



FINANCIAL CRIME AND MATERIAL SUPPORT SCHEMES LINKED TO AL-QA'IDA AND AFFILIATED MOVEMENTS (AQAM) IN THE UNITED STATES: 1990 TO JUNE 2014

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PURPOSE

COLLECT systematic data on financial and material support schemes.

IDENTIFY links between these crimes and terrorist organizations.

SUPPORT a broader understanding of terrorist-related criminal activity.

BACKGROUND

This research examines the financial and material support schemes linked to al-Qa'ida and affiliated movements (AQAM) in the United States between 1990 and June 2014. It supplements a previous overview of the violent crimes and plots committed or attempted by AQAM supporters in the United States between 1990 and 2013 ([Gruenewald, Freilich, Chermak, & Parkin, 2014](#)). Data come from the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB).

KEY TERMS

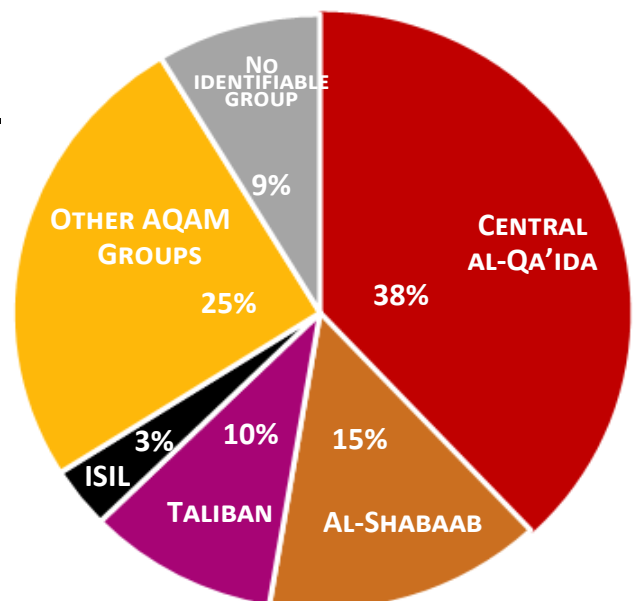
- ◆ **FINANCIAL SCHEME:** An illicit financial operation involving activities carried out by perpetrator(s) to obtain unlawful gain or economic advantage through deliberate deception. Examples include money laundering, investment fraud, tax avoidance, identity theft, counterfeiting, and banking fraud.
- ◆ **MATERIAL SUPPORT:** An act taken to aid terrorist activities and groups, such as providing resources, supplies, equipment, training, personnel or other critical non-monetary support.

FINDINGS

- ◆ 98 material support schemes and 52 financial schemes linked to AQAM were committed by 286 perpetrators between 1990 and June 2014.
- ◆ The majority of schemes involved material (65%) or monetary (19%) support for terrorism.
- ◆ More than 95% of material and monetary support schemes linked to AQAM were motivated by ideology, while 52% of other financial schemes were committed for a non-ideological goal, such as profit or greed.

GROUPS LINKED TO AQAM-RELATED SCHEMES IN THE UNITED STATES

- Only 50% of perpetrators had a direct association with AQAM. 33% were sympathizers or supporters with indirect connections, and 17% were non-extremist collaborators motivated by non-ideological goals, such as profit.
- The fluid nature of associations between perpetrators involved in these schemes highlights the importance of examining broader networks of AQAM extremists and their associates.



MATERIAL SUPPORT SCHEMES

98 material support schemes linked to AQAM and **192** perpetrators were identified.



59 (60%) of these schemes involved 108 perpetrators who traveled/attempted to travel overseas to join or aid an AQAM group or cause.



48 (49%) involved 119 perpetrators who provided support via guidance, information, training, or recruitment.



17 (17%) involved 33 perpetrators who provided supplies, equipment, or weapons.



4 additional material support schemes linked to ISIL have occurred since June 2014, with more expected as the group gains notoriety.

FINANCIAL CRIME SCHEMES

52 financial crime schemes linked to AQAM and **118** perpetrators were identified.

29 (56%) of these schemes involved money dirtying, or funneling money from a legal source into illegal activities.



9 (17%) were banking schemes, which include falsifying statements for bank loans and passing checks with inadequate funds/false accounts.



4 (8%) involved money laundering, or converting illicit income to disguise the source of the money.



10 (19%) consisted of a range of other financial crimes, such as credit card fraud, currency counterfeiting, cybercrime, and identity theft.



OTHER FINDINGS/FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- ◆ Preliminary analysis suggests that at least 20% of AQAM-related financial crimes and material support schemes are linked to violent attacks or plots, and at least 40% are linked to other financial crime or material support schemes.
- ◆ Because perpetrators may facilitate violence while being unwilling to carry it out themselves, it is important to focus on both AQAM-related violence and the nonviolent crimes that may support it.

TERRORISM & EXTREMIST VIOLENCE IN THE U.S. DATABASE

This research is part of a larger effort to develop a comprehensive database on Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the U.S. (TEVUS) that integrates data from the Global Terrorism Database, the American Terrorism Study, Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the U.S., and the U.S. Extremist Crime Database. Led by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), the research team is creating a resource that will allow operational and academic end-users to conduct unprecedented analyses that incorporate incident, perpetrator, and geospatial information.

TEVUS
Terrorist & Extremist Violence in the U.S.

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