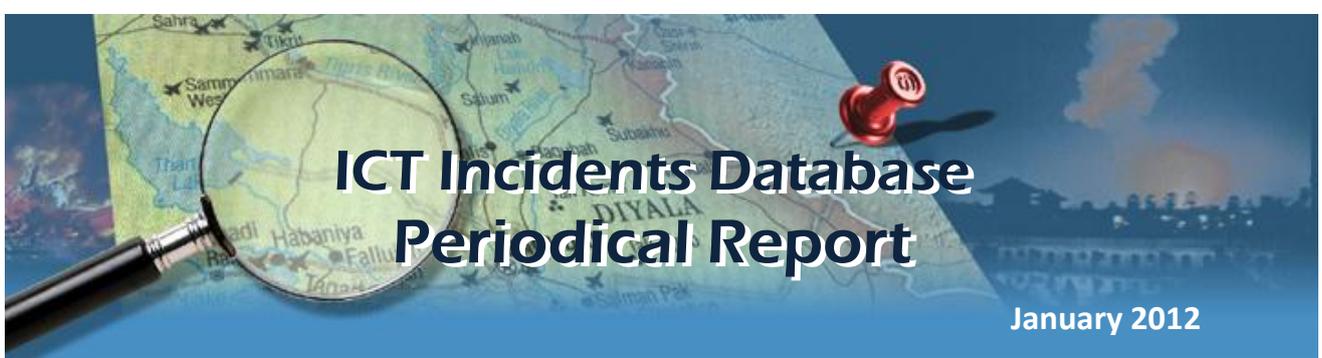




The following is a summary and analysis of terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations that occurred during the month of January 2012, researched and recorded by the ICT database team. Among others:

- Irfan Ul Haq, 37 was sentenced to 50 months in prison on 5 January, for providing false documentation and attempting to smuggle a suspected Taliban member into the USA.
- On 5 January, Eyad Rashid Abu Arja, 47, a male Palestinian with dual Australian-Jordanian nationality, was sentenced to 30 months in prison in Israel for aiding Hamas.
- On 6 January, a bomb exploded in Damascus, Syria killing 26 people and wounding 63 others.
- ETA militant Andoni Zengotitabengoa, was sentenced on 6 January to 12 years in prison for the illegal possession of weapons, as well car theft, falsification of documents, assault and resisting arrest.
- On 9 January, Sami Osmakac, 25, was charged with plotting to attack crowded locations in Florida, USA.
- On 10 January, a car bomb exploded at a bus stand outside a shopping bazaar in Jamrud, northwestern Pakistan killing 26 people and injuring 72.
- Jermaine Grant, 29, a British man and three Kenyans were charged on 13 January in Mombasa, Kenya with possession of bomb-making materials and plotting to explode a bomb.
- On 13 January Thai police arrested Hussein Atris, 47, a Lebanese-Swedish man, who was suspected of having links to Hizballah. He was charged three days later with the illegal possession of explosive materials.
- On 14 January, a suicide bomber, disguised in a military uniform, killed 61 people and injured 139, at a checkpoint outside Basra, Iraq.
- On 19 January, an Islamic Jihad cell suspected of planning attacks on Israel was dismantled and its members were arrested in the West Bank by the Israel Security Agency.
- On 21 January, Boko Haram militants disguised as police officers killed 178 people and injured 50 others in Kano, Nigeria.
- Indian anti-terrorism police arrested two men on 23 January, on suspicion of being involved in the 13 July 2011 Mumbai bombings.
- ETA militant Ernesto Prat Urzainqui was arrested on 25 January at his home in the French Basque town of Urruña.
- On 27 January, a suicide car bomber killed 33 people and injured 65 others in Yarmouk, a mostly Sunni district in the western part of Baghdad, Iraq
- Rasim Aliyev, Ali Huseynov, and Balaqardash Dadashov were arrested on 25 January suspected of planning to attack a Jewish school in Baku, Azerbaijan.



## **EUROPE**

### **France**

ETA militants Jon Echeverria Oyarbide, Ruben Rivero Campo and Inigo Sancho Marco, were arrested on 15 January by French police in Joigny. An official at the Paris prosecutor's office said one of the suspects had been under police surveillance and was suspected of involvement in the 2010 murder of a French policeman.<sup>1</sup> Police located Oyarbide at the Bercy railway station in Paris and then followed him to Joigny, where an apparent rendezvous with the other men took place. The men were armed and police found a car with false license plates in the station car park in Joigny.<sup>2</sup>

Ernesto Prat Urzainqui, who has been on Spain's list of most-wanted terrorists since 2008, was arrested on 25 January by French police at his home in the French Basque town of Urruña. In 2008, he fled from Spain to France after an operation by the Civil Guard against EKIN, a Basque support organization in the northern Spanish region of Navarre. In 2007, he became a senior leader of the banned Batasuna party, the political arm of the ETA terrorist group. Urzainqui was the fourth ETA militant arrested since the center-right Popular Party came to power in Spain in December 2011.<sup>3</sup>

### **Norway**

On 30 January, two men were found guilty of planning to attack Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten after it printed cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Mikael Davud was sentenced to seven years in prison. He is from China's ethnic Uighur minority in Norway and authorities believed he was linked to al-Qa'ida. Shawan Sadek Saeed Bujak, an Iraqi Kurd, was sentenced to three-and-a-half years. A third man, David Jakobsen, was found guilty of assisting Davud and Bujak in acquiring the explosives, but cleared of all terror charges. He was given a four-month sentence, but was freed immediately because of time already served.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AP, "Spain: 3 ETA Suspects Arrested in France", 15 January 2012;

<sup>2</sup> The Telegraph, "Three ETA suspects arrested in France", 15 January 2012;

<sup>3</sup> LAHT, "ETA Terrorist Captured in France" , 25 January 2012;

<sup>4</sup> BBC , "Norway jails two for Danish newspaper terror plot", 30 January 2012;



The men were arrested in July 2010 and had denied the charges, however Davud had admitted he was planning to attack Chinese targets in Norway because of the treatment of ethnic Uighurs. Prosecutors claimed the cell had intended to kill cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, but Bujak, who admitted his hatred for Westergaard, said he had no intent to kill the cartoonist.<sup>5</sup> Authorities believe the plot was linked to the same al-Qa'ida planners behind thwarted attacks on the New York subway system and a UK shopping centre in 2009.<sup>6</sup>

### United Kingdom

Shabaaz Hussain, 28, from east London, confessed on 27 January to seven counts of fund-raising for al-Shabaab militants in Somalia. However, he denied four counts of providing funds for terrorism and engaging in the preparation of acts of terrorism. Hussain admitted sending nearly £9,000 to Muhammed Jahangir, Tufual Ahmed and Mohammed Shahim between April 2010 and September 2010. Police also found he was in possession of extremist material, including CDs, DVDs and documents.<sup>7</sup>

### Portugal

ETA militant Andoni Zengotitabengoa, 32, was sentenced to 12 years in prison by a court in Portugal on 6 January. He was charged with membership in a terrorist organization as well as the illegal possession of weapons, car theft, using false identification, assault, and resisting arrest. Zengotitabengoa was arrested at Lisbon airport in March 2010, as he tried to board a plane to Venezuela with a false Mexican passport.<sup>8</sup> His brother Luis Maria Zengotitabengoa was arrested in Belgium in 2010. Zengotitabengoa was found guilty of hiding 1,500 kilograms of explosives at a hideout and bomb-making factory of the ETA in the town of Obidos in west Portugal.<sup>9</sup>

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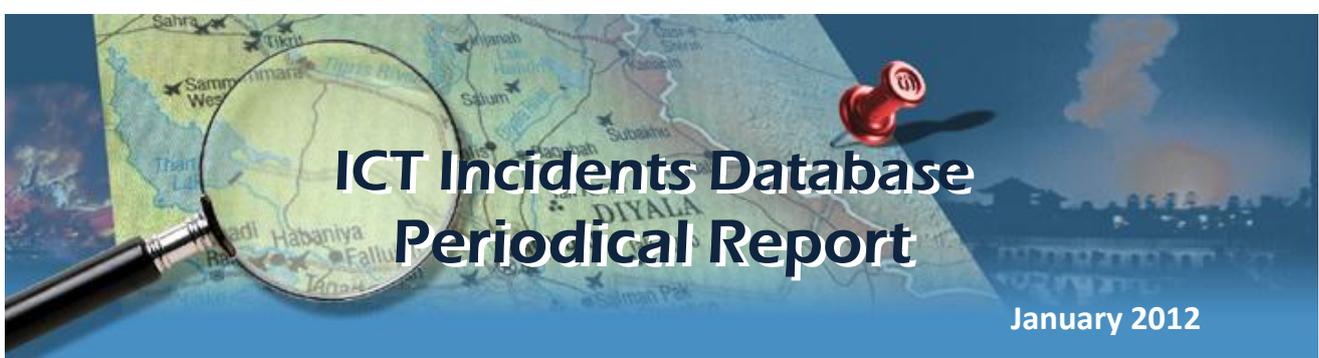
<sup>5</sup> Guardian, "Men jailed for planning attack on Danish newspaper", 30 January 2012;

<sup>6</sup> AFP, "Norway jails two over Prophet cartoon terror plot" , 30 January 2012;

<sup>7</sup> BBC, "Man admits sending 'Somali Three' terror funding" , 27 January 2012

<sup>8</sup> DPA, "Top ETA terrorist sentenced to 12 years in Portugal", 6 January 2012;

<sup>9</sup> AP, "Portuguese court sentences Zengotitabengoa to 12 years in prison" , 9 January 2012;



## **AFRICA**

### **Ethiopia**

Three journalists, a politician, and a politician's assistant were found guilty on 19 January of conspiring to commit acts of terrorism. The five were charged under Ethiopia's controversial anti-terrorism laws and were involved in planning attacks on infrastructure, telecommunications and power lines. The suspects faced the death penalty. The verdict drew immediate criticism from human rights groups due to the lack of free speech. Among the three journalist convicted were, Reeyot Alemu, a columnist for the independent weekly Fetah and former opposition member; Elias Kifle, editor-in-chief of a US based opposition website, who was tried in absentia; and Wubshet Taye, deputy editor-in-chief of the recently closed-down weekly newspaper Awramba Times.<sup>10</sup>

### **Kenya**

On 13 January Jermaine Grant, 29, a British man, and three Kenyans, two men and a woman, were charged in Mombasa with possession of bomb-making materials and plotting to explode a bomb. The men were ordered to remain in custody until the case reconvenes on 20 February 2012, while the woman was granted bail of \$228,000.<sup>11</sup> Grant was arrested in Mombasa in December 2011 and suspected of having ties to al-Shabaab.<sup>12</sup> Grant was serving a three-year jail sentence for being in Kenya illegally, after he used false documents that claimed he was a Canadian named Peter Joseph.<sup>13</sup>

On 15 January, the Kenya-based Muslim Youth Center announced on their internet website that they had merged with al-Shabaab militants in Somalia.<sup>14</sup> The Muslim Youth Center was named in a United Nations report in 2011 for recruiting, fundraising, and running training and orientation events for al-Shabaab. However, al-Shabaab made no comment.<sup>15</sup> The statement was made amid several warnings from embassies about planned terror attacks in Kenya. In the 50 minute audio message, the Group's leader Amiir Ahmad Iman Ali pledged

<sup>10</sup> AP, "3 journalists, politician found guilty on terror charges in Ethiopia" , 19 January 2012;

<sup>11</sup> UPI, "4 held in Kenya in alleged bomb plot" , 13 January 2012;

<sup>12</sup> BBC, "UK's Jermaine Grant charged over Kenyan bomb plot" , 12 January 2012;

<sup>13</sup> Skynews, "British Man Charged Over Kenya Terror Plot" , 13 January 2012;

<sup>14</sup> AP, "Kenyan Islamic group announces alliance with al-Shabaab in climate of Nairobi terror warnings" , 15 January 2012 ;

<sup>15</sup> National, "Kenya Islamic group claims ties to al-Shabab " , 15 January 2012;



allegiance to al-Shabaab, and discussed the wars in Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq and Chechnya. The video was produced by al-Kataib, al-Shabab's media foundation.<sup>16</sup>

## Nigeria

Kabiru Sokoto, the main suspect in the Christmas Day 2011 attacks in Nigeria, escaped police custody on 25 January within 24 hours of his arrest. A police statement said Sokoto escaped whilst he was being escorted to another police station outside of Abuja. The Nigerian police commissioner who ordered the transfer was suspended and police launched an investigation. Authorities expressed concern that sympathizers of radical group Boko Haram have infiltrated government security agencies.<sup>17</sup>

A coordinated attack on 21 January by Boko Haram militants, disguised as police officers, killed 178 people and injured 50 in Kano.<sup>18</sup> Police spokesman Olusola Amore said the attackers targeted five police buildings, two immigration offices, and the local headquarters of the State Security Service.<sup>19</sup> A curfew was imposed on the city following the violence.<sup>20</sup> Abul-Qaqa, a Boko Haram spokesman claimed responsibility for the attacks in a message to journalists. He said the attack came as the state government refused to release Boko Haram members held by the police.<sup>21</sup>

## Somalia

A suicide truck bomber attacked a local government headquarters in Beledweyne on 24 January killing approximately 30 people, although the exact death toll was unclear. The majority of those killed were Ethiopian soldiers. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>22</sup> Security guards shot the bomber before he reached the gates of the offices but he still managed to detonate his explosives.<sup>23</sup> A witness said he saw a truck with the back

<sup>16</sup> National, "Kenya Islamic group claims ties to al-Shabaab", 15 January 2012;

<sup>17</sup> VOA, "Top Suspect in Nigerian Christmas Bombing Escapes Police", 18 January 2012;

<sup>18</sup> BBC, "Nigeria attacks: What Boko Haram assault means", 22 January 2012;

<sup>19</sup> AP, "At least 143 killed in Nigerian sect attacks", 21 January 2012;

<sup>20</sup> AFP, "Coordinated attacks, gun battles kill 162 in Nigerian city", 21 January 2012;

<sup>21</sup> AP, "At least 143 killed in Nigerian sect attacks", 21 January 2012;

<sup>22</sup> Garowe, "Somalia: Al Shabaab claim 33 killed in bomb blast in Beledweyne", 24 January 2012;

<sup>23</sup> BBC, "Somalia's al-Shabab attack Ethiopian base in Beledweyne", 24 January 2012;



covered in black cloth or tarpaulin speeding toward the base and then heard a large explosion.<sup>24</sup>

## **MIDDLE EAST**

### **Iraq**

A series of attacks targeting Shia Muslims on 5 January killed 72 people in southern Iraq and in Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> The first incident occurred when a suicide bomber attacked a security checkpoint, killing 44 people and injuring 81, as pilgrims were making the journey from Nasiriyah to Kerbala for a religious festival. In Baghdad, 13 people were killed and 32 were injured, when three bombs exploded in Sadr City next to a group of labourers who were waiting to be hired. Several hours later, two car bombs in the Kadhimiya district of Baghdad killed 16 people and wounded 32 others. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but police suspect al-Qa'ida in Iraq.<sup>26</sup>

On 14 January a suicide bomber dressed in a military uniform killed 61 people and injured 139 at a checkpoint near Basra.<sup>27</sup> The checkpoint was used frequently as it was in the direction of the Shia mosque in the Zubeir district, approximately 20km south-west of Basra.<sup>28</sup> A witness said that the bomber was handing out cookies to the pilgrims who were on their way to celebrate the festival of Arbain and when a policeman approached him, he detonated the explosive belt.<sup>29</sup>

A suicide car bomber killed 33 people and injured 65 others in Yarmouk, a mostly Sunni district in the western part of Baghdad on 27 January. The explosion targeted the funeral procession of Mohammed al-Maliki, a real estate agent who was killed along with his family a day earlier. Minutes after the explosion, a group of gunmen opened fire at a checkpoint in Zafaraniyah, killing two police officers.<sup>30</sup> There was no immediate claim of responsibility for

<sup>24</sup> AP, "Somalia: Al Shabaab Truck Bomb Hits Ethiopian Base", 24 January 2012;

<sup>25</sup> Reuters, "Bombs kill at least 67 in Iraq's capital", 5 January 2012;

<sup>26</sup> BBC, "Iraq: Bombings in Baghdad and Nasiriya kill scores", 5 January 2012;

<sup>27</sup> Washington Post, "Bombing kills 53 Shiite pilgrims near Basra, Iraq", 14 January 2012;

<sup>28</sup> BBC, "Iraq suicide bomb kills 50 in Basra pilgrims attack", 14 January 2012;

<sup>29</sup> Irish Times, "53 dead in Iraq suicide attack", 14 January 2012;

<sup>30</sup> Telegraph, "Car bomb in Iraq kills 28", 28 January 2012;



the attack but the bombing resembled previous attacks by al-Qa'ida in Iraq.<sup>31</sup> **Israel, West Bank and Gaza Strip**

Eyad Rashid Abu Arja, 47, a Palestinian computer engineer with dual Australian-Jordanian nationality, was sentenced on 5 January to 30 months in prison following his conviction for aiding Hamas.<sup>32</sup> He was arrested at Ben Gurion Airport on 24 March 2011 and initially charged with belonging to an illegal terrorist organization. He claimed he was in Israel for a four day vacation, but later agreed to plead guilty to aiding Hamas under a plea bargain. According to the indictment, since the mid 1980s, Arja had been in contact with several Hamas activists in connection with Palestinian-related activities in Australia and Saudi Arabia. He met with several individuals including a man named Saleh Abd al-Karim Altamoni and Hamas activist Abu Salah Nazmi. Arja discussed his knowledge of encryption techniques. He became known amongst the activists by the code name "Bashir" or "Bashar." Throughout 2009 and 2010, Arja was asked several times to help Saleh Abd al-Karim Altamoni locate encrypted devices, including cellphones, panoramic photography equipment and technologies to detect and guide missiles. During the month of Ramadan in 2010, Arja met Hamas activist Dr. Borahan in Mecca, where Arja received a new code name. Borahan instructed Arja to travel to Israel using his Australian passport and he was tasked with photographing commercial centers, collecting maps and making contact with commercial businesses. However, Abu Arja was arrested upon his arrival in Israel.<sup>33</sup>

On 19 January, an Islamic Jihad cell, based in Jenin and consisting of 10 militants suspected of planning attacks on Israel was broken up and its members arrested by the Israel Security Agency. Authorities suspected the cell were planning attacks both on Israeli civilians and on the military, including kidnapping attempts and making explosives.<sup>34</sup> The ISA said that the militants were in direct contact with Islamic Jihad headquarters in Damascus, Syria from which they received large sums of money to fund terrorist activity, as well as instructions on how to carry out the attacks. The IDF soldiers who carried out the raid, together with ISA agents, discovered a kilogram of potassium, as well as an AK-47 assault rifle, 150 bullets and NIS 2,000 in cash that was allegedly intended for financing terrorist attacks. During interrogation, the suspects confessed to establishing a cell in northern Samaria to carry out

<sup>31</sup> AP, "Suicide bomber kills 33 at Shiite funeral in Iraq", 27 January 2012;

<sup>32</sup> AFP, "Israel gives Australian 30 months for aiding Hamas", 5 January 2012;

<sup>33</sup> Jerusalem Post, "30 months for Aussie citizen who aided Hamas", 5 January 2012;

<sup>34</sup> AFP, "Islamic Jihad cell in West Bank broken: Israel", 19 January 2012;



shooting attacks against settlers and IDF patrols, and to kidnap an Israeli civilian or soldier to use as a bargaining chip for securing the release of Palestinians imprisoned in Israel.<sup>35</sup> The suspects were indicted at the Salem Military Court on multiple counts of membership of a terror group, using enemy funds, and various weapons charges.<sup>36</sup>

## Syria

On 6 January a bomb exploded in the Al-Midan district of Damascus, killing 26 people and wounding 63 others. According to the Syrian government, a suicide bomber attacked buses carrying riot police shortly before an anti-government protest was to begin. The target appeared to be a minibus carrying policemen dispatched to contain protesters. Both officers and bystanders were among the casualties. A second device exploded in the suburb of Tal, killing a girl, while a third was said to have been defused.<sup>37</sup> The attack occurred as Arab League observers were meeting to oversee a peace plan for the country.<sup>38</sup>

## **NORTH AMERICA**

### USA

Irfan Ul Haq, 37 was sentenced on 5 January to 50 months in prison in the US, for providing false documentation and attempting to smuggle a person he thought was a Taliban member into the United States. His sentence was part of an agreement to plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to provide material support to the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan. In September 2011, Ul Haq and Qasim Ali, 32, and Zahid Yousaf, 43, pleaded guilty. Ali and Yousaf were sentenced in December to 40 months and 36 months, respectively. All three men are Pakistani nationals and agreed to be deported after serving their sentence.<sup>39</sup> They were arrested on 13 March 2011, in Miami in a federal sting operation. Due to their guilty pleas to terrorism conspiracy charges, the government dismissed the charges of conspiracy to commit alien smuggling.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Jerusalem post, "Shin Bet arrests terror cell planning abductions", 19 January 2012;

<sup>36</sup> Ynet, "Syria-backed terror cell exposed in Jenin", 19 January 2012;

<sup>37</sup> New York Times, "Bomb Kills Dozens in Damascus, Stoking Suspicions", 6 January 2012;

<sup>38</sup> BBC, Syria unrest: "Damascus blast and clashes kill many", 7 January 2012;

<sup>39</sup> CNN, "Pakistani man gets more than 4 years in prison in terror case", 6 January 2012;

<sup>40</sup> MSNBC, "Pakistani man sentenced in attempt at smuggling", 5 January 2012;



On 9 January, Sami Osmakac, 25, a naturalized US citizen born in Kosovo, was charged with plotting a radical Islamic attack on crowded locations around Tampa, Florida. Osmakac recorded an eight minute video shortly before his arrest. In the video, in which he was shown armed with a pistol and an AK-47, he said that Muslim blood was more valuable than that of people who do not believe in Islam and that he sought revenge for any wrong-doings against Muslims. In September 2011, Osmakac attempted to purchase al-Qa'ida flags from a business in Tampa. A confidential source contacted the FBI, who instructed him to hire Osmakac and tape their conversations. Two months later, the FBI agent said Osmakac and the confidential source discussed and identified potential targets in Tampa including nightclubs and a sheriff's office that Osmakac wanted to attack with a car bomb, assault rifle, and other explosives. He was arrested after he purchased explosive devices and firearms from the undercover Federal agent.<sup>41</sup>

On 14 January, three men received sentences ranging from 15 to 45 years for their roles in a homegrown terrorist cell based in North Carolina. Hysen Sherifi, a native of Kosovo and a legal permanent resident of the United States, was sentenced to 45 years in prison. Ziyad Yaghi, a naturalized US citizen, was sentenced to 32 years. The two men were convicted in October 2011 of plotting to kill people overseas and of conspiracy to provide material support for terrorism. Sherifi also was convicted of conspiring to kill a federal officer or government employee and of two firearms charges. The third man, Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan, was sentenced to 15 years for conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism. All three are in their 20s and had pleaded not guilty. Prosecutors claimed that the cell was made up of eight people. The leader, Daniel Patrick Boyd, pleaded guilty in February 2011 to conspiracy to kill people overseas and material support for terrorism. He has not been sentenced. The indictment said that from November 2006 through July 2009, Boyd conspired with the others to provide material support to terrorists. That included money, training, transportation and manpower. Boyd and most of the others were arrested and charged in July 2009. Two of his sons, Zakariya and Dylan Boyd, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism this year and received sentences of nine and eight years, respectively. Anes Subasic, a naturalized US citizen, is awaiting trial in North Carolina. The eighth suspect charged in the case is Jude Kenan Mohammad, a US citizen who is believed to be at large in Pakistan. In April 2010, a ninth man was charged in what previously

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<sup>41</sup> AP, "Feds charge ex-Kosovo man in Fla. Islamic plot" , 9 January 2012;



had been known as an eight-person conspiracy. Bajram Asllani, a resident of Kosovo, was charged with conspiracy to kill people overseas and to provide material support to terrorists. The US government alleged that Asllani solicited money from Boyd and the others to establish a base of operations in Kosovo to carry out violent jihad. He is reportedly at large in Kosovo.<sup>42</sup>

Antonio Martinez pleaded guilty on 26 January to a charge of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction against a building used by the US Defense Department. Martinez is scheduled to be sentenced on 6 April and faced 25 years in prison if found guilty. Court documents described an FBI sting operation that allegedly caught Martinez attempting to detonate what he believed was a car bomb, but was actually a fake bomb assembled by the FBI agents, outside the Armed Forces Recruiting Center in Catonsville in December 2010.<sup>43</sup> Martinez also faced a charge of attempting to kill US officers and employees, but the prosecutors agreed to drop the second charge at sentencing. In the plea agreement, Martinez acknowledged that he wanted to pursue jihad to the United States "to send a message that all American soldiers would be killed so long as the country continued its 'war' against Islam."<sup>44</sup>

## **ASIA**

### **Afghanistan**

On 10 January, 26 people were killed and 72 injured when a car bomb exploded at a bus stand outside a shopping bazaar in Jamrud, northwestern Pakistan.<sup>45</sup> A car parked at an abandoned petrol station near the Tirah bus stand exploded and damaged about 10 vehicles, the petrol station and dozens of nearby shops. Authorities believe the targets of the attack were local tribesmen from the Zakhakhel tribe.<sup>46</sup> The truck contained hundreds of kilograms of explosives mixed with rockets and mortar shells. Tehreek-e-Taliban Tariq spokesperson Ehsanullah Ehsan disowned the attack in an email sent to the media.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> CNN, "Three men sentenced in North Carolina terrorist ring", 14 January 2012;

<sup>43</sup> CSM, "Baltimore man tricked by FBI pleads guilty to trying to bomb recruiting site", 26 January 2012;

<sup>44</sup> AP, "Md. man caught in sting pleads guilty in bomb plot", 26 January 2012;

<sup>45</sup> BNO News, "Car bomb attack in north-western Pakistan kills 26", 10 January 2012;

<sup>46</sup> Central Asia Online, "Jamrud car bombing kills 30 people, injures 72", 10 January 2012;

<sup>47</sup> International Herald Tribune, "Reprisal assault: Car bombing kills 30 in Khyber", 10 January 2012;



## Azerbaijan

Rasim Aliyev, Ali Huseynov, and Balaqardash Dadashov were arrested on 25 January on suspicion of planning to attack a Jewish school in Baku.<sup>48</sup> Authorities believe the intended targets were two Israeli Chabad emissaries, a rabbi and a teacher employed by the school. The suspects had allegedly received smuggled arms and equipment from Iranian agents. The suspects claimed the planned attack was in retaliation for the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists. It was also reported that the suspects had planned to target Israel's Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Michael Lotem, and that Iran had offered \$150,000 to fund their activities.<sup>49</sup>

## India

On 23 January, Indian anti-terrorism police announced the arrest of two men accused of involvement in the 13 July 2011 Mumbai bombings. The men were identified as Naqi Ahmed Wasi Ahmed Sheikh, 22, and Nadeem Akhtar Ashfaq Sheikh, 23, both originally from the eastern state of Bihar.<sup>50</sup> They were accused of creating false documents that aided the bombers in carrying out the attack. The mastermind and planners of the attack remained at large.<sup>51</sup> Authorities suspect the mastermind of the attack, was senior Indian Mujahideen leader Yasin Bhatkal. Authorities believe that Naqi Ahmed Wasi Ahmed Sheikh came to Mumbai in September 2010. Nadeem, his co-villager, from Bihar's Darbhanga district, was living in Antop Hill area of the city. In 2008 Naqi met Yasin Bhatkal. Nadeem was called to Delhi by Bhatkal and handed over a cloth packet containing the explosive and detonators used in the blast that was handed over to Naqi.<sup>52</sup>

## Pakistan

On 15 January, 18 people were killed and 30 wounded in a bomb attack on a Shia religious procession in Khanpur. Police initially thought the explosion had been caused by an electrical fault, but later confirmed it was a bomb. Authorities suspected the bomb, planted near an electricity pole was homemade and was detonated by remote control. The attack targeted

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<sup>48</sup> Jerusalem Post, "Terror cell eyed Israeli targets in Azerbaijan", 25 January 2012;

<sup>49</sup> Haaretz, "Azerbaijan thwarts terror attack against Israeli, Jewish targets", 25 January 2012;

<sup>50</sup> CNN, "Indian police arrest 2 for 2011 Mumbai bombings", 23 January 2012;

<sup>51</sup> Indian Express.com, "Mumbai blasts: Maharashtra police claim breakthrough, 2 arrested", 23 January 2012;

<sup>52</sup> asianetIndia.com, "ATS arrests two from Bihar in 13/7 Mumbai blasts", 23 January 2012;



Shias marking the festival of Arbain, one of the main holy days of the Shia calendar.<sup>53</sup> No organization claimed responsibility for the attack, but authorities suspected Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, which is notoriously anti-Shia.<sup>54</sup>

On 17 January, a journalist working for the Voice of American broadcasting service was killed whilst he was praying in a mosque in Shabqadar.<sup>55</sup> The journalist, Mukarram Khan Aatif, 40, had received death threats prior to the killing.<sup>56</sup> Witnesses and local police said that Aatif was attending evening prayers when two assailants on a motorbike arrived at the mosque. One of them shot Aatif in the head and chest before escaping the scene. Aatif was taken in critical condition to a hospital, where he later died from his injuries. The man who was leading the service was also injured in the attack.<sup>57</sup> Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the incident.<sup>58</sup>

### Thailand

On 13 January 2012, Thai police arrested Hussein Atris, 47, a Lebanese-Swedish man suspected of having links to Hizballah, as he attempted to depart Thailand at Bangkok's international airport. Atris was born in Lebanon but acquired Swedish citizenship and a passport after marrying a Swedish woman in 1996. Police released a sketch of a second male suspect of Middle Eastern origin, clean shaven in his 30s or 40s, who remained at large and was thought to have escaped Thailand.<sup>59</sup>

The arrest was made after US and Israeli officials tipped off the Thai government about a planned attack by Hizballah operatives in Bangkok. It was reported that the Chabad Jewish community centre near Khao San road in Bangkok was the main target of the planned attack.<sup>60</sup> As a result of a three-day interrogation, police were led by Atris to a townhouse in Bangkok where police seized more than 4,000 kg of bomb-making materials on 16 January.<sup>61</sup> Thailand's national police chief, General Piewpan Damapong, said that Hussein confessed

<sup>53</sup> Guardian, "Pakistan bomb blast leaves 18 dead", 15 January 2012;

<sup>54</sup> BBC, "Pakistan blast: Shias killed in Khanpur procession", 15 January 2012;

<sup>55</sup> VOA News, "Pakistani Taliban Claims Responsibility for Killing VOA Reporter", 17 January 2012;

<sup>56</sup> BBC, "Pakistan Taliban admit killing reporter MK Atif", 18 January 2012;

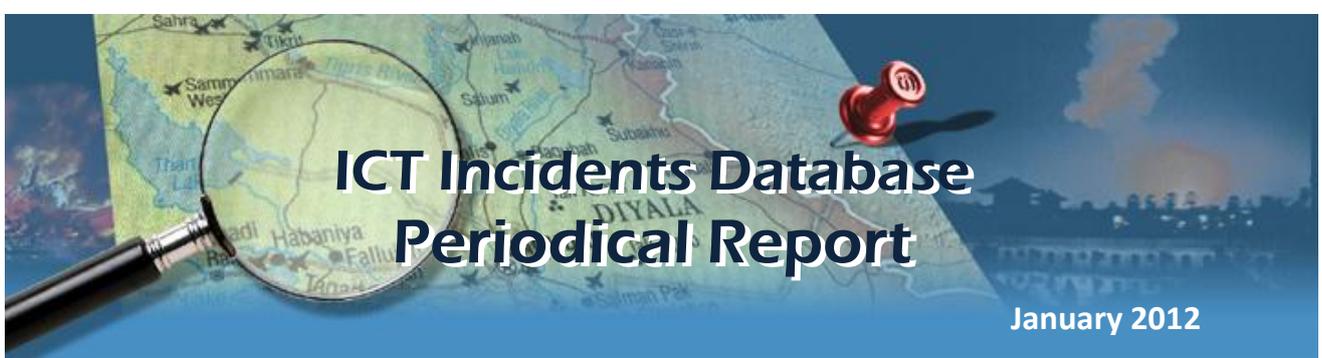
<sup>57</sup> AFP, "Pakistani journalist working for US media shot dead", 18 January 2012;

<sup>58</sup> BBC, "Pakistan Taliban admit killing reporter MK Atif", 18 January 2012;

<sup>59</sup> Guardian, "Thailand arrests Hezbollah suspect after terror tipoff", 13 January 2012;

<sup>60</sup> Bangkok Post, "Terror suspect planned Bangkok attack, says website", 17 January 2012;

<sup>61</sup> BBC, "Thai police find large cache of bomb-making materials", 16 January 2012



that he and his alleged accomplices had intended to bomb locations in Bangkok popular with Israeli tourists, but that when they realized police were watching them they canceled their plans. Atris then changed his confession a few days later, saying he bought large amounts of fertilizer and ammonia nitrate to ship overseas.<sup>62</sup> On 17 January, Atris was charged with illegal possession of explosive materials.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Time, "Vague Terrorism Alert, Arrests Put Bangkok on Edge", 17 January 2012;

<sup>63</sup> Strafor, "A Hezbollah Threat in Thailand?", 19 January 2012.