

BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

[Country Reports on Terrorism 2017](#)

SRI LANKA

Overview: There were no terrorist attacks in 2017. In January, police claimed they disrupted a plot by former Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) members to assassinate a Tamil politician. The government maintained a large military presence in post-conflict areas and continued to voice concern about the possible reemergence of LTTE sympathizers, but it has also begun to shift its focus to emerging threats, amid reports of Sri Lankans joining ISIS and other terrorist groups.

Counterterrorism cooperation and training is a growing part of the U.S. relationship with Sri Lanka. For example, two Sri Lankan naval officers attended an anti-terrorism training in Florida in November and December. Additionally, the Sri Lankan government regularly sends officers to U.S.-sponsored regional counterterrorism workshops and courses such as the Comprehensive Security Response to Terrorism at the Daniel K. Inouye - Asia Pacific Center Security Studies (APCSS).

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Government of Sri Lanka continued to use the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), enacted in 1982 as a wartime measure, which gives security forces broad powers to search, arrest, and detain individuals. The National Police claimed there were no arrests made under the PTA during the year. On February 8, the government announced it had indefinitely suspended making arrests under the PTA, pending the release of a new counterterrorism act, a draft of which remained under consideration at the end of 2017. Significant flaws with that draft remain, according to international and domestic legal experts.

The Special Task Force is a unit of the Sri Lanka Police Service specializing in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations and a major security arm of the state charged with ensuring security of top government and foreign government officials, protecting sensitive terrorist targets, and suppressing activities that pose a threat to national security. There is also a Terrorism Investigation Division within the regular police structure.

Border security remained a significant issue for the Sri Lankan government. The Sri Lankan Immigration and Emigration Department is implementing a new information system to process immigration activity. The new system will connect several relevant departments with INTERPOL databases for criminal investigation and intelligence collection purposes, and it is expected to be fully operational in early 2018. The Sri Lankan government expanded its partnership with the U.S. Departments of State, Homeland Security, Defense, and Energy on securing its maritime border. The U.S. Coast Guard, under the Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security program, continued to train Sri Lankan Coast Guard and Navy personnel on border and export control matters, and the Government of Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Department of Energy through the container security initiative, megaports, and related initiatives. The Government of Sri Lanka continued to collaborate with the European Union Immigration Department on an Advanced Passenger Information system, which transmits passenger information to Sri Lankan immigration officials upon arrival.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Sri Lanka belongs to the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Sri Lanka's financial intelligence unit is a member of the Egmont Group. Although it is neither an important regional financial center nor a preferred center for money laundering, Sri Lanka remained vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist financing. On November 3, FATF added Sri Lanka to its Public Statement entitled "Improving Global AML/CFT Compliance: On-going process," also known as the

“grey list.” Sri Lanka agreed to an action plan to address several vulnerabilities, including improving mutual legal assistance, issuing customer due diligence rules for designated non-financial businesses and persons, and enhancing risk-based supervision. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the [*2018 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report \(INCSR\), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*](#).

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): Sri Lanka continued to operate a rehabilitation program for persons allegedly linked to the LTTE, participation in which was mandatory for a majority of the prisoners formerly held under the PTA who were released on bail. The number of persons participating in this program has dropped dramatically in recent years, however. Limited access by independent bodies to known rehabilitation camps precluded reliable evaluations of the government’s efforts. At the provincial level, Sri Lanka is implementing educational outreach programs to address issues of religious tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution. These programs focus on post-conflict areas of Jaffna, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, and Vavuniya where the local populations are considered vulnerable to re-radicalization.

International and Regional Cooperation: Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with a number of donor countries to improve its land and maritime border security. Sri Lanka is a partner nation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. In September, Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Defense signed an MOU with Australia’s Department of Immigration and Border Protection on enhanced information sharing on methods for investigating, tracking, and intercepting people smugglers. The agreement also furthers cooperation between the two nations on countering human trafficking, stopping the movement of illicit goods, and targeting money laundering and proceeds of crime. In December, Sri Lanka co-sponsored UN Security Council resolution 2396 on returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters.