



## Periodic Database Incident Report, March 2013



International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT)

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The following is a summary and analysis of the terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations that occurred during the month of March 2013, researched and recorded by the ICT database team. Important events this month included the following:

- On 2 March, Mohamed Nuh Adan and Abdirasak Hassan Tahlil, two Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahedin militants, were sentenced to death in the Nugal Military Court, Somalia.
- On 4 March, Hafiz Khan, 77, an elderly Muslim cleric was convicted in Florida, USA of funneling thousands of dollars to support the Pakistani Taliban.
- On 5 March, Gary McDaid, 35, and Seamus McLaughlin, 37, were arrested and charged with the discovery of four mortar bombs in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, UK.
- On 7 March, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, a senior Al-Qaeda spokesman was arrested while being deported from Turkey to Kuwait under a scheme orchestrated by US authorities. He was charged with conspiring to kill Americans but pleaded not guilty at his hearing in federal court in Manhattan on 8 March.
- On 10 March, Omot Odol Ojulu, an Ethiopian-born American citizen who was on the African nation's most wanted list, was killed during by security forces in Gambella region.
- On 10 March, it was reported that seven foreign hostages kidnapped by Ansaru militants in Nigeria on 16 February 2013 were killed.
- On 18 March, 41 people were killed and 65 others injured when two suicide car bombers carried out an attack at a bus station in Kano, Nigeria.
- On 19 March, Qari Abdul Hai, alias Asadullah, was arrested in Karachi, Pakistan suspected of playing a role in the 2002 murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl.
- On 19 March, a home-made rocket landed in the town of Khan al-Asal, Syria killing 31 people and injuring 110 others, in what was suspected to be the first use of chemical weapons in the conflict. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On 21 March, Hossam Taleb Yaacoub, a dual Swedish-Lebanese citizen, was found guilty at a court in Limosal, Cyprus of participating in a Hizballah plot to attack Israeli tourists in Cyprus in the summer of 2012.
- On 26 March, French-Algerian militant Hakim Benladghem, 39, was killed by police on the A8 Lille-Brussels motorway as he allegedly attempted to fire at them and he was suspected of planning to carry out a terrorist attack in Europe.
- On 26 March, Henry Okah, the former leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend), was sentenced to 24 years in prison in South Africa for masterminding two simultaneous explosions in Abuja, Nigeria in October 2010.
- On 27 March, 20 Uighurs with suspected ties to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, were convicted on charges that included terrorism and separatism.

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## EUROPE

### Belgium

On 26 March, French-Algerian militant Hakim Benladghem, 39, was killed by authorities, on the A8 Lille-Brussels motorway as he allegedly attempted to fire at police. Belgium police received intelligence from authorities in France who suspected that Benladghem was planning to carry out a series of terror attacks across Europe.<sup>1</sup> Police ordered him to stop driving; however, he refused to comply and then tried to hit one of the unmarked police cars before opening fire. The police retaliated and the suspect was killed by the return gunfire.<sup>2</sup> As part of the investigation, Belgian authorities searched his apartment in Anderlecht and found several weapons, including an assault rifle, a sub-machine gun and a tactical shotgun. He also possessed a large collection of tactical equipment, including a ballistic vest, a Kevlar helmet, a ballistic shield and two gas masks.<sup>3</sup> It was unclear whether Benladghem had ties to Jihadist groups or was a 'Lone Wolf'. Authorities said he made several attempts to travel to Israel to fight in Gaza but was refused entry. Records show he received 150 calls to two cell phones from Gaza in February 2008. He also travelled to Norway, Italy, Switzerland and Syria on a regular basis. He had also been issued an Indian visa but it had not been used. Authorities said that a woman living at the address, believed to be Benladghem's partner, was arrested and charged with possessing the arsenal. It was also reported that Benladghem had trained as a 'para-commando' in the French Foreign

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<sup>1</sup> Mail Online, "The deadly arsenal discovered at home of French terror suspect gunned down in his car by special forces", 29 March 2013.

<sup>2</sup> www.esisc.org, "Hakim Benladghem: solitary Jihadist or member of a multinational Network", 28 March 2013

<sup>3</sup> Strafor, "The Acute Jihadist Threat in Europe", 3 April 2013.

Legion before he moved to Belgium in 2008. Authorities believe it was during this time he became radicalized.<sup>4</sup>

## Cyprus

On 21 March, Hossam Taleb Yaacoub, a dual Swedish-Lebanese citizen, was found guilty of participating in a plot to attack Israeli tourists in Cyprus. Authorities said Yaacoub was trained in the use of weapons and scouted sites in Europe, including a Cypriot airport. He admitted that he was a member of Hizballah and staking out areas frequented by Israeli tourists, but said he did not know his work was part of a plot to kill Israelis.<sup>5</sup> He was found guilty on five of the eight charges against him, including participation in a criminal organization and in the preparation of a criminal act. The three other counts were conspiracy charges, which the ruling said were already covered under the other charges. Yaacoub will be sentenced at a separate hearing. Yaacoub's lawyer Antonis Georgiades said he will appeal. The charges carry a maximum 10 years in prison and a 50,000-euro fine.<sup>6</sup> This was the first time a European court convicted a suspect of plotting to target Israeli citizens abroad on behalf of Hizballah. US authorities hoped the conviction will encourage the European Union to declare Hizballah a terrorist group, restricting the group's ability to recruit and raise funds within Europe.<sup>7</sup>

## France

On 26 March, Miguel de Garikoitz Aspiazu Rubina, the former Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) military leader, was sentenced to eight years in prison on charges of

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4 Mail Online, "The deadly arsenal discovered at home of French terror suspect gunned down in his car by special forces", 29 March 2013.

5 Times of Israel, "Cyprus verdict may undercut Hezbollah in Europe", 25 March 2013.

6 AP, "Cyprus convicts Hezbollah member in terror plot", 21 March 2013.

7 ABC, "In First, European Court Convicts Hezbollah Agent", 21 March 2013

kidnapping and bomb-making.<sup>8</sup> Rubina was arrested in 2008 in the mountainous Pyrenees region near the border with Spain and was suspected of kidnapping a Spanish couple and a child in the region in 2007. At the time, he was Spain's most-wanted man due to his alleged role in a 2006 bomb attack on the Madrid airport that killed two people. The French court found him guilty of possessing 500 kg of explosives, as well kidnapping the family. Nine co-defendants were handed jail sentences ranging from eight to 20 years. In 2011 he was sentenced in absentia to 377 years in prison for 20 attempted assassinations.<sup>9</sup> Rubina, who is also known by the aliases "Txeroki" and "Cherokee", also faces another trial in April 2013, for the 2007 murder of two Spanish paramilitary police near France's Basque country.<sup>10</sup>

### United Kingdom

On 1 March, Zahid Iqbal, Mohammed Sharfaraz Ahmed, Umar Arshad and Syed Farhan Hussain pleaded guilty to facilitating, planning and encouraging travel overseas contrary to Section 5 of Terrorism Act 2006. The men were arrested following a series of anti-terror raids in Luton in 2012. During the trial, the men said they downloaded computer files containing practical instructions for an attack. The men purchased survival equipment and collected funds for terrorist purposes. The offenses took place between January 2011 and April 2012.<sup>11</sup> The men were also charged with possessing documents including six copies each of the Al-Qaeda magazine *Inspire* and copies of a manual written by the late Anwar Al Awlaki, called *44 Ways to Support Jihad*.<sup>12</sup> Ahmed admitted that he had in his possession the Al-Qaeda Manual entitled *21 Techniques of Silent Killing*, and Hussain was charged with

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8 Reuters, "French court jails former ETA chief for 20 years", 26 March 2013.

9 Expatia.com, "French court gives ETA chief 8 more years", 26 March 2013.

10 AFP, "French court gives ETA chief 8 more years", 26 March 2013.

11 BBC, "Four men admit discussing UK terror plot", 1 March 2013.

12 Telegraph, "Four British al-Qaeda inspired fanatics face jail after admitting terror plot", 1 March 2013.

possessing *The Book of Jihad* and a copy of *The Explosives Course 2*. The men will face sentencing in April 2013.<sup>13</sup>

On 5 March, Gary McDaid, 35, and Seamus McLaughlin, 37, were arrested under the Terrorism Act and charged with the discovery of four mortar bombs in a van in Londonderry. The mortars were found in the white van and the roof of the vehicle had been cut back to allow the mortars to be fired. A third man was arrested later but has since been released unconditionally.<sup>14</sup> Authorities said the cell were planning to fire the mortars at Derry police station and that they also discovered an incendiary device in the van that authorities suspect was going to be used by the militants to destroy all evidence at the weapons' firing point. Police also found two kitchen timer units, two toggle switches attached to the timers in a plastic lunchbox-type container and a vehicle battery in the front passenger seat. The driver's seat was covered in plastic.<sup>15</sup> Both men faced charges of possession of explosives with intent to endanger life, possession of articles for terrorist purposes and conspiracy to cause an explosion.<sup>16</sup>

On 20 March, Norman Faridi, 32, a Kenyan aerospace engineering student, was found guilty of possessing records likely to be useful to someone preparing or committing an act of terrorism. He was sentenced to nine months in prison but he was cleared of a third charge of having a guide to fighting techniques for a similar purpose. Authorities said Faridi will be deported once he has completed his prison sentence. Faridi applied to work as a volunteer in Cardiff where several football matches were held during the 2012 summer Olympics. It

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13 BBC, "Four men admit discussing UK terror plot", 1 March 2013.

14 Guardian, "Derry mortar van contained bomb to destroy evidence, court told", 6 March 2013.

15 Independent, "Northern Ireland: Terrorist attack foiled in Londonderry just minutes before mortars due to be fired at police station", 4 March 2013.

16 BBC, "Londonderry mortars: Two men charged", 5 March 2013.

was later discovered that he had in his possession a terrorist's manual called *39 Ways To Serve And Proceed In Jihad*, on his external hard drive and in a deleted file. He was also found to have downloaded a video of Muslim cleric Abu Hamza on to his mobile phone. He was arrested in July 2012 when 39,000 deleted files were examined.<sup>17</sup>

## **AFRICA**

### **Ethiopia**

On 10 March, Omot Odol Ojulu, an Ethiopian-born American citizen who was on the African nation's most wanted list was killed during an exchange of fire with security forces in Gambella region, which borders South Sudan. Authorities claimed Ojulu had ties to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) or Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) rebel groups. Authorities believe he was the mastermind of a 2012 attack on Gambela based Saudi Star rice farm, an agriculture company owned by Ethiopian billionaire Mohammed al-Amoudi, which killed six people, including a Pakistani worker and injured eight others. Following the attacks security forces then arrested at least 14 perpetrators; however, Ojulu then managed to escape and had been under police hunt until his death. Police said he was also responsible for organizing and recruiting members from the region to carry out more attacks. He had previously been charged under the country's anti-terrorism law in absentia.<sup>18</sup>

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17 Independent, "Student found with 'terrorism manual' Norman Idris Faridi facing jail after being turned down job at London 2012", 14 March 2013.

18 Sudan Tribune, "Ethiopian security forces kill US "terrorist"", 11 March 2013.

## Mali

On 20 March, it was reported that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) said they killed Philippe Verdon on 10 March in retaliation for France's intervention in Mali.<sup>19</sup> There was no official confirmation however from the French authorities. Philippe Verdon and Serge Lazarevic were said to be on a business trip when they were captured at their hotel in Hombori, about 160km from the regional capital Gao, in November 2011. French troops captured the town from militant Islamist about two weeks after they intervened in Mali.<sup>20</sup>

On 23 March, authorities in France confirmed that Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, 46, a senior figure in Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) was killed in Mali.<sup>21</sup> Zeid was considered one of AQIM's most radical leaders. Authorities said in June 2009, his men kidnapped British tourist Edwin Dyer. According to multiple witnesses, Abou Zeid personally beheaded him.<sup>22</sup>

On 24 March, it was reported that Algerian Djamel Okacha was named as his replacement.<sup>23</sup>

## Nigeria

On 10 March, seven foreign hostages kidnapped by Ansaru militants had been killed. The hostages were seized on in February 2013. Italy and Greece denied that any attempt to rescue them had been made by any of the governments involved. Nigeria had no confirmation of the killings.<sup>24</sup> The British foreign office named the British hostage as Brendan Vaughan. An intelligence source in Abuja named the Italian as Silvano Trevisan.<sup>25</sup>

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19 Mail Online, "Al Qaeda 'beheads French hostage held for 14 months in revenge for war in Mali'", 20 March 2013.

20 BBC, "Philippe Verdon: French Mali hostage 'killed by al-Qaeda'", 20 March 2013.

<sup>21</sup> BBC, "France confirms death of Islamist commander Abou Zeid", 23 March 2013.

22 TelegrAph, "Al-Qaeda leader Abdelhamid Abou Zeid confirmed dead in Mali", 23 March 2013.

23 Reuters, "New leader named for Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: TV", 24 March 2013.

24 IOL news, "Italy says hostages were killed in Nigeria", 10 March 2013.

25 Reuters, 'Italy and Greece confirm hostages killed in Nigeria', 10 March 2013.

On 18 March, 41 people were killed and 65 others injured when two suicide car bombers carried out an attack at a luxury bus station in Kano.<sup>26</sup> Authorities said the two suicide bombers drove their car at high speed into the luxury buses causing a large explosion hitting five buses. No group claimed responsibility, but Boko Haram militants were suspected to be responsible.<sup>27</sup>

## Somalia

On 2 March, Mohamed Nuh Adan and Abdirasak Hassan Tahlil, two Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahedin militants were sentenced to death in the Nugal Military Court. A third man, Sidow Ali Qable was found not guilty of planning an act of terrorism.<sup>28</sup> The men were arrested in Galkayo in November 2012 carrying explosives, wires and detonators. Material evidence that was caught at the scene included TNT, grenades, wires, detonators, cell phones, remote controls, ball bearing used to make shrapnel and other supplies.<sup>29</sup>

On 18 March, a suicide bomber killed ten people and injured 15 others outside the National Theatre in Mogadishu.<sup>30</sup> The suicide bomber packed his car full of explosives and targeted a vehicle carrying the intelligence chief Col. Khalif Ahmed Ereg and soldiers. He sustained minor injuries in the attack. The explosion also killed a number of people travelling in a minibus including some children. Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedin claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>31</sup>

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26 AP, "Nigeria: Death Toll in Kano Bombing Rises to 41", 19 March 2013.

27 Daily Nation, "Death toll from Nigeria's bus station attack rises to 41", 20 March 2013.

28 AllAfrica.com, "Somalia: Court Finds Al Shabaab Agents Guilty of 'Planning Terror Act'", 2 March 2013.

29 Garowe, "Somalia: Court finds Al Shabaab agents guilty of 'planning terror act'", 2 March 2013.

30 CNN, "10 killed in suicide car bombing in Mogadishu", 18 March 2013.

31 RFI, "Mogadishu car bomb kills civilians, schoolchildren", 18 March 2013.

## South Africa

On 26 March, Henry Okah, the former leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend), was sentenced to 24 years in prison in South Africa for masterminding two simultaneous explosions in Abuja, Nigeria during Independence Day holiday celebrations in October 2010.<sup>32</sup> Authorities said Okah planned the attack that killed 12 people and injured 36 others from South Africa, where he had been living after leaving Nigeria as part of an amnesty deal reached in 2009. He also received a 13-year jail term for threats made to the South African government after his arrest in October 2010 but this runs concurrently with his 24-year sentence. Okah was arrested on gun-running charges in Angola in 2007 and then transferred to Nigeria but never convicted. He was released after two years under an amnesty for oil militants and he returned to South Africa.<sup>33</sup>

## MIDDLE EAST

### Egypt

On 25 March, authorities in Sinai arrested 25 Hamas and Al-Qaeda linked militants. The suspects were reportedly found carrying 50 weapons, including an anti-tank RPG launcher, ammunition, and satellite phones.<sup>34</sup> They were also in possession of maps and photos of strategic installations in the peninsula.<sup>35</sup> Authorities also said that security forces exposed a uniform manufacturing workshop in the town of Menufia that included over 1,000 items of clothing which authorities suspect were intended to be used to dress militants in fake uniforms in order to carry out terror attacks on military bases.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Vanguard, "Henry Okah jailed for 24 years", 26 March 2013.

<sup>33</sup> BBC, "Henry Okah: Nigerian oil militant jailed for 24 years", 26 March 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Ynet, "Egypt arrests 25 Hamas, Qaeda terrorists", 25 March 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Times of Israel, "Egypt arrests 25 Hamas and al-Qaeda operatives in Sinai", 25 March 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Jerusalem Post, "Egypt seizes weaponry, arrests terrorists in Sinai", 25 March 2013.

## Iraq

On 29 March, 23 people were killed and 119 others wounded, in a series of car bombings that targeted Shiite mosques in Baghdad and Kirkuk as worshipers were emerging from Friday prayers.<sup>37</sup> Explosions were reported in mosques in the Baghdad areas of Zafaraniyah, Binook, Qahira, and Jihad during Friday prayers. The Kirkuk attack was reported at the same time. In the first attack, a parked car exploded in Baghdad's western Jihad neighborhood, killing seven people and wounding 25 others. Another bomb detonated in the eastern Qahira neighborhood, killing four people and wounding 20 others, while a third explosion killed three people and wounded 15 in the Zafaraniyah district. A fourth car bomb killed five people and wounded 14 in the north-eastern Binook neighborhood. In Kirkuk, a suicide bomber drove his explosive-laden car into a group of worshipers outside a mosque, killing three people and wounding 70.<sup>38</sup> No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities suspected Al-Qeda in Iraq militants.<sup>39</sup>

## Israel and the West Bank

On 4 March, Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) said a terrorist cell operating in Hebron was uncovered and the suspects were plotting to carry out combined explosives and shooting attacks on IDF soldiers in the Hebron area. Authorities seized a pipe bomb that belonged to the cell. Indictments were filed against three of the cell members at the Judea Military Court. They were charged with membership in an illegal organization, conspiracy to cause death, possession and manufacture of arms, creating an explosives device, and importing enemy funds.<sup>40</sup> The leader of the cell was identified as Basel Himouni, a Hamas operative who was expelled to the Gaza Strip as part of the Shalit prisoner exchange deal. He has not

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37 AP, "String of attacks targeting Shiite mosques in Iraq kills at least 23 people", 29 March 2013.

38 BBC, "Iraq: Car bombs hit worshippers in Baghdad and Kirkuk", 29 March 2013.

39 AP, "Car bombings kill at least 23 in Iraq", 29 March 2013.

40 Jerusalem post, "Shin Bet uncovers Hamas terror cell in Hebron", 4 March 2013.

been arrested.<sup>41</sup> The suspects included Manjad Junidi, 23, of Hebron, who was arrested in November 2012 on suspicion of heading the cell in Hebron and recruiting members. He admitted to having ties with Heimuini. Security forces also named Muhammad Sh'idam, 25, of Hebron, as a cell member, who is suspected of manufacturing a pipe bomb, and plotting a shooting attack.<sup>42</sup>

## Syria

On 19 March, 31 people were killed, including ten soldiers and 110 others injured in the town of Khan al-Asal in what was suspected to be the first use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict.<sup>43</sup> Witnesses said they could smell chlorine after the attack and it was reported that photos of dead farm animals in a yard, and video footage of survivors struggling to breathe supported that chemical weapons had been used in the attack. Authorities also said that the photos of victims showing foam coming out of their mouths and contracted pupils were signs that it was likely a chemical such as Sarin gas had been used in the attack.<sup>44</sup> Information Minister Omran al-Zoabi said that a home-made rocket was fired at a military checkpoint from the vicinity of Al-Bab, a district close to Aleppo that is controlled by Jabhat al-Nusra. However, a senior rebel commander, Qassim Saadeddine, who is also a spokesman for the Higher Military Council in Aleppo, denied this, blaming Assad's forces for the alleged chemical strike.<sup>45</sup> The immediate effects were to induce vomiting, fainting, suffocation and seizures among those in the immediate area. According to some witnesses, Syrian soldiers were seen attending to the wounded and at the scene.

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41 Times Of Israel, " Hamas cell nabbed in Hebron", 4 March 2013.

42 Jerusalem post, "Shin Bet uncovers Hamas terror cell in Hebron", 4 March 2013.

43 CNN, "Game-changer: Syria's 'probability' of using chemical warfare", 20 March 2013.

44 Jerusalem post, "IDF official: Assad used chemical weapons", 23 April 2013.

45 Reuters, "Alleged chemical attack kills 25 in northern Syria", 19 March 2013.

Some of the soldiers were included in the casualties.<sup>46</sup> Syria is suspected to possess one of the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons in the world, allegedly holding supplies of sarin, mustard and VX gases, all banned under international law. Damascus however denies the claims.<sup>47</sup> Immediately following the alleged attack, the Syrian government demanded an international investigation, and the UN Security Council obliged, created a team with the assistance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). However, the UN team is waiting for permission from Syria to enter the country to investigate the claims. At present nothing has been confirmed or denied.<sup>48</sup>

On 22 March, 42 people were killed and 84 others wounded when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives inside a mosque in Damascus, Syria.<sup>49</sup> Amongst the victims was Dr Mohammed Saeed Ramadan al-Boutia, a senior pro-government Sunni cleric. Authorities announced a day of mourning for the 23 March when his funeral was held. Al-Boutia was a staunch supporter of President Bashar al-Assad and the Imam of Damascus's Ummayyad Mosque.<sup>50</sup> The assassination of Sheikh Mohammad Said Ramadan al-Buti removed one of the few remaining pillars of support for the Syrian president among Sunnis – the majority sect that has risen up against him. The explosion struck as al-Buti, was giving a religious lesson in the Eman mosque in the central Mazraa district of Damascus.<sup>51</sup>

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46 Telegraph, "Syria chemical weapons: finger pointed at jihadists", 23 March 2013.

47 Ibid.

48 Time, "Why Reports of Chemical Weapons Attacks in Syria May Never Be Confirmed", 12 April 2013.

49 Reuters, "Assad says Syria will wipe out mosque attackers", 22 March 2013.

50 AFP, "UN Council condemns Syria mosque attack", 22 March 2013.

51 BBC, "Top pro-regime cleric killed' in Syria blast", 22 March 2013.

## NORTH AMERICA

### USA

On 4 March, Hafiz Khan, 77, an elderly Muslim cleric was convicted of channeling approximately \$50,000 to the Pakistani Taliban and was responsible for attacks against the Pakistani police and military targets. He was found guilty of two conspiracy counts and two counts of providing material support to terrorists. Each charge carries a potential 15-year prison sentence. Khan testified saying that the money he sent overseas was for family, charity and his religious school (madrassa) in Pakistan's Swat Valley. Khan also said he repeatedly lied about harboring extremist views to obtain \$1 million from a man who turned out to be an FBI informant wearing a wire to record their talk. Prosecutors, however, said the purported \$1 million offer is never heard on any tapes and no other witnesses testified about its existence. The informant, identified in court papers as Mahmood Siddiqui, did not testify.<sup>52</sup> Prosecutors built their case around hundreds of FBI recordings of Khan's telephone conversations. In those calls, he praised Taliban attacks, including those against United States military personnel and the failed 2010 attempt to detonate a bomb in Times Square. He also discussed the thousands of dollars he was sending to Pakistan. Prosecutors also relied on bank records and a confidential informant.<sup>53</sup>

On 7 March, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, a senior Al-Qaeda spokesman and son-in-law of the late Osama Bin Laden, was arrested while being deported from Turkey to Kuwait under a scheme orchestrated by US authorities. He is believed to have spent most of the last decade in Iran. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without parole. His case is notable because he is only the second suspected Al-Qaeda militant known to be captured

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<sup>52</sup> AP, "South Florida imam found guilty of financially aiding Taliban", 4 March 2013.

<sup>53</sup> New York Times, "Miami Imam Sent Money to Terrorists, Jury Finds", 4 March 2013.

overseas and brought to the US for trial under the Obama administration. He pleaded not guilty at his hearing in federal court in Manhattan on 8 March.<sup>54</sup> He was charged with conspiring to kill Americans, rather than be killed by a CIA or military drone.<sup>55</sup>

On 29 March, Oytun Ayse Mihalik, 40, of La Palma, California was sentenced to five years in prison for wiring money to Pakistan to help fund terrorist attacks against US military personnel.<sup>56</sup> Mihalik, who is a Turkish national and permanent US resident, pleaded guilty in August 2012, to one count of providing material support to terrorists after sending three money orders over a month in late 2010 and early 2011. Authorities said she used a false name, "Cindy Palmer," to send the funds.<sup>57</sup> Mihalik was placed in federal custody since her arrest in August, after she attempted to board a flight to her native Turkey. Shortly after her arrest, she told the FBI that she believed the person in Pakistan was a member of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.<sup>58</sup> She faces being deported after completing her prison sentence.<sup>59</sup>

On 27 March, Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed, 38, was sentenced in Manhattan to 9 1/4 years in prison. He pleaded guilty in June 2012 to conspiring to provide material support to Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahedin and to conspiring to receive military-type training from the organization.<sup>60</sup> Ahmed was arrested in Nigeria in November 2009 and brought to Manhattan federal court to face US terrorism charges in March 2010. He is an Eritrean national and a permanent resident of Sweden.<sup>61</sup> The government said in court papers that Ahmed had admitted, under questioning by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that he had received

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54 LA Times, "U.S. arrests Osama bin Laden son-in-law on terrorism charges", 7 March 2013.

55 New York Times, "Bin Laden Relative Pleads Not Guilty in Terrorism Case", 8 March 2013.

56 AP, "CA Woman Gets Prison in Terrorism Funding Case", 29 March 2013.

57 LA Times, "O.C. woman sentenced to five years for sending funds to terrorists", 29 March 2013.

58 FBI, "Orange County Woman Sentenced to Five Years in Federal Prison for Providing Material Support to Terrorists by Sending Money to Pakistan to be Used in Attacks Against U.S. Forces Overseas", 29 March 2013.

59 AP, "CA Woman Gets Prison in Terrorism Funding Case", 29 March 2013.

60 Reuters, "Eritrean man gets 9 years in prison for aiding Somalia's al Shabaab", 27 March 2013.

61 AFP, "Swedish-based Somalia fighter sentenced in US", 27 March 2013.

bomb-making instructions from an Al-Shabab Al-Mujhideen explosives expert and had donated money to the group. He also admitted to owning an assault rifle and two grenades to be used in fighting on behalf of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedin. Ahmed will also be deported when he completes the sentence.<sup>62</sup>

## ASIA

### Afghanistan

On 26 March, eight suicide bombers stormed the headquarters of a special unit of the Afghan police in Jalalabad killing five officers and wounding four others. Six civilians were also wounded in the attack. Authorities said the attackers were armed with rocket-propelled grenades and light machineguns, sparking a three-hour battle with Afghan security forces.<sup>63</sup> The assault began around 0500 when a car bomb exploded near the entry gate of the compound. This explosion was followed by another car bomb inside the gate, which cleared the way for the insurgents to enter with suicide vests and weapons. Three of the bombers succeeded in blowing themselves up inside the compound. The remaining was shot before they could detonate their charges. It was unclear if any forces from the American-led coalition were at the compound at the time. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack coincided with the second day of US Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to Afghanistan.<sup>64</sup>

### China

On 27 March, 20 Uighurs were convicted on charges that included terrorism and separatism. They received sentences that ranged between five years in jail to life in prison in five

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62 New York Times, "In U.S. Court, a Familiar Argument Over Intentions in Joining a Terrorist Group", 27 March 2013.

63 Reuters, "Taliban suicide bombers kill five Afghan police as Kerry visits Kabul", 26 March 2013.

64 AP, "5 Police Officers Killed in Bomb Attack in Afghanistan", 26 March 2013.

separate cases in Kashgar and Bayingol provinces.<sup>65</sup> The militants were part of four cells guilty of spreading multimedia jihadist materials and promoting terrorism. It said one of the groups plotted to assassinate local law officers, and that another tested bombs.<sup>66</sup> Authorities said the militants had links to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement.<sup>67</sup>

## India

On 28 March, Manpreet Singh, 69, was arrested at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport upon his arrival from Sydney, Australia. A senior police officer said Singh had been charged more than a decade ago under India's Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act but fled the country when he was released on bail in May 1999. He faced multiple charges that included alleged involvement in dissident activities, masterminding a jailbreak and the attempted murder of a jail staff.<sup>68</sup> Indian authorities said Singh was a member of the All India Sikh Students Federation, which the Indian police claimed was a militant organization. Indian police said how Singh got a passport to leave the country was being investigated.<sup>69</sup>

## Pakistan

On 4 March, 48 people were killed and 200 wounded after a car bomb exploded in Karachi. Authorities said a car bomb was detonated outside a Shia mosque, just as locals were leaving after the evening's services. As rescuers gathered to the scene of the bombings, a second explosion targeted the rescue workers.<sup>70</sup> A senior police official said an estimated

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65 AP, "China imprisons 20 Uighurs in far west Xinjiang on terrorism, separatism charges", 27 March 2013.

66 CNN, "China sentenced 20 people in Xinjiang on charges of terrorist activities", 29 March 2013.

67 Reuters, "China jails 20 on jihad, separatism charges in restive Xinjiang", 27 March 2013.

68 Hindustan Times, "Proclaimed offender arrested after 22 years", 24 March 2013.

69 New Zealand Herald, "Leading Kiwi Sikh held on terrorism charges in India", 28 March 2013.

70 Guardian, "Karachi bomb is unlikely to prompt decisive action against militants", 4 March 2013.

100 kg (220 pounds) of explosives was planted the vehicle.<sup>71</sup> Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility for the bombings.<sup>72</sup>

On 19 March, authorities in Pakistan arrested Qari Abdul Hai, alias Asadullah, in Karachi as a result of a police raid. Hai, a former leader of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) was suspected of having a role in the 2002 murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Pearl, an American, was kidnapped in Karachi while researching a story on Islamist militants in the months after 9/11. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the al-Qaida militant who claimed responsibility for the 9/11 attacks, said he beheaded Pearl after his abduction.<sup>73</sup> It was reported that he was a “facilitator” who had close ties with other men involved in the kidnapping. Authorities had been tracking him for three weeks after receiving intelligence he was in Karachi. In 2003, Hai was arrested in Multan and held in connection with the death of six Shiites. He was later acquitted and continued to live freely in Punjab Province, where Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has its strongest roots. When he was arrested for the Shiite killings, he was also investigated for his role in the Pearl case, though he was not charged.<sup>74</sup>

On 21 March, 15 people were killed and 30 injured after a car bombing at the Jalozai refugee camp near Peshawar. The bomb exploded in a car parked near the administration office where refugees were lining up to get rations and new arrivals were being registered. It left a large crater.<sup>75</sup> Initial investigations revealed that the bomb was detonated by a timer and carried up to 35 kg of explosives and mortar bombs. Police suspected the motivation behind the attack may have been a response to the arrests of several Lashkar-e-Islam

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71 Telegraph, “At least 45 killed in Karachi bomb attack”, 4 March 2013.

72 Reuters, “Bomb at Shi'ite mosque kills 45 in Pakistan”, 3 March 2013.

73 Reuters, “Pakistan arrests suspect in murder of Daniel Pearl”, 19 March 2013.

74 New York Times, “Pakistan Arrests Militant Suspected in Daniel Pearl Killing”, 19 March 2013.

75 Express Tribune, “Heightening security fears: Terror strikes Jalozai refugee camp”, 22 March 2013.

militants several days earlier. According to authorities, attacks on refugee camps in Pakistan are extremely rare, although there have been concerns over the years that militants would try to infiltrate Jalojai and other camps. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>76</sup>

### Philippines

On 23 March, Warren Rodwell an Australian man kidnapped in the Philippines was released near Pagadian city in the southern Philippines. He was kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf militants in December 2011, and had last been shown alive in a video posted on social media websites in December 2012.<sup>77</sup> Rodwell is believed to have fought his kidnappers when he was initially taken and bloodstains found beside his house were believed to have been from an injury to his hand. Rodwell settled in Ipil in 2011 after working as a teacher in China before marrying Ms Gutang, whom he met on the internet.<sup>78</sup>

### Thailand

On 1 March, one soldier and five civilians were injured when a motorcycle bomb exploded at a market in Narathiwat. Several hours later in a separate attack, a car bomb containing 20 kg of explosives hidden inside a pickup truck detonated opposite Muang Narathiwat police station. There were no casualties and no groups claimed responsibility for the attacks. No group claimed responsibility.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> BBC, "Deadly car bomb hits Pakistan's Jalojai refugee camp", 21 March 2013.

<sup>77</sup> BBC, "Abu Sayyaf release Australian hostage Warren Rodwell", 23 March 2013.

<sup>78</sup> AAP, "Warren Rodwell released by Islamic militant captors in the Philippines", 24 March 2013.

<sup>79</sup> Bangkok Post, "Car bomb attack in Narathiwat", 1 March 2013.