



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

- On 1 February, a suicide bomber killed a security guard and injured one civilian outside the US embassy in Ankara, Turkey.
- On 3 February, a suicide car bombing at the provincial police headquarters in Kirkuk killed 36 people, including the chief of police and injured 105 others.
- On 3 February, Israeli authorities said they dismantled a Palestinian militant cell with ties to Islamic Jihad. The cell was allegedly plotting to kidnap an Israeli civilian or soldier for ransom.
- On 5 February, Bulgaria's Interior Minister implicated Hizballah as being responsible for the Burgas bombing attack on 18 July 2012.
- On 7 February, Mohamed Echaabi, a Moroccan citizen was arrested in Valencia, Spain on suspicion he was planning terror attacks in Spain and elsewhere in Europe.
- On 8 February, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives in Gao, Mali, the first since French-led troops began their operation on Islamist militants in January 2013
- On 16 February, gunmen from the Boko Haram splinter group Ansaru kidnapped seven foreign construction workers in Bauchi State, Nigeria.
- On 16 February, a bomb in Quetta, Pakistan killed 84 people and wounded 200 others. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility for the attack
- On 17 February, Bahrain's Interior Minister announced police had arrested eight people suspected of being part of a militant cell that was linked to Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon.
- On 19 February, a French family of seven were kidnapped by Boko Haram militants in northern Cameroon. They are still being held despite diplomatic efforts to free them.
- On 21 February, three militants from Birmingham, UK were found guilty at Woolwich Crown Court, London of being the ringleaders of an Al-Qaeda backed cell.
- On 21 February, Nigeria's State Security Service (SSS) announced that they arrested an alleged Iranian-backed terrorist cell targeting US and Israeli targets in Lagos, Nigeria.
- On 21 February, 83 people were killed and 200 injured, when a car bomb exploded next to the Ba'ath Party offices in Damascus, Syria.
- On 21 February, twin bombings in Hyderabad, India killed 17 people and injured 119 others. The Indian Mujahedeen were suspected of carrying out the attacks.
- On 22 February, four Somali immigrants were convicted in San Diego, USA of conspiring to channel money to Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahedin in Somalia.
- On 27 February, 17 police officers were poisoned and shot at blank range at a military base in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan by Taliban militants.



Europe

Bulgaria

On 5 February, Bulgaria's Interior Minister Tsvetan Tsvetanov implicated Hizballah as being responsible for the Burgas bombing attack on 18 July 2012. Though investigators did not release the names of the suspects, they identified the bomb maker as an Australian citizen and a second suspect as a male Canadian citizen, both of whom lived in Lebanon. Hizballah denied responsibility for the bombing.¹ Authorities believe that the conclusions of the investigation may open the way for the EU to join the USA in designating Hizballah a terrorist organization since there is now a clear connection to an attack on EU territory.²

France

On 5 February, four suspected Islamist militants were arrested near Paris, as part of an investigation into the recruitment of fighters for Al-Qaeda-linked forces in Africa's Sahel. Authorities said the raid was ordered by the country's domestic intelligence agency, the DCRI, under the authority of anti-terrorism judge Marc Trevidic.³ The men had been under surveillance for several months although authorities did not specify what led them to make the arrests at this specific time.⁴ One of the men was of Malian descent, one was French-Algerian, and two were French. The suspects were between the ages of 22-38 years old.⁵ The men allegedly had links to a French citizen identified as Cédric Lobo, 27, who was arrested in Niger in August 2012. He was arrested as he attempted to purchase a four-wheel drive vehicle using a false driver's license. Authorities believe he was intending to travel to Timbuktu to join Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.⁶ Lobo is being held in France awaiting trial on terrorism charges.⁷

Norway

On 13 February, police arrested a man in Oslo for threatening to attack government buildings in the city.⁸ Oslo Deputy Police Chief, Roger Andresen, did not identify the suspect

¹ AP, "Bulgaria says Hezbollah linked to bus attack that killed 5 Israelis", 5 February 2013.

² Jerusalem Post, "Bulgaria: Hezbollah behind Burgas attack", 5 February 2013.

³ Reuters, "France arrests suspected Islamist militants in Mali rebels probe", 5 February 2013.

⁴ New York Times, "France Arrests 4 It Says Planned to Aid or Join Militants", 5 February 2013.

⁵ New York Times, "France Arrests 4 It Says Planned to Aid or Join Militants", 5 February 2013.

⁶ France 24, "French police arrest 'Islamic extremists' near Paris", 5 February 2013.

⁷ New York Times, "France Arrests 4 It Says Planned to Aid or Join Militants", 5 February 2013.

⁸ EuroNews, "Norwegian police arrest terror suspect", 13 February 2013.



but said he was a Norwegian in his 20s and was known to the authorities. It was reported in local media that he had connections to the far-right, anti-Muslim Norwegian Defense League. Police found a bullet-proof vest and a gas pistol in the apartment where the man was arrested.⁹

Spain

On 7 February, Mohamed Echaabi, a Moroccan citizen was arrested in Valencia on suspicion he was planning terror attacks in Spain and elsewhere in Europe. The Spanish Interior Ministry said that Echaabi had attempted to acquire firearms and explosives with the purpose of carrying out an attack.¹⁰ They also said in January 2011, Echaabi traveled from Spain to the Gaza Strip with the intent of carrying out a suicide mission against Israeli targets.¹¹ He was described by police as a lone wolf who had radicalized through the Internet and was recruited by terrorist networks. He had a similar profile to that of Mohamed Merah, the perpetrator of the March 2012 attacks in Toulouse, France.¹²

United Kingdom

On 8 February, Noel Noonan and Thomas McMahon were arrested after police seized rocket launchers and explosives during an investigation into dissident republican terrorism in County Tipperary, Northern Ireland. A third man arrested during the same operation was released without charge. On 9 February, the men appeared at the Special Criminal Court in Dublin and were charged with membership to an unlawful paramilitary organization.¹³

On 21 February, Irfan Naseer, 31; Irfan Khalid, 27; and Ashik Ali, 27, from Birmingham, were found guilty at Woolwich Crown Court of being the ringleaders of an Al-Qaeda backed cell. The men planned to detonate to eight bombs in rucksacks, using timers to ignite the charges and intended to cause greater damage than then 7 July 2005 attacks in London. The men were secretly recorded by MI5 and police leading to their arrest in September 2011 amid fears an attack was imminent. All three men were found guilty of 12 counts of preparing for

⁹ AP, "Norwegian police arrest man after bomb threat on Parliament; part of central Oslo shut down", 13 February 2013.

¹⁰ AFP, "Spain arrests man suspected of Islamist attack plots", 8 February 2013.

¹¹ La Moncloa, "Spanish National Police arrest alleged Islamic terrorist, Mohamed Echaabi, in Valencia", 8 February 2013.

¹² CNN, "Moroccan suspected of being terrorist arrested in Spain", 8 February 2013.

¹³ BBC, "Two men in court over dissident republican terrorism", 9 February 2013.



acts of terrorism between December 2010 and their arrest in September 2011.¹⁴ They were also guilty of raising money for terrorism and recruiting others for a terror act. The cell raised more than £20,000 by claiming to be collecting for Muslim Aid to fund their atrocity but lost large parts of it after investing it in the foreign exchange markets. Rahin Ahmed, 28, the group's main fundraiser who lost the money had pleaded guilty at an earlier date to fundraising and helping other travel to Pakistan for terror training.¹⁵ Naseer and Khalid were also convicted of traveling to Pakistan to attend terrorist training camps, where they made martyrdom videos to be released by Al-Qaeda after they carried out their suicide missions. Authorities said that when the men returned to Birmingham in the summer of 2011 they shared their knowledge with Ashik Ali. He rented a council flat which became a makeshift bomb factory and the center of the terror plot. Naseer, a pharmacy graduate, had planned to extract ammonium nitrate from sports injury cold packs using a recipe which experts told the court could have created a viable device.¹⁶ Naseer had sketched out a formula for an explosive that was only partially destroyed and was seized by police officers.¹⁷ Although no target was decided, the men told police they had planned to attack soldiers but they also discussed crowded places in Birmingham center. Four other men, Naweed Ali, 24; Ishaq Hussain, 20; Khobaib Hussain, 20; and Shahid Khan, 20, pleaded guilty to traveling to Pakistan in August 2011 for terrorist training. Mujahid Hussain, 21, who was heavily involved in raising money for terrorism, pleaded guilty to a charge of fundraising. The militants are due to be sentenced in April or May 2013 and are likely to receive life sentences.¹⁸

AFRICA

Cameroon

On 19 February, French President Francois Hollande confirmed that a French family of seven, including four children aged between five and 12 years-old were kidnapped by militants on motorcycles near Dabanga, northern Cameroon by suspected Boko Haram militants.¹⁹ Following the abduction, the French government said it believed the hostages were taken

¹⁴ BBC, "Birmingham men guilty of mass bomb plot", 21 February 2013.

¹⁵ Telegraph, "Suicide bomb gang guilty of plotting 'worst ever terror attack in Britain'", 21 February 2013.

¹⁶ Guardian, "Three would-be suicide bombers found guilty of terror plot", 21 February 2013.

¹⁷ Independent, "Guilty: the ringleaders who plotted a terror spectacular to rival 9/11", 21 February 2013

¹⁸ BBC, "French children kidnapped in Cameroon 'shown in video'", 26 February 2013.

¹⁹ AP, "French family of 7 kidnapped in Cameroon, including 4 children", 19 February 2013.



across the border into Nigeria.²⁰ On 21 February, it was reported in the media that the Cameroon military had found the family safe and well in an abandoned house in Dikwa, Nigeria, approximately 100 km from the border with Cameroon. However, the French foreign ministry said the reports were untrue. Nigerian defence spokesman Mohammed Yerima also said reports they had been freed were false.²¹ On 26 February, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the kidnapping in a video released on YouTube. The video showed an armed man reading a statement in front of two men, a woman and four children. The man claimed to be a member of Boko Haram and demanded the release of prisoners in Cameroon and Nigeria. The video was fronted by an Arabic-speaking man that authorities said was not a native Arabic speaker and his style of reading and the way the script was written suggested he received some kind of Arabic religious education. The message, delivered in Arabic, contained many references to jihad and religious discourse. The banner used as the backdrop featured guns and an Islamic slogan which reads "There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Prophet of God". Authorities said similar backdrops had been used by other jihadist groups but this featured an Arabic font usually found in North Africa. The family have not yet been released despite diplomatic efforts to free them.²²

Mali

On 8 February, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives in Gao, the first suicide attack since French-led troops began their operation on Islamist militants in January 2013. Authorities said the attacker approached a group of soldiers on a motorbike before detonating an explosive belt, injuring one of them. The Al-Qaeda-linked Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) claimed responsibility for the attack.²³

On 22 February, five people were killed and two wounded in a car bomb attack.²⁴ Authorities said the car bomb exploded near a camp housing French and Chadian troops in the city of Kidal. The vehicle, apparently driven by a suicide bomber, was targeting the camp but exploded on before it reached the base, killing the driver. The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁵

²⁰ New York Times, "French Family Kidnapped in Cameroon", 19 February 2013.

²¹ AFP, "France denies kidnapped family freed in Cameroon", 21 February 2013.

²² BBC, "French children kidnapped in Cameroon 'shown in video'", 26 February 2013.

²³ BBC, "Mali conflict: 'First suicide bombing' in Gao", 8 February 2013.

²⁴ Reuters, "Five killed in Islamist car bomb attacks in north Mali", 22 February 2013.

²⁵ AFP, "Rebels claim Mali car bomb, troops battle Islamists", 22 February 2013.



Nigeria

On 16 February, gunmen kidnapped seven foreign construction workers, including a Briton, an Italian, a Greek, and four Lebanese in Jama'are, Bauchi State. Police said that the gunmen arrived in the town and first attacked a local prison, burning two police trucks. The militants then targeted a camp for workers of the Lebanese construction company Setraco who were in the area building a road. The gunmen, who were armed with explosives, shot dead a guard at the camp before kidnapping the foreign workers.²⁶ A witness said the gunmen left the Nigerian household staff members at the residence unharmed, while seizing the foreigners, showing the attack was planned and they clearly knew who they wanted to target.²⁷ On 18 February, Ansaru, a Boko Haram splinter group, claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁸ It was reported on 10 March 2013 that the hostages had been killed.

On 21 February, Nigeria's State Security Service (SSS) announced that in December 2012, they arrested an alleged Iranian-backed terrorist cell targeting US and Israeli targets in Lagos.²⁹ The cell was suspected of gathering intelligence about locations of the offices of USAID, Chabad House in Lagos, and the offices of the Israeli container shipping company ZIM. They were also allegedly planning to assassinate a former military ruler.³⁰ Nigerian authorities identified the cell's leader as Abdullahi Berende, 50, a Shi'ite Muslim Nigerian citizen, who had been under surveillance for six months due to suspicious visits to Iran. Authorities claimed that Berende was recruited by Iranian militants when he studied as an Islamic scholar in Iran in 2006. In 2011, he allegedly returned to Iran for weapons and espionage training. Berende also received \$30,000 in cash to fund the group's planned operations.³¹ Berende admitted during interrogation that he travelled to Iran on several occasions, in order to meet with Iranians with links to global terrorist networks. He said the last time he met his Iranian handlers was in April 2012 in Dubai, where he discussed collecting information about the location of the ZIM offices and Chabad house in Lagos. Berende admitted his handlers insisted he used code names in all his communications with them. He was told to use the word "uncle" to indicate Israeli targets and the word "aunt" for American ones. He was also directed to set up a small business in Lagos that would be used

²⁶ AP, "Nigerian police say 7 foreigners kidnapped", 17 February 2013.

²⁷ AP via New York Times, "Extremist Group in Nigeria Says It Killed 7 Foreign Hostages", 9 March 2013.

²⁸ Reuters, "Gunmen kidnap seven foreigners in north Nigeria", 17 February 2013.

²⁹ Reuters, "Nigeria says arrests Iran-linked cell targeting U.S., Israel", 21 February 2013.

³⁰ Haaretz, "Nigeria arrests Iranian terror cell planning attacks on Israeli, U.S. targets", 20 February 2013.

³¹ AP, "Nigeria busts terror cell plotting attack on Israelis", 20 February 2013.



as a front for the operations. Berende said that the Iranians were motivated to attack Israeli targets in Lagos as they suspected the city was home to an Israeli intelligence base being used to collect information on Iran.³² The other cell members were identified as Sulaiman Saka and Saheed Adewumi. A fourth alleged member, Benyamin Yosuf, escaped.³³ Iran denied all charges that it had trained and funded the militant cell.³⁴

Somalia

On 28 February, a court in Puntland passed a death sentence in absentia against Ahmed Abdi Godane alias "Abu Zubeir", the leader of Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahedeen for his role in masterminding the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Hajji Abdirahman in Bosasso in December 2012.³⁵ Eleven other militants were also sentenced to death by firing squad for their role in the murder. Only six of the 12 convicted were present at the court hearing. The rest, including Godane, were sentenced in absentia.³⁶

MIDDLE EAST

Bahrain

On 14 February, a bomb containing 2kg of explosives, wires and a mobile phone bomb was found on the Saudi-Bahraini causeway. The device was defused by the anti-terrorist explosive team. Authorities believe the intended target was tourists coming from Saudi Arabia.³⁷ Several days later the on 17 February, Bahrain's Interior Minister, Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, announced police had arrested eight people suspected of being part of a militant cell that was linked to Iran, Iraq and Lebanon. The cell allegedly received funding and weapons and explosives training.³⁸ It was not clear whether the two incidents were linked. The Interior Ministry said the operation was a joint Bahrain-Oman intelligence operation and said the cell was masterminded by an Iranian Revolutionary Guards member codenamed Abu Nasser, who it says supplied the group with \$80,000 to gather information,

³² UPI, "Alleged terror cell arrested in Nigeria", 21 February 2013.

³³ Haaretz, "Nigeria arrests Iranian terror cell planning attacks on Israeli, U.S. targets", 20 February 2013.

³⁴ Reuters, "Iran denies allegations of organising spy cell in Nigeria", 22 February 2013.

³⁵ AllAfrica.com, "Somalia:Puntland Court Sentences Al Shabaab Chief Godane and 11 Others to Death", 28 February 2013.

³⁶ Sabahi, "Puntland court sentences 12 al-Shabaab members to death", 28 February 2013.

³⁷ Reuters, "Bahrain says arrests eight on "terror-related" charges", 17 February 2013.

³⁸ Nahrenet, "Bahrain Says it Arrested Alleged Terror Cell Tied to Iran, Lebanon", 17 February 2013.



recruit volunteers and find places to store weapons in Bahrain. Authorities said they are searching for four more suspects believed to have links to the cell.³⁹

Iraq

On 3 February, a suicide car bombing at the provincial police headquarters in Kirkuk killed 36 people and injured 105 others, including the chief of police. Authorities said the suicide bomber drove his explosive-laden car into the entrance of the police compound. Two suicide bombers wearing explosive vests and armed with AK-47 assault rifles and hand grenades attempted to penetrate the security walls, but the guards opened fire. Authorities said the bomber triggered the explosion near a side entrance to the police building, demolishing part of a government office nearby.⁴⁰ Three additional attackers were killed as they attempted to throw grenades at security forces following the bombing.⁴¹ Police said that they believe the motivation for the attack was to take control of the police compound and target the jail of the headquarters which holds dozens of detainees, some of whom are senior Al-Qaeda members.⁴²

On 8 February, five car bombs killed 39 people in Shi'ite areas of Iraq. Two car bombs killed 17 and injured 45 others at a bird market in Baghdad. Two similar attacks killed 16 people and wounded 44 others in Shomali, 70 km south of Hilla. An explosion outside Karbala killed five people and injured 16 others, while an Iraqi soldier was wounded by sniper fire in Fallujah. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda in Iraq.⁴³

On 17 February, 37 people were killed and 100 others injured when a series of car bombs exploded in Baghdad. The attack began with the detonation of a parked car loaded with explosives in Sadr City. Shortly after, two other parked cars exploded in the same neighborhood. Simultaneous explosions were then reported in southeastern Baghdad neighborhood of Al-Amin. Authorities said bombs were detonated at an open-air market in Husseiniya and in the Kamaliya area, which is located in Baghdad's eastern suburbs. Police said they had carried out controlled explosions of two other car bombs in Husseiniya and

³⁹ BBC, "Iran 'set up Bahrain militant cell'", 20 February 2013.

⁴⁰ Reuters, "Attackers kill 33 at police HQ in disputed Iraqi city", 3 February 2013.

⁴¹ BBC, "Iraq violence: 'Many dead' in Kirkuk police HQ attack", 3 February 2013.

⁴² Xinhua, "Deadly suicide bomb attacks rock Iraq's Kirkuk", 3 February 2013.

⁴³ Reuters, "Car bombs in Shi'ite areas of Iraq kill 34", 8 February 2013.



Habibiya. Finally, a car bomb exploded near street vendors and a police car in Karradah.⁴⁴ No group claimed responsibility for the attacks but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda in Iraq.⁴⁵

Israel and the West Bank

On 3 February, after a gag order was released, Israeli authorities said they foiled a plot by a Palestinian militant cell to kidnap for ransom an Israeli civilian or IDF soldier. The militants were arrested whilst in a car near Kfar Saba in December 2012. Police seized ropes, scotch tape, knitted hats, a utility knife and a fake gun from the car. The cell-members were identified as; Sayd Manjad Dib Jasser, 19; Taufik Hader Taufic Ajbarieh, 18, from Jenin; and Yussef Hasan Yussef Warda, 34, from Qalansawe. A fourth suspect identified as Anes Jabareen, 18, an Israeli from Umm al-Fahm, was also indicted together with Warda for charges of attempted kidnapping for ransom, contacting a foreign agent and assisting an illegal association. Jabareen said he was aware of the cell members plot, but provided them shelter in his home.⁴⁶ During interrogation Warda, Jasser and Ajbarieh confessed that for two days they made several attempts to abduct Israeli soldiers and citizens from public transport stations around central Israel, but failed since no one consented to get in their car.⁴⁷ Following their initial failures, the suspects attempted to kidnap people who were returning from New Year's Eve celebrations on the assumption they had been drinking alcohol so it would be easier to kidnap them. Failing again, the three suspects spent the night prior to their arrest at the Eyal Junction. They had planned to take the abducted Israeli to Jenin using Warda's Israeli citizen ID to pass through the road-blocks and conduct the ransom negotiations from there. Israeli authorities said the suspects were acting upon instructions from two Islamic Jihad operatives, one of whom is a prisoner in an Israeli jail. The other was identified as Majbdi, the brother of one of the two Palestinian suspects. Eight other suspects from the Jenin area were also arrested on charges of failing to report the abduction plot.⁴⁸

On 28 February, a Grad rocket fired from the Gaza Strip landed on the outskirts of Ashkelon. There were no casualties however this was the first rocket from Gaza to hit Israel in the three months since a cease-fire agreement ended Operation Pillar of Defense in November

⁴⁴ AP, "Series of bombings in Baghdad area kill dozens", 17 February 2013.

⁴⁵ Reuters, "Blasts hit Shi'ite districts in Baghdad, killing 26", 26 February 2013.

⁴⁶ Ynet, "Terrorist cell plotting to kidnap Israelis nabbed", 3 February 2013.

⁴⁷ Jerusalem Post, "Police nab terror cell plotting to kidnap Israelis", 3 February 2013.

⁴⁸ Haaretz, "Shin Bet nabs Islamic Jihad cell plotting to kidnap Israelis", 3 February 2013.



2012. Israeli authorities said the rocket was an upgraded Fajr-5 missile with a range of 70 km.⁴⁹ The Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack and said in a statement that it was in response to the death of Arafat Jaradat, a Palestinian prisoner who died in an Israeli Jail on 23 February. Israel authorities said as a response to the rocket attack, Israel temporarily closed its border crossings with Gaza to goods and people, allowing only medical and humanitarian cases through.⁵⁰

Syria

On 21 February, 83 people were killed and 200 injured, when a car bomb exploded next to the Ba'ath Party offices in Damascus. The majority of the casualties were civilians. Police and witnesses said the explosion occurred at a security checkpoint between the Russian embassy and the Ba'ath Party central headquarters.⁵¹ It was also reported that two mortars were fired at the military headquarters in Damascus shortly after the car bomb detonated and two other bombs exploded in the city. In addition, three bombs exploded in the suburb of Barzeh killing 22 people and injuring 50 others.⁵² No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the Al-Nusra Front to Protect the Levant group who had previously carried out similar attacks.⁵³

Turkey

On 1 February, a suicide bomber killed a security guard outside the US embassy in Ankara. A journalist was injured in the attack.⁵⁴ US officials said the bomber first attempted to access the embassy from the rear side of the embassy but then went to the checkpoint on the building's perimeter, where he detonated six kilos of TNT explosives on a walkway used by embassy employees and their guests.⁵⁵ Authorities said the bomb contained an electronic detonator. The force of the explosion damaged nearby buildings where many other state institutions and embassies are also located.⁵⁶ The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) group claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was in response to

⁴⁹ Times of Israel, "After months of calm, rocket slams into Ashkelon", 28 February 2013.

⁵⁰ New York Times, "Israel Struck by Rocket From Gaza After a Death", 28 February 2013.

⁵¹ VOA, "Death Toll Rises in Damascus Blasts", 22 February 2013.

⁵² BBC, "Syria conflict: Many dead in huge Damascus bombing", 21 February 2013.

⁵³ Reuters, "Car bomb kills over 50 near Damascus ruling party office", 21 February 2013..

⁵⁴ CNN, "Guard killed, journalist hurt in suicide bombing at U.S. Embassy in Turkey", 2 February 2013.

⁵⁵ AFP, "Two killed in blast outside US embassy in Ankara: report", 1 February 2013.

⁵⁶ Reuters, "Suicide bomber kills guard at U.S. embassy in Turkey", 1 February 2013.



NATO's recent deployment of MIM-104 Patriot missiles along the Turkish-Syrian border.⁵⁷ The DHKP-C is designated a terrorist organization in the US and Europe.⁵⁸ Turkish authorities identified the suicide bomber as Ecevit Sanli, 40, alias Alisan Sanli. He was a convicted terrorist, linked to the DHKP-C, who had twice attacked government facilities in Istanbul. It was reported in the local media that Sanli had been released from prison in Germany under an amnesty program. He returned to Turkey illegally several days before carrying out the attack. Police also said they had arrested three other people suspected of assisting Sanli in the attack. They also seized a handgun linked to the group.⁵⁹

On 28 February, Turkish police arrested 11 people suspected of links to Al-Qaeda. Police raided nine houses in Tekirdag and two others in Istanbul. Authorities said they seized 25 kilograms of plastic explosives and diagrams and photographs of the US Consulate, a synagogue and a church in Istanbul.⁶⁰ Following the arrests, the US Embassy in Ankara issued a warning for all Americans in Turkey to be more aware of their personal safety. However, the embassy denied claims that the arrested terrorists had actual plans to attack specific sites in Istanbul.⁶¹

NORTH AMERICA

USA

On 7 February, Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis, 21, pleaded guilty to attempting to detonate what he believed to be a 453- kilogram bomb at the New York Federal Reserve Bank in lower Manhattan's financial district.⁶² Nafis was arrested on 17 October 2012 as a result of an FBI sting operation and charged with attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction and attempting to provide material support to Al-Qaeda. If convicted, he faces a sentence of 30 years to life.⁶³

⁵⁷ BBC, "DHKP-C group claims US embassy suicide blast in Ankara", 2 February 2013.

⁵⁸ Hurriyet Daily, "DHKP/C claims responsibility for the attack on U.S. Embassy", 2 February 2013.

⁵⁹ New York Times, "Marxists Claim Bombing of U.S. Embassy in Turkey", 2 February 2013.

⁶⁰ AP, "Report: 11 Al-Qaida Suspects Detained in Turkey", 28 February 2013.

⁶¹ Todays Zaman, "Police arrest al-Qaeda members with US Consulate building plan, explosives", 28 February 2013.

⁶² FBI, "New York Man Pleads Guilty to Attempting to Bomb New York Federal Reserve Bank in Lower Manhattan", 7 February 2013.

⁶³ AP, "New York Federal Reserve Bomb Plot: Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis To Plead Guilty", 7 February 2013.



On 8 February, Matthew Aaron Llaneza, 28, was arrested as he attempted to detonate, what he believed was a car bomb, outside a branch of the Bank of America in Oakland, California. The arrest was the culmination of an FBI sting operation and Llaneza was charged with attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction. The FBI said that Llaneza told their agent that his stated goal of the attack was to trigger “a governmental crackdown, which he expected would trigger a right-wing counter-response against the government followed by, he hoped, civil war”.⁶⁴ He had previously been imprisoned for possessing an AK-47 rifle but was released in November 2011. The FBI said in an affidavit, that an undercover FBI agent first met Llaneza on 30 November 2012, under the auspices that he was a Taliban operative. Llaneza proposed structuring his attack to make it appear that an "umbrella organization for a loose collection of anti-government militias and their sympathizers" was behind the attack. Llaneza told the agent that he intended to travel to Afghanistan to train with the Taliban. Initially, he was planning to attack the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco but decided to attack the Bank of America branch in Oakland instead as there was less security obstacles there. He worked with the undercover agent to develop a plan to construct a car bomb. Authorities said that the FBI agent provided the SUV that Llaneza would use for the car bomb and on 26 January 2013, they loaded 12 five-gallon buckets containing chemicals obtained and prepared by the FBI to simulate an explosive mixture into the back of the vehicle. Authorities said Llaneza also purchased two cell-phones to use as trigger devices and gave them to the undercover agent. In the early morning hours of the 8 February, Llaneza allegedly drove the SUV to the Oakland bank before walking to meet the undercover agent. He was arrested after he allegedly placed two calls he believed would set off the trigger device attached to the fake car bomb.⁶⁵ If convicted he faced a maximum sentence of life in prison.⁶⁶

On 22 February, four Somali immigrants were convicted in San Diego of conspiring to channel money to Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahedin in Somalia. The men coordinated fundraising efforts and sent approximately \$9,000 to the organization between 2007 and 2008.⁶⁷ Mohamed Mohamud, 40, used his connections as a popular imam at a mosque in San Diego's City Heights neighborhood to raise money for the group. The other defendants were

⁶⁴ US state dept, “Federal Agents Arrest Man After He Attempts To Bomb Bank In Oakland”, 8 February 2013.

⁶⁵ AP, "Matthew Aaron Llaneza Charged In Oakland Car Bomb FBI Terror Sting", 8 February 2013. US state dept, Federal Agents Arrest Man After He Attempts To Bomb Bank In Oakland, 8 February 2013.

⁶⁶ US state dept, Federal Agents Arrest Man After He Attempts To Bomb Bank In Oakland, 8 February 2013.

⁶⁷ Reuters, "Four Somali immigrants convicted of supporting militants", 22 February 2013.



two San Diego taxi drivers, Basaaly Saeed Moalin, 36, and Issa Doreh, 56, and Ahmed Nasir Taalil Mohamud,⁶⁷ whose financial transfer business Shidaal Express was used to route the money. Moalin, Doreh and Mohamed Mohamud were convicted of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization and several counts of conspiracy. Nasir Mohamud was convicted of conspiracy and money laundering. Sentencing was scheduled for 16 May 2013.⁶⁸

On 26 February, the US Department of State labeled the Commander Nazir Group (CNG) and its sub-commander Malang Wazir as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. As a result of the designation, any assets they hold in the US will be blocked and all Americans citizens are prohibited from conducting business with them. Authorities said that since 2006, CNG has run training camps, dispatched suicide bombers, provided safe haven for Al-Qaeda fighters, and conducted cross-border operations in Afghanistan against the US and its allies. In addition to its attacks against international forces in Afghanistan, CNG is also responsible for assassinations and intimidation operations against civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan. CNG leader Commander Nazir died in early-January 2013, but the group has since chosen a new leader, and in a statement vowed to continue the group's activities, including supporting Al-Qaeda and conducting attacks in Afghanistan. In the same statement, Malang was named as a part of CNG's senior leadership. Malang has overseen training centers and has been known to send fighters to Afghanistan to support the Taliban and has claimed responsibility for several attacks in Pakistan. In May 2011, CNG broke a ceasefire agreement and attacked a Pakistani army camp in Wana, Pakistan, with missiles and rockets.⁶⁹ The US Department of State also nominated Iyad ag Ghali, leader of Ansar al-Dine (AAD), an organization operating in Mali which has close ties to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. As a result of the designation, all property subject to US authority in which Ghali has any interest is blocked and US persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with him or to his benefit.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ AP, "Jury convicts 4 Somali immigrants of terror support", 22 February 2013.

⁶⁹ US DEPT.OF STATE, "Terrorist Designations of the Commander Nazir Group and Malang Wazir", 26 February 2013.

⁷⁰ US DEPT.OF STATE, "Terrorist Designations of Iyad ag Ghali", 26 February 2013.



ASIA

Afghanistan

On 27 February, Taliban militants killed 17 Afghan police officers at a base in Ghazni province during an overnight infiltration attack. The militants, disguised as police officers, poisoned the dinner food of the other officers and then proceeded to shoot them at close range. Authorities said they then stole their weapons and fled after setting a police vehicle on fire. General Zahid said that 10 of the victims were Afghan Local Police officers who had finished their training, and that the other seven were recruits who had been undergoing training.⁷¹ Authorities arrested two policemen, described as Taliban infiltrators who had carried out the attack.⁷² Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack.⁷³

India

On 21 February, a twin bombing in Hyderabad killed 17 people and injured 119 others.⁷⁴ Authorities said attacks were planned and targeted crowded areas to cause maximum damage. The bombs exploded within about 150 yards of each other near a crowded bus stop in the neighbourhood of Dilsukh Nagar, an area filled with shops, restaurants, theatres and a large produce market. A senior police officer said that iron nails were found at both sites. India's home minister said bombs had been planted on bicycles 150 yards apart near a crowded fruit market.⁷⁵ The Indian government said that it had received intelligence indicating an attack was planned, and informed local police in several cities, among them Hyderabad, two days prior to the attack.⁷⁶ It was reported in the media that the arrest of four terrorists in October 2012 revealed that one of them had done "reconnaissance" of the same Hyderabad neighbourhood that was targeted.⁷⁷ No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities suspected Indian Mujahedeen due to the use of detonators and timers, the pattern of the bombings and the fact that bombs were placed on bicycles which is a modus operandi used by the groups in past attacks.⁷⁸ Both the devices were packed with ammonium nitrate and shrapnel with a timer mechanism, which has been used in

⁷¹ New York Times, "20 Afghan Police Officers Killed in 2 Attacks, Including a Mass Poisoning", 27 February 2013

⁷² Al-Jazeera, "Afghans killed in Taliban 'poison attack'", 27 February 2013.

⁷³ AP, "Taliban kill 17 at Afghan police checkpoint", 27 February 2013

⁷⁴ BBC, "India's Hyderabad hit by two explosions", 21 February 2013.

⁷⁵ The Hindu, "13 killed, 83 injured as twin blasts rock Hyderabad", 21 February 2013.

⁷⁶ CSM, "Hyderabad: Indian government warned of impending terrorist attack", 22 February 2013.

⁷⁷ New York Times, "Warning Signs Seen Ahead of India Bombings", 22 February 2013.

⁷⁸ CSM, "Hyderabad: Indian government warned of impending terrorist attack", 22 February 2013.



previous attacks by the group. The use of bicycles to strap bombs has also been an IM trademark since November 2007 when they attacked courts in UP. Both bombs were designed to ensure that the impact of explosions was concentrated on one side: again a stock in trade for IM which has used boat-shaped devices earlier in order to maximize casualties.⁷⁹

Malaysia

On 9 February, a Malaysian court charged two people with inciting terrorism in Syria after Amnesty International urged authorities to try or release them instead of detaining them under a new security law, known as the Security Offences Special Measures Act (SOSMA).⁸⁰ Yazid Sufaat, 49, was charged with inciting or promoting the commission of terrorist acts. If convicted, he faces a 30 year sentence. He was previously detained under the Internal Security Act in 2001-2008. Yazid, a US-trained biochemist is wanted by US authorities and is accused of having links to one of the 9/11 bombers. His wife's religious teacher, Halimah Hussein, 52, was charged with aiding and abetting Yazid to promote the commission of terrorist acts at a house in Ampang between August and October 2012.⁸¹ A third man, identified as Hilmi Hasim remained in police custody.⁸²

Pakistan

On 1 February, Taliban militants armed with heavy machine guns, attacked an army checkpoint in Serai Naurang, killing 35 people, including 10 civilians.⁸³ Authorities said 12 militants were killed in the attack, some of them suicide bombers. Eight people were wounded. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and said it was in retaliation for the death of Faisal Khan and Toofani, two Taliban commanders in a drone strike in January 2013. The Taliban said four of the attackers were suicide bombers.⁸⁴

On 1 February, a suicide bomber killed 26 people and injured 56 others in Hangu. Authorities said the bomber, who arrived by motorbike, targeted worshippers emerging from the Masjid Purdil mosque and the Masjid Faizullah mosque after Friday prayers.⁸⁵ Authorities said the

⁷⁹ Times of India, "Indian Mujahideen hand becomes clearer in Hyderabad blasts", 23 February 2013.

⁸⁰ Daily Times, "Malaysia charges duo with terrorism in test case", 9 February 2013.

⁸¹ Straits Times, "Detention of trio under Security Offences Act has global impact", 9 February 2013.

⁸² Daily Times, "Malaysia charges duo with terrorism in test case", 9 February 2013.

⁸³ New York Times, "Taliban Militants Attack Pakistani Base", 2 February 2013.

⁸⁴ BBC, "Northwest Pakistan Taliban attack kills 23", 2 February 2013.

⁸⁵ Central Asia Online, "Hangu mosque suicide bombing kills at least 26", 1 February 2013.



bomber's vest contained 6-7kg of explosives embedded and contained pellets to maximize the damage. Police said they recovered the trigger and the bomber's head.⁸⁶ The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and said that the attack was in revenge for the killing of Mufti Abdul Majeed Deenpuri, 60, a Sunni cleric. He was shot in Karachi, setting off fears of reprisals against Shi'ites.⁸⁷

On 16 February, a bomb in Quetta killed 84 people and wounded 200 others. The improvised explosive device, which was attached to a vehicle outside a vegetable market targeted Pakistan's minority Shi'ite population.⁸⁸ Police said the bomb contained approximately 800 to 1,000 kilograms of explosives and it had been planted in a water tank which was towed to the market by a tractor. The explosion caused a nearby two-story building to collapse and severely damaged shops, vehicles and other buildings near the market.⁸⁹ Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility for the attack.⁹⁰ Police detained 170 suspects in connection with the attack and during the operation four militants, including the alleged bomb-maker were killed. Weapons, ammunition and bomb-making material were also seized by security officials.⁹¹ Amongst those arrested was Malik Ishaq, leader of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). Authorities said they arrested him on 22 February at his home in Rahim Yar Khan.⁹² Ishaq spent a decade in jail had been formally charged with any offence. Under public order laws, suspects can be held in Pakistan for three months without any charge.⁹³

Philippines

On 3 February, Abu Sayyaf militants released Ramel Vela and Roland Letriro, two Filipino members of a TV crew, who were kidnapped in June 2012. The men were captured as they set out to interview members of the group. Authorities said that Jordanian Abdulla Atyani, captured along with Vela and Letriro is believed to still be in captivity.⁹⁴ Senior Superintendent Renato Gumban, chief of the PNP Anti-Kidnapping Group, said Atyani was alive and had communicated with his family in Dubai in December 2012. His captors last

⁸⁶ Reuters, "Suicide bomb kills 22 near mosques in northwest Pakistan", 1 February 2013.

⁸⁷ NYTimes, "Suicide Attack at Market in Northwest Pakistan Kills at Least 21", 1 February 2013.

⁸⁸ Al Jazeera, "Scores dead in Pakistan sectarian attack", 17 February 2012.

⁸⁹ BNO, "Bomb blast kills 83, injures nearly 200 at market in southwest Pakistan", 16 February 2013.

⁹⁰ Al Jazeera, "Scores dead in Pakistan sectarian attack", 17 February 2012.

⁹¹ BBC, "Quetta anti-Shia bombing: Pakistan police detain '170'", 19 February 2013.

⁹² DAWN, "LJ leader Malik Ishaq detained in Rahim Yar Khan", 22 February 2013.

⁹³ ABC, "Terror Leader Arrested in Pakistan", 22 February 2013.

⁹⁴ BBC, "Abu Sayyaf militants release two hostages in Philippines", 3 February 2013.



communicated with Atyani's family in January 2013. Gumban said the last ransom demand for Atyani was \$3 million. It was reported in the media on 7 February that he was also freed but these reports were not confirmed by any officials.⁹⁵ Authorities said that the militants demanded 130 million pesos (\$3.1 million) for the release of the men. Ransom was reportedly paid but authorities could not confirm the report or if the full amount was paid. Authorities said the men had been held in the jungles of Sulu's mountainous Patikul town. Abu Sayyaf gunmen handed the two Filipinos to unknown negotiators.⁹⁶ According to Vela, he and Letrero had no knowledge if a negotiation with the Abu Sayyaf took place. The Philippine National Police (PNP)'s Anti-Kidnapping Group said the two men would undergo in-depth debriefing so the police would be able to know how they were captured and ultimately freed. Vela and Letrero said they were held captive by about 400 militants and were transferred from one place to another on foot. At times, they were told to wear military uniform to avoid being noticed, however they said they were treated well.⁹⁷

On 26 February, Arnold Mayo, a member of the Special Action Force (SAF) was arrested for his alleged involvement in a bus bombing in Makati City on 25 January 2011, where four people were killed and 11 others were wounded. He was injured in the attack. Mayo had been under restrictive custody at the SAF headquarters since 25 January 2012. He was caught by a surveillance camera of a fast-food restaurant carrying a sack that allegedly contained the improvised explosive device. Authorities said Mayo and another policeman brought an 81-millimeter mortar round to a junk shop in Lower Bicutan, Taguig City and used this in the attack. The other policeman was killed in the attack.⁹⁸

Thailand

On 10 February, insurgents detonated a car bomb on a road in Yala province, as the truck carrying six soldiers passed by. Thatong police chief Lt Col Topan Pusantiar said the car bomb contained 50kgs of explosives. He also said that initial investigations showed that the car used in the incident was stolen from the Kampung Bangol School's headmaster, who was shot dead by militants in December 2012.⁹⁹ The militants then opened fire on the soldiers,

⁹⁵ Manilla Buletin, "MNLF Verifying Release of Jordanian Journalist", 7 February 2013.

⁹⁶ AP, "Abu Sayyaf militants free 2 Filipino hostages", 3 February 2013.

⁹⁷ Interaksyon.com, "Frail-looking, unable to walk, freed Atyani crewman says Sayyaf captors were kind" 3 February 2013.

⁹⁸ The Philippine Star, "Cop arrested for 2011 Makati bus bombing", 27 February 2013.

⁹⁹ ABN News, "Five soldiers in car bomb attack in Yala", 10 February 2013.



killing five of them. Police also said the attackers took away the dead soldiers' rifles. The other soldiers were seriously injured in the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁰⁰

On 13 February, approximately 50 armed gunmen stormed a military base in Yala. No military casualties were reported and but authorities said 16 of the attackers were killed.¹⁰¹ The military were tipped off by defected militants so they were able to secure the camp therefore preventing casualties.¹⁰² Authorities said the militants were wearing combat uniforms to avoid detection. Regional army commander Lieutenant Udomchai Thammasaroraj said that as a result of the attack the army declared a temporary 24 hour curfew for the area within 5 km of the base.¹⁰³ No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities believe the attacks were organized by the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) Coordinate, an offshoot of the Patani Malay National Revolutionary Front.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Naharnet, "5 Thai Soldiers Killed in Restive South", 10 February 2013.

¹⁰¹ Reuters, " Thai insurgents attack army base, troops kill 16", 13 February 2013.

¹⁰² Al-Jazeera, "Thai army repels mass attack in restive south", 13 February 2013.

¹⁰³ Guardian, "Thailand insurgents killed in attack on military base", 13 February 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Reuters, "Thai insurgents attack army base, troops kill 16", 13 February 2013.