Consulate in Cairo and the August 2015 beheading of a Croatian oil worker. In October 2015, the ISSP claimed responsibility for the crash of a Russian passenger jet in the Sinai and the resulting deaths of all 224 passengers and crew. The Government of Canada listed ISSP as a terrorist entity under the *Criminal Code* in 2015.

Across the Sahel, groups such as al-Murabitoun, a group formed in 2012, pose a serious threat. Al-Murabitoun was originally part of AQIM, but broke away and later reunited with AQIM. In November 2015, al-Murabitoun attacked a hotel in Bamako, Mali, describing it as "their first act of unity."

In West Africa, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to Daesh in March 2015 and was renamed the Islamic State in West Africa. Despite a regional military offensive against it, Boko Haram continues frequent attacks in northeastern Nigeria and neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The group has also conducted mass kidnappings of women and girls.

In East Africa, al-Shabaab remains the most prominent terrorist threat. It maintains a core of trained, dedicated fighters in Somalia, and attacks government and civilian targets. Al-Shabaab conducts raids against nations contributing troops for the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), targeting Kenya in particular. Kenya has seen some of the largest al-Shabaab attacks, including that in 2013 on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi (which killed 70 people, including two Canadians) and the April 2015 attack at Garissa University College (148 killed and 79 or more injured). In 2015, a number of al-Shabaab fighters pledged allegiance to Daesh in Somalia, although the significance and permanence of this pledge are unclear.

## South Asia

### AFGHANISTAN

The Taliban confirmed the death of Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar in July 2015, more than two years after his death. Perhaps to demonstrate its continued presence, the Taliban quickly staged several high-profile attacks in the Kabul area in early August 2015 and managed to capture the northern city of Kunduz briefly in September. The Afghan Taliban poses a substantial and ongoing threat to the Afghan state and Western interests in Afghanistan.

In January 2015, Daesh announced the creation of the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP), made up of several small groups of fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan. ISKP and the Taliban have since clashed repeatedly in the eastern part of Afghanistan.

### PAKISTAN

In June 2014, the Pakistani military launched a major ground offensive along the border with Afghanistan. The offensive disrupted militant and terrorist activity in the border region and has since expanded to other areas of the country. However, terrorist attacks continue, with Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and its factions posing the greatest threat to security and stability in Pakistan.

## Southeast Asia

Some extremist groups in Southeast Asia have pledged allegiance to Daesh. As of the end of 2015, however, Daesh had yet to formally announce a “province” in the region. Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) is a strong supporter of Daesh in Indonesia. JAD publicly proclaimed itself the official Daesh affiliate in Indonesia and its leader the self-appointed Daesh emir for the region. Much like in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, local pledges to Daesh in Indonesia have created conflicts with groups that remain loyal to al-Qaida. In 2016, JAD will likely seek to unite all other groups in Indonesia supporting Daesh into one cohesive and functional organization to train and send members to fight in Iraq and Syria.

In the Philippines, a group of veterans of the conflict against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s founded the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in 1991. The group holds extreme political and religious views and is prone to using violence to achieve its objectives, its primary one being the establishment of an independent state in the southern Philippines. In July 2014, ASG proclaimed allegiance to Daesh. The group kidnapped two Canadians in 2015, killing them in the spring of 2016. The Government of Canada listed ASG as a terrorist entity under the *Criminal Code* in 2003.

# Emerging Issues

Terrorism is a complex problem involving many fluid elements, including the perpetrators and their tactics. The following issues, widely discussed in media over the past year, represent only a fraction of those shaping the current counter-terrorism landscape.

## ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

Digital technologies and electronic communications have transformed Canadian society and facilitated online commerce and trade, among other benefits. Advances in technology have also helped to secure Canada's information technology systems and networks. This in turn enhances cybersecurity, privacy and public safety.

However, terrorists use these same technologies and communications platforms to spread propaganda and facilitate activities such as recruitment, fundraising and planning attacks. For example, Daesh leadership uses online communications in its general calls for action, and Syria-based members are actively providing online guidance and direction to would-be attackers in the West.

Technology has increased the speed and ease with which plots can move from conception to execution. Instead of needing lengthy planning and travel for face-to-face meetings, terrorists from around the world can quickly share and refine attack plans online. The decentralization of attack planning has made it harder for security agencies to detect plots in time to stop them.

The growing use of encryption was brought to public attention during investigations into recent terrorist attacks outside Canada. Encryption technology helps protect the privacy of Canadians but also creates new barriers in law enforcement and national security investigations. The Government intends to work with Canadians, industry, other key stakeholders and the international community to address these privacy and security concerns.

## PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN TERRORISM-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The participation of women in terrorist organizations and activities is not new. What is new is the number of women who have subscribed to Daesh's ideology and travelled (or attempted to travel) abroad to join Daesh. Women now constitute approximately 20 per cent of total extremist travellers from Canada. In some cases, women have taken their children to conflict zones.

It is often unclear which roles women who travel to Syria perform. The most commonly held assumption is that women travel abroad to marry terrorists, but the reasons for travel and eventual roles vary. Some may occupy secondary roles within terrorist groups, while in other cases they appear to be training and taking part in combat. Some women have also facilitated the travel of others.

Groups such as Boko Haram are using female suicide bombers to cause mass casualties. Some of these women and girls were likely kidnapped and forced into the attacks, while others may be willing relatives of male fighters who have been killed.

## CHEMICAL WEAPONS

In Iraq and Syria, Daesh has adapted chemical agents, specifically chlorine and a crude form of indigenously-produced mustard gas, for use in weapons. It has used chemical weapons against both Iraqi Security Forces and Kurdish fighters on several occasions since September 2014. In part, this has occurred because the territorial gains of Daesh have given the organization access to expertise, materials and a permissive operating environment.

In 2015, Daesh also made propaganda statements calling for attacks against the West. Several times it referred to using improvised explosives, poisons and commercially-available toxic industrial chemicals.

# Responding to the Terrorist Threat

The Government of Canada uses a wide range of tools to counter threats, in Canada and abroad, to safety and security. The section below is not exhaustive, but highlights important developments.

## ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS

Twenty individuals have been convicted of terrorism offences under the Criminal Code since 2002. Another 21 have been charged with terrorism-related offences (including 16 since January 2015) and are either awaiting trial or have had warrants issued for their arrest.

In September 2015, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice sentenced two men for conspiring to derail a Via Rail train. Both received a sentence of life imprisonment for conspiring to murder persons unknown for the benefit of a terrorist group, a violation of section 83.2 of the *Criminal Code*. One received a second life sentence for conspiring to interfere with transportation infrastructure for the benefit of a terrorist group, also a violation of section 83.2. Each received additional sentences for multiple counts of participating in the activities of a terrorist group, a violation of section 83.18(1).

---

### *The Counter-terrorism Information Officer Initiative*

*The RCMP's Counter-terrorism Information Officer (CTIO) initiative serves to increase national security awareness among first responders across the country so they can identify national security threats at the earliest possible stage. CTIOs play a vital role in raising awareness among fellow first responders about key indicators of terrorist activities, techniques and practices that might otherwise go unnoticed and unreported. More than 2500 individuals have received such training since 2009.*

---

In December 2015, the Court of Quebec, Youth Division, found a 16-year-old male guilty of committing an offence for the benefit of, at the direction of, or in association with a terrorist group, a violation of section 83.2 of the *Criminal Code*. The Court also found him guilty of attempting to leave Canada to participate in the activities of a terrorist group, a violation of section 83.18(1). The youth was 15 at the time of the offences and had previously pleaded guilty to robbing a convenience store to help finance his departure to the Syrian conflict zone.

## TERRORIST LISTINGS

Canada lists terrorist groups and individuals to meet its domestic and international security obligations. Canada's primary listing mechanism is established under the *Criminal Code*. As well, two sets of regulations under Canadian law—the *United Nations Al-Qaida and Taliban Regulations* and the *Regulations Implementing the United Nations Resolutions on the Suppression of Terrorism*—fulfill Canada's international obligations under UN resolutions. In



December 2015, Canada co-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 2253, which expanded the UN's al-Qaida sanctions framework to include Daesh.

In 2015, Canada listed two groups under the *Criminal Code*: Islamic State—Sinai Province, and the Abdallah Azzam Brigades. The names of all groups and individuals currently listed by Canada can be found at [www.publicsafety.gc.ca](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca).

## THE GLOBAL COALITION TO COUNTER DAESH

The international community has organized its response to Daesh through the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh. The Coalition was established in September 2014 and has over 60 member countries and organizations, including Canada.

The Coalition has focused on reducing Daesh's strength and preventing it from controlling territory from which it can organize and command operations. The Coalition's military mission is an important part of the global response to Daesh, but the international community has acknowledged that it cannot succeed by military means alone. For this reason, the Coalition also focuses on civilian efforts to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, stop the financing of Daesh, help ensure Iraq's lasting stability and undermine Daesh's propaganda. Coalition members are also addressing the humanitarian crisis in the region.

In February 2016, the Government of Canada announced a refocused Canadian role in the Coalition. At the same time, the Government released a new three-year strategy to address the ongoing crises in Iraq and Syria and their impact on Lebanon, Jordan and the wider region. Under this new strategy, Canada will invest about \$1.6 billion over three years for the region, including \$840 million in humanitarian assistance, \$270 million in development assistance, \$145 million in stabilization and security assistance, and \$305 million in military assistance. The investments will allow Canada, for example, to triple its capacity to train security forces and significantly increase its intelligence capacity in the region.

## Military Efforts

Canada has extended its military engagement in Iraq and Syria to March 31, 2017. It is continuing air support to the Coalition through air surveillance and refuelling aircraft, but ceased air strike operations earlier in 2016. Canada is also tripling the size of its advise-and-assist mission to train local Iraqi security forces, provide additional military equipment (such as small arms, ammunition and optical equipment) to assist in the training, and deploy CAF medical personnel to provide battlefield casualty management training to Iraqi security forces. CAF personnel are also supporting Coalition members and Iraqi security forces in planning and executing military operations.

Canada's foreign signals intelligence agency, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), is also supporting this mission. It is using its unique capabilities and expertise to provide the foreign intelligence required by the Government of Canada, including intelligence to protect CAF personnel from threats on the ground.

## Stemming the Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Canada is actively engaged in the Coalition's Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters. The working group helps countries to implement UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (about preventing the recruitment, organization, transporting and equipping of foreign terrorist fighters) and the "good practices" identified by the Global Counterterrorism Forum. One of the most pressing issues to date has been the need to expand the sharing of information. Canada has contributed \$1 million to Interpol to enhance the capacity in the Middle East and North Africa region to stop extremist travellers. The project focuses on improving access to Interpol's tools and services at major airports and crucial border control points, increasing the knowledge and skills of counter-terrorism personnel, and encouraging greater regional cooperation.

## Eliminating Daesh's Sources of Funds

Canada is committed to eliminating Daesh's sources of funds. Domestic agencies such as the Department of Finance, CSIS, the RCMP, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC) work together to suppress Daesh financing and prevent misuse of Canada's financial system. Internationally, Canada plays a leadership role in advancing counter-terrorist financing initiatives through its participation in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and other organizations.

---

### *Countering Terrorist Financing*

*Terrorist organizations require funds to recruit, train and deploy terrorists, as well as to facilitate support activities such as distributing propaganda.*

*Terrorist groups and sympathizers raise funds in Canada to support terrorist operations and may derive money from legitimate or illicit sources. Terrorist financing means include diverting funds from charitable giving, obtaining private donations through door-to-door and online solicitation, and engaging in criminal activity.*

*While certain types of terrorist attacks may not require significant funding, denying terrorists access to financing or other resources impedes their activities and may limit their plans.*

*To counter the broad range of fundraising activities, counter-terrorism authorities must work together closely. To that end, Canada has a robust anti-money laundering/anti-terrorist financing regime.*

---

Canada's actions also include financial contributions to support technical assistance delivered by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Canada shares in capacity-building efforts to provide countries with the expertise to develop more robust anti-money laundering/anti-terrorism financing (AML/ATF) regimes and better mitigate risks in their regions. Canada's role includes investment in oversight bodies to allow more effective internal tracking of regional financial transfers, including those involving Canada. Skills training of front-line officers like border police will help them detect bulk cash transfers and the movement of non-cash resources across borders.

## Supporting Stabilization

Canada is delivering stabilization and development assistance in Iraq and in countries hosting large numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees. The goal is to address short-term needs during the Syrian crisis and to foster resiliency, stability and prosperity over the long term. Providing humanitarian assistance to those affected by the conflict is as important for maintaining regional stability as it is for meeting urgent needs.

## Exposing and Countering Daesh Ideology

Canada is working with its allies to support local and international initiatives to counter Daesh propaganda, thwart its recruitment efforts and reduce radicalization. Canada supports communications activities to curb recruitment by Daesh and adherence to its ideology. For example, Canada is working with other Coalition partners to provide populations in territory held by Daesh with information that challenges Daesh propaganda.

---

### *Building Counter-terrorism Capacity Abroad*

*Canada is a founding member of and is heavily engaged in the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). Its membership consists of 29 states and the European Union. The GCTF works to strengthen and coordinate civilian capacity to combat terrorism. Together with Algeria, Canada co-chairs the GCTF's Sahel Region Capacity-Building Working Group. The Working Group promotes regional cooperation and provides a venue for experts to discuss capacity-building gaps and identify solutions to terrorism-related issues in that region.*

---

## COUNTER-TERRORISM CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

The Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program (CTCBP) is a key part of Canada's international terrorism prevention efforts. The Program provides training, equipment, technical and legal assistance to foreign states lacking the resources and expertise to prevent and respond to terrorist activity.

**Middle East and North Africa (MENA):** Canada is working with partner states to limit the movement of extremist travellers. Efforts include supporting United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) efforts to establish legal regimes that respect the rule of law, due process and human rights. Canada is also contributing to efforts to stop money laundering and terrorist financing. In 2015, the CTCBP committed \$3 million in total through the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Interpol to strengthen financial systems in the Middle East and Africa and to cut off financing to Daesh.

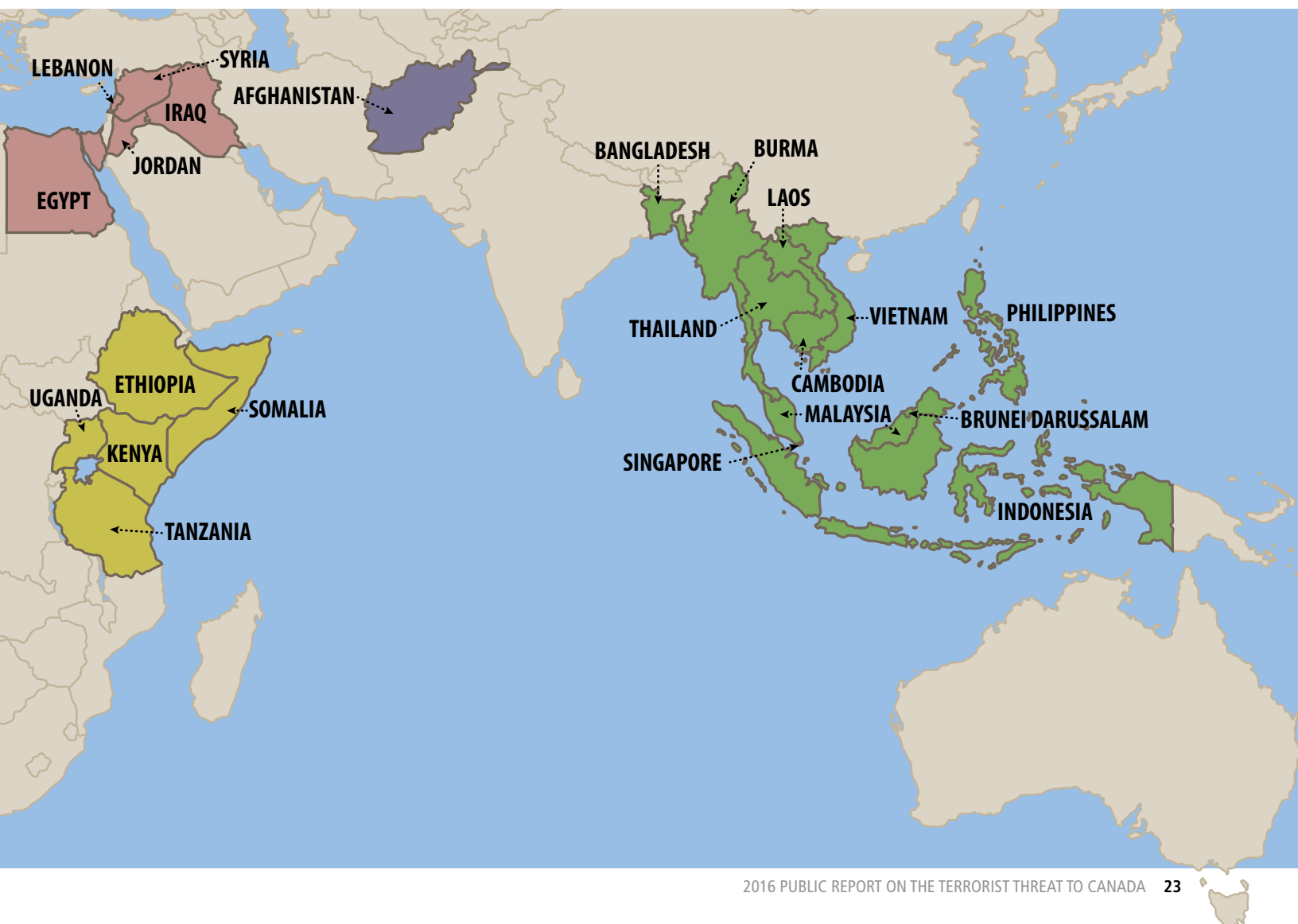
**East Africa:** Canada is committed to countering radicalization to violence and violent extremism. To achieve this, the CTCBP spent over \$600,000 implementing various projects



in 2015. These projects involved targeted training and outreach to strengthen community resilience to violent extremism and to prevent recruitment by violent groups in Kenya and the wider East Africa region.

**West Africa:** Canada supports strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and national authorities to address terrorism effectively while at the same time respecting human rights. Canada provided \$2.2 million to the UNODC to provide legislative assistance, support judicial reform and implement and universalize the UN instruments against terrorism in the Sahel region.

**Southeast Asia:** Canada has made significant investments in law enforcement and military capacity-building. This includes cooperation with Interpol to develop the capacity of regional law enforcement agencies to conduct counter-terrorism investigations. It also includes cooperation with the World Bank on legislative reform and enforcement to combat the financing of terrorism in Southeast Asia. Canada's contribution to these two projects is valued at over \$5 million.



# Deepening Our Understanding

The Government of Canada is committed to deepening its understanding of the terrorist threat. This will assist it to develop responses aimed at keeping Canadians safe. To acquire this knowledge, the Government partners with the research community and with experts from a range of disciplines and perspectives.

## KANISHKA PROJECT AND PARTNERS

The Kanishka Project was a \$10 million, five-year program for research on terrorism-related issues affecting Canada, such as the online activities of individuals involved in violent extremist groups, understanding and supporting the needs of victims of terrorism, and a range of issues related to countering radicalization to violence. Kanishka has funded close to 70 projects, several of which involve multiple studies. The program has supported targeted research studies, student projects and events to build research capacity and networks.

For example, Kanishka provided core funding for the creation in 2012 of the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS). TSAS recently received a seven-year Partnership Grant of \$2.1 million from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. TSAS now has close to 200 affiliates.

While the Kanishka Project concluded in March 2016, Public Safety and its partners continue to publish results and build on the program's research.

## THE CANADIAN INCIDENT DATABASE

In December 2013, TSAS developed the Canadian Incident Database (CIDB). The database is available to the public and describes terrorism and violent extremism events with a Canadian connection. The database includes incidents outside Canada involving Canadian perpetrators, targets or victims. The database covers over 1,800 terrorism and violent extremism events between 1960 and 2015. It provides unclassified information that can be used to identify patterns and trends. This will help improve the understanding of terrorism and extremist violence relating to Canada.

## CSIS ACADEMIC OUTREACH

CSIS launched its Academic Outreach Program in September 2008. Since that time, CSIS has been at the fore in supporting a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the fast-moving global security environment. Collaboration with universities, think tanks and the private sector has given CSIS a growing range of open-source knowledge and an expanding network of experts in Canada and abroad.

The program pays significant attention to terrorism-related issues. Among the program's key accomplishments is a series of workshops and conferences bringing together security and

intelligence practitioners and leading non-governmental specialists. Reports from recent events are publicly available on the program website and include the following:

- *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon and Related Security Trends in the Middle East* (2016)
- *Pitfalls and Promises: Security Implications of a Post-revolutionary Middle East* (2014)
- *Political Stability and Security in West and North Africa* (2014).

# Looking Ahead

The Government of Canada has a fundamental obligation to ensure the safety and security of citizens. Canada's security tools must be appropriate for addressing today's and tomorrow's threats to the country. The Government also has an obligation to protect Canadians' rights and freedoms. Achieving the two goals requires thorough consideration, discussion and debate.

To facilitate a national dialogue on national security, the Government of Canada will soon launch consultations on Canada's security framework. These consultations will seek to ensure that Canada's national security framework reflects the needs and values of Canadians.

In addition, the Government is strengthening its system of accountability for national security by creating a committee of parliamentarians with access to classified information. The Government is also establishing an office of the community outreach and counter-radicalization coordinator to provide leadership, coordinate initiatives, support community outreach and foster research on radicalization to violence.