



# Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE)

Organization of American States (OAS)

## COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIES

### Customs and Immigration security training

From February 18-22, the CICTE Secretariat provided technical assistance to the Government of Barbados through follow-on security training to twenty-one (21) customs, immigration and security officials functioning at the air and sea port in Barbados. The training was provided by experts from the United States Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP). This training was based on the recommendations of a three-day assessment of security at the major ports of entry which was conducted from January 29-31 by the CBP experts. The assessment and training in Barbados follows similar assistance which was provided to the other eight countries in the Caribbean which hosted the Cricket World Cup March/April 2007.



For more information, please contact Mr. Sherindon Hill, [shill@oas.org](mailto:shill@oas.org).

### Aviation Security (February, 2008)

This month the CICTE Secretariat continues to provide its capacity building work in the Aviation Security Sector. From February 25- March 8, 2008 our Basic Security Training program is scheduled for officers in St. Lucia.

This is St. Lucia's fourth program since the series began in 2006. The Basic Security Training Program is designed to enhance aviation security screener skills as the first line of defense against terrorism in international aviation security.

CICTE firmly commits to continue to support the capacity building efforts of the Member States in the area of Aviation Security and would welcome your comments and suggestions.

For more information, please contact Ms. Hayda Wallen, [hwallen@oas.org](mailto:hwallen@oas.org)



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## Editorial

### Reaffirmation of the Hemispheric Commitment to Fighting Terrorism

High-level government officials from the Americas will reaffirm their hemispheric commitment to fighting terrorism at the Eighth Regular Session of CICTE March 5-7, 2008, at OAS Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Member States will focus their discussions this year on furthering mutual cooperation in three substantive aspects of counter-terrorism: cyber-security, document security and fraud prevention, and port security. The CICTE Secretariat already has well-advanced technical assistance programs in these areas.



Peru is expected to be elected Chair of CICTE at the meeting, and Peruvian Minister of Defense (and former Permanent Representative to the OAS), Dr. Antero Flores-Araoz, will deliver the keynote address during the Inaugural Ceremony presided by the CICTE Chair, Ambassador Aristides Royo, Permanent Representative of Panama to the OAS. OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza will also address the CICTE participants.

CICTE Member States have repeatedly identified **Cyber Security** as an emerging terrorist threat which requires greater attention. To this end, a representative of Spain's Civil Guard will open the session with a talk on "Use of the Internet by Terrorists." The Director of the OAS Office of Information and Technology Services will report on a pilot project linking five of the existing Cyber Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) through a secure server hosted at the OAS.

A representative of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will open the session on **Document Security and Fraud Prevention** with a review of Machine Readable Travel Documents, and a representative of Interpol will then discuss the Interpol Database of Lost and Stolen Passports.

At the final session on **Port Security—Trade and Safe Transportation**, Member States will hear from the National Security Advisor from Panama, the Director for Government Policy of Northrop Grumman Corporation, and the Vice Chair of APEC's Maritime Security Working Group.

The sixth meeting of CICTE's National Points of Contact will take place on the morning of March 5, with a focus on legislation related to terrorism financing. An expert from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), CICTE's partner in the Legislative Assistance and Terrorism Financing Program, will discuss the legislative elements required by UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and the nine Special Recommendations of the FATF.

In addition to the above experts, the Executive Director for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee will address the delegates on the UN Global Strategy on Terrorism and ongoing UN coordination with international, regional, and sub-regional organizations, including CICTE. The OAS Under Secretary for Multidimensional Security will discuss terrorism as one of the threats to security in the Hemisphere.

## **COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIES**

### **Crisis Management Exercise on Port Security held in Colombia**



REPÚBLICA DE COLOMBIA  
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

The Port Security Assistance Partnership of the CICTE Secretariat organized a Crisis Management Exercise (CME) on Port Security in Bogotá, Colombia, on February 21-22, 2008, in collaboration with the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Maritime Secretariat (Dirección Marítima de Colombia – DIMAR).

The US Coast Guard and Transport Canada, together with instructors from Argentina and Uruguay, provided the technical assistance in design of the scenario and conduction of the CME. Representatives of Ecuador and Peru attended as observers. The exercise was implemented as a tabletop exercise.



The overall aim of the exercise was to assist Colombia in effectively assessing the complex and multi-faceted nature of the response capacities and mandates of each of the actors involved in a crisis situation at port facilities and to encourage discussions that would address eventual vulnerabilities in security plans.

To effectively review the Port Security processes and procedures at the various levels of strategic, political and tactical-operative decision making, two simulated committees were established. The strategic issues related to the exercise were dealt with in the committee of Bogotá, whereas the tactical ones were dealt with in parallel in the committee of the Port of Buenaventura. A videoconference during the exercise ensured full communication between both simulated committees.



In this series of CMEs, which started with the one undertaken in Buenos Aires, Argentina, last September, the next exercise will take place in Peru in the springtime. For more information contact Mr. Pablo Martínez at [pmartinez@oas.org](mailto:pmartinez@oas.org)



Transport Canada    Transports Canada

### **New Publications on Human Rights and Counter Terrorism**

The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation in New York City, New York, has recently published two volumes of interest: Human Rights and the Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Hopes and Challenges by Eric Rosand, Alistair Millar, and Jason Ipe, and a Handbook on Human Rights Compliance While Countering Terrorism, by Alex Conte. For more information [click here](#).

### **International Organization for Migration**

From February 11-15, a team of experts from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted an assessment of border management and migration issues in Suriname, under a Memorandum of Understanding with the CICTE Secretariat to help Caribbean countries secure their borders and strengthen their migration management systems. The government of Suriname submitted a self assessment questionnaire to IOM prior to the assessment. During the five-day assessment, IOM experts met with government officials and examined policy, legislation, regulatory and institutional framework for managing the orderly movement of people, complying with international conventions, and controlling irregular migration. A report of the findings of this assessment will be submitted to the government of Suriname for its consideration. For more information contact Mr. Sheridon Hill, [shill@oas.org](mailto:shill@oas.org).



## International Seminar on Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

To support implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the government of Slovakia, in cooperation with the governments of Costa Rica, Japan and Switzerland and with the support of the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, launched on 7 November 2007 in New York an International Process on Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation. The focus of the expert-driven International Process is on assessing the overall contributions of the United Nations to the fight against terrorism, and identifying ways to make its institutions more relevant to national counter-terrorism strategies and better able to support implementation of the Strategy. The Process involves experts from governments, relevant UN and other multilateral bodies from different regions, as well as academic and research institutions. It will provide food-for-thought for all States with respect to the General Assembly's first formal review of the implementation of the Strategy, scheduled for September 2008, and is intended to complement the work of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), which will be closely involved during the whole process.

The first workshop of the Independent International Process on Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation was hosted by the Government of Switzerland on 21 and 22 January 2008 in Zurich, and focused on Institutional Challenges in Implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will be hosting the Second Workshop in the International Process on 17-18 March 2008 in Bratislava: "Engaging with Regional, Sub-Regional and Functional Bodies and Civil Society on Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy." Some 40 countries, as well as representatives from regional, sub-regional and functional bodies and civil society are being invited to participate.

## Regional Seminar on Security for Major Events

The Ministry of the Interior of Spain, thanks to the support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) and in cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the CICTE Secretariat, will convene a Regional Seminar in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on Security for Major Events. The event will take place under the umbrella of UNICRI's International Permanent Observatory (IPO) program on Security for Major Events and in particular the regional initiative IPO Americas, jointly implemented with the CICTE Secretariat. The event will include briefings on the most recent major events and offer the opportunity to identify future major events of regional interest and promote mechanisms for facilitating international and regional cooperation in preparation for and during major events.

The Regional Seminar will be an occasion to bring together, for the first time, the National Focal Points (NFP) on Security for Major Events, appointed by OAS Member States in response to a letter of request sent by UNICRI and the CICTE Secretariat in September 2007. In accordance with the Terms of Reference provided in that letter, the NFPs should have knowledge of security planning and be identified within the national authorities responsible for planning or validating the security of major events. This network will function as a sub-network of the CICTE National Points of Contacts (NPCs). To date, four countries have formalized appointment of their NFPs: Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua. We look forward to receiving responses from the other Member States on their appointment of an NFP in preparation for the Regional Seminar of Cartagena. For more information: [gbristol@oas.org](mailto:gbristol@oas.org)

## NCTC releases new counterterrorism calendar

The US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) has released its 2008 Counterterrorism Calendar. It is available in print and via the NCTC's website at [www.nctc.gov](http://www.nctc.gov) in a PDF as well as an interactive online version. The NCTC has published a "daily planner" print version of its CT calendar since 2005. The 2008 edition is the largest to date. It includes 160 pages of information on known terrorist groups, individual terrorists, and technical information on topics such as biological and chemical threats. The interactive online version of the calendar further includes locator maps, photographs, and lists of helpful links specific to each threat area. A special feature of the site is an interactive counterterrorism timeline which allows users to explore key dates, including the anniversaries of terrorism-related incidents dating as far back as 1950. Each month of the timeline also provides a "Terrorist Profile" and a "This Day in History" highlight with accompanying photographs.

## The OAS to support judges against money laundering



February 11, 2008. The head of Mexico's national procurement office (known as PGR in Spanish), Eduardo Medina-Mora, inaugurated the course "Asset Laundering" of OAS-CICAD, directed at members of the judicial branch of the federal government. He stated that the money laundering is the principal support for the operations of criminal organizations, and at the same time one of their most vulnerable points. He went on to say that it is important that the institutions that are in charge of fighting this calamity be up to date with developments regarding the reform of penal justice and public security, and with the adaption of the new tools for combating this illicit act.

In the fight against organized delinquency, the asset laundering will be a front on which the federal government will focus all available resources to reduce the field of action, and this course and workshop, he said, had the objectives of enhancing training and strengthening judicial capabilities. The Deputy Under-Secretary for Multidimensional Security for the Organization of American States, Abraham Stein, noted the importance of training those who are on the front line in the fight against organized delinquency. For his part, the representative of the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Jose Manuel Martinez, stressed that the training and updating are valuable instruments to prevent and prosecute serious threats, and to strengthen the capabilities and understanding of the authorities working against organized delinquency. For more information [click here](#).

## Cyber Security



In accordance with the Comprehensive Inter-American Strategy to Combat Threats to Cyber Security, and as part of its on-going effort to promote cyber security awareness and enhance OAS Member States' cyber security capabilities, the CICTE Secretariat is organizing two sub-regional courses on "Cyber Security Awareness: Creation and Management of a Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT)".

The first of these courses will be held for the countries of Central America, including Mexico and the Dominican Republic, in Guatemala in April. The second will target the Andean countries as well as Paraguay, and will be convened in Colombia in May. Both are intended for government representatives with technical as well policy-oriented responsibilities related to their national cyber security infrastructure, and will address, among other issues, the steps required for the creation of a national CSIRT, and capabilities and practices required for their effective management.

These courses are specifically designed to achieve the Secretariat's objective of assisting OAS Member States to establish a national CSIRT, as well as to strengthen an inter-American network on cyber security. With respect to the latter, the Secretariat will continue to provide administrative support to the pilot project network of national CSIRTs, begun in January of this year.

## Council of Europe News

For information on this section see:  
[www.coe.int/gmt](http://www.coe.int/gmt)



### 1. Council of Europe Conventions

Following its ratification by Malta on 30 January 2008, the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS No. 198) has now reached the ratification threshold for entry into force.

The Convention aims to prevent and combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism by facilitating, *inter alia*, the rapid tracing of property or bank accounts, the rapid freezing of funds and quick access to financial information held by criminal organisations.

The Convention will enter into force on 1 May 2008 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malta, Moldova, Poland and Romania. The Convention has been signed by a further 22 states.

Current state of signatures and ratifications

Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196): 41 signatures, 10 ratifications

Council of Europe Convention on the Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS No. 198): 28 signatures, 6 ratifications

Protocol amending the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (ETS No. 190): 46 signatures, 26 ratifications

European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (ETS No. 090): 47 signatures, 46 ratifications

### 2. Terrorist Financing

OSCE has requested observer status with the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (**MONEYVAL**). A positive decision is expected soon so as to allow for OSCE's participation in the forthcoming meetings of MONEYVAL. This is particularly important in light of the entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention on the Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS No. 198) on May 1, 2008. The next (26th) meeting of MONEYVAL will be in Strasbourg, March 31 – April 4, 2008. See [www.coe.int/moneyval](http://www.coe.int/moneyval).

### 3. Terrorism and Human Rights

In January 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe considered Dick Marty's report on United Nations Security Council and European Union blacklists and adopted a recommendation and a resolution on this subject inviting "the United Nations Security Council and the Council of the European Union to examine their targeted sanctions regimes and to implement procedural and substantive improvements aimed at safeguarding individual human rights and the rule of law".

For the report [click here](#)

For the Recommendation [click here](#)

The Council of Europe Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI) will be considering this matter at its forthcoming meeting in Strasbourg, 6-7 March 2008. In the context of its operation as *European Observatory of Reservations to International Treaties*, the Committee will also consider reservations to anti-terrorism international treaties. The Committee has already drawn up a list of such possibly problematic reservations. See [www.coe.int/cahdi](http://www.coe.int/cahdi).

CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg recently released two important statements: See "Serious human rights violations during anti-terror campaign must be corrected - and never repeated" of 4 February, and "The protection against torture must be strengthened" of 18 February available [here](#).

### 4. Cyberterrorism and use of the Internet for terrorist purposes

The report of the Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER) is up for consideration by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 27 February 2008. See [www.coe.int/gmt](http://www.coe.int/gmt).

Further to that, the Council of Europe is organising an expert conference on cybercrime including cyberterrorism and use of the Internet for terrorist purposes in Strasbourg, 1-2 April 2008. For additional information see Octopus Interface Conference at [www.coe.int/cybercrime](http://www.coe.int/cybercrime).

### 5. Forthcoming meetings

- CoE: 35th meeting of the Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI), Strasbourg, 6-7 March 2008 – [www.coe.int/cahdi](http://www.coe.int/cahdi)
- CoE: 14th meeting of the Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER), Strasbourg, 7-9 April 2008 – [www.coe.int/gmt](http://www.coe.int/gmt)
- CoE: Octopus Interface Conference on cybercrime including cyberterrorism and use Internet for terrorist purposes, Strasbourg, 1-2 April 2008 - [www.coe.int/cybercrime](http://www.coe.int/cybercrime).
- CoE: 26th meeting of the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), Strasbourg, 31 March - 4 April 2008 - [www.coe.int/moneyval](http://www.coe.int/moneyval).

## RECENT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS

Month	Days	Event	Venue
February	11, 2008	Third Session of the Preparatory Meeting of the Eighth Regular Session of CICTE	Washington D.C, U.S.
	11 - 15, 2008	International Organization on Migration (IOM) In country Assessment	Suriname
	18 - 22, 2008	Immigration and Customs Security Training	Bridgetown, Barbados
	21 - 22, 2008	Port Crisis Management Exercise in Port Security	Bogota, Colombia
	25 - March 4, 2008	Aviation Security Basic Security Training	Castries, Saint Lucia

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Month	Days	Event	Venue
March	March - May, 2008	Port Security Training	Jamaica & Guyana
	Postponed TBD	Aviation Security Crisis Management Training	Georgetown, Guyana
	4, 2008	Meeting of Experts to Evaluate the Results of the Pilot Project on Tourism and Recreational Facilities Security	Washington D.C, U.S.
	5, 2008	Sixth Meeting of CICTE National Points of Contact	Washington D.C, U.S.
	5 - 7, 2008	Eighth Regular Session of CICTE	Washington D.C, U.S.
	10 - 20, 2008	Port Security Training Needs Assessment	The Bahamas
	10 - 14, 2008	International Organization on Migration (IOM) In country Assessment	St. Lucia
	10-14, 2008	Aviation Security National Development Workshop	Barbados
	11-12, 2008	Legislative Technical Assistance Mission--Follow-up. Organized by CICTE and UNODC	Guatemala City, Guatemala
	17-18, 2008	Second Workshop in the International Process on Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation	Bratislava, Slovakia
	17-18, 2008	UN CTITF Working Group on Vulnerable Targets	Turin, Italy
	17-19, 2008	APEC Port Security Training for Peru by US Coast Guard	Elizabeth City, North Carolina - U.S.
	31, 2008	Discussion of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the Americas	New York, United States
	31 - April 3, 2008	Specialized training for prosecutors, judges and law enforcement officials (UNODC and CICTE)	San Salvador, El Salvador
April	1 - 2, 2008	Conference against Cybercrime - Council of Europe	Strasbourg, France
	7-9, 2008	14th Council of Europe CODEXTER meeting	Strasbourg, France
	7-11, 2008	Sub-regional Course on Cyber Security Awareness and the Creation and Management of a Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT)	Antigua, Guatemala
	7-11, 2008	Aviation Security Crisis Management Course	Lima, Peru
	10-14, 2008	Aviation National Development Program Workshop	Bridgetown, Barbados
	TBC	Port Security Crisis Management Exercise	Lima, Peru
May	6-9, 2008	Sub-regional Course on Cyber Security Awareness and the Creation and Management of a Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT)	Bogota, Colombia
	26-Jun 3, 2008	Aviation Security Basic Security Training	Georgetown, Guyana
	26 - 29, 2008	Ministerial Conference, Legislative Assistance and Terrorist Financing. Organized by CICTE and UNODC.	Panama City, Panama
June	June - July, 2008	Port Security Follow on Training	The Bahamas
	TBD	Best Practices Workshop for Central America on Travel Document Security	San Salvador, El Salvador

## **NEWS**

### **Colombia stands against terrorism**



4.8 million Colombians gathered in the streets on February 4, 2008, to protest against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known by its Spanish acronym, FARC).

"It has been a unanimous show of support for democratic institutionalism and the fight of the State to achieve security and neutralize terrorism", said analyst Alfredo Rangel, director of the Security and Democracy Foundation, in Bogota.

The videos and the messages of the former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, and of the various hostages, both political and military, have served as evidence of the maltreatment of the captives, and has turned public opinion against the group.

Said Mr. Rangel, "This change of attitude started brewing and could not be disassociated from the effects of the politics of security of the government of Alvaro Uribe, which has reduced the fear of the people". Previously, he continued, "they spoke of "civil war" and not of terrorism perpetrated by those financed by drug trafficking ; of 'war prisoners' instead of kidnapping victims; of a 'negotiated solution' ...". Now, according to this analyst, things are clear. For more information [click here](#).

### **Network of logistical support to the FARC dismantled in 7 countries, including the United States**

More than 160 people, many already in captivity, have had charges brought against them as part of an operation termed Operation "Growing Antenna" by the FBI and "Medusa" by the Colombian National Police. The network provided the guerilla group arms, munitions, satellite telephones, GPS, computers, cellular SIM cards, radios, antennas and medical equipment. A particularly interesting aspect of the case, which took four years to orchestrate and involved DAS, the Army and the Department of the Treasury, is that it is the first time in history that the United States will seek the extradition of 13 Colombians for "providing material support to a terrorist group." To date, the U.S. has gone after the FARC with charges of narco-trafficking and the kidnapping of three Americans, but never for supporting a terrorist group.

For more information [click here](#).

### **Attorney General's Office links the FARC again to Leftist Paraguayan Groups**

On February 7, the Attorney General's Office again linked the FARC (Revolutionary Forces of Colombia) to leftist Groups in Paraguay after the confrontation between the police and unknown persons in a jungle area in the center of the country February 6 in which a police commissioner and another police official were hurt. The "Anti-kidnapping" prosecutor Rogelio Ortuzar told journalists that they found indication at the site of "an operating style like that of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia who we know well to be those who manage drug operations in Colombia." The confrontation occurred while the police were trying to detain Magna Meza, Manuel Mieres and others accused of allegedly belonging to the band that kidnapped on September 21, 2004, the daughter of ex-President Raúl Cubas Cecilia Cubas who was found dead February 18, 2005. The primary members of the kidnapping group--mostly militants in the minority leftist party Patria Libre (PPL), were sentenced in December 2006 to 25 years in prison.

For more information [click here](#).

### **Spain arrests suspected Islamic extremists**

Police arrested three Algerian men early Thursday, February 14, in the northern Basque city of Vitoria on suspicion of promoting radical ideology among the Muslim community, the Basque regional government said in a statement. The three were not immediately identified but police said they were each around 30 years old and had prior police records for petty crimes. Police in this case suspect them of distributing CDs and MP3 files obtained from the Internet, with calls for an Islamic "jihad," the statement said.

The arrests come three weeks before Spain's parliamentary elections on March 9 and just a few weeks after Spanish police in Barcelona arrested 14 suspected Islamic suspects, mainly Pakistani nationals, on suspicion of planning suicide attacks in Barcelona and elsewhere in Europe. A National Court judge later ordered 10 of the 14 to be held in jail.

More than 300 suspected Islamic extremists have been arrested in Spain since the Madrid train bombings killed 191 people and wounded more than 1,800 on March 11, 2004.

For more information [click here](#).

## Bahamas e-passport system working well, minister says



February 8, 2008. NASSAU, Bahamas (BIS) As of January 15, 2008, the Passport Office in New Providence has issued a total of 557 passports: 415 regular passports, 120 children's passports, 15 frequent flyer passports, and seven Diplomatic passports. (ICAO) The International Civil Aviation Organization, of which Bahamas is a member, has mandated that all countries must begin issuing Machine Readable Passports by 2010. "That system is up and running in New Providence and seems to be working fairly well," said Symonette, who has oversight for the Passport Office. "It takes about two weeks to get the new e-passport; but that timeframe is expected to be reduced as the system progresses.

Bahamas officially launched the Machine Readable Passport or e-Passport on December 5, 2007, a move intended to increase protection against identity theft, heighten aviation security and combat illegal immigration. Foreign nationals would also be able to apply for and be issued machine-readable visas in New Providence and at the overseas missions. However, passport holders are being advised to continue to travel on their existing passports until expiration or until further notice. For more information [click here](#).

## Hizbollah militant and terrorist mastermind killed

A HIZBOLLAH military chief who masterminded many of the most notorious terrorist operations of the 1980s and 1990s has died in a car bombing.

Imad Mughniyeh, 45, was killed as he left a function at an Iranian cultural centre in Damascus, the Syrian capital, where he has lived as a fugitive for years, repeatedly using plastic surgery to avoid detection. He was last seen in public in 1994. Hizbollah and Iran immediately blamed Israel for the assassination, though the Israeli government denied involvement. One other possibility is that his assassination resulted from a feud within Hizbollah.

His career stretched from the early days of Hizbollah in the early 1980s, when he masterminded the attack on the US marine barracks that killed hundreds in Beirut, to the present day. He remained a powerful figure within Hizbollah, described by western intelligence as its military chief of staff, and was blamed by Israel for deliberately sparking the 2006 war between Israel and Hizbollah by kidnapping two Israeli soldiers, who still remain unaccounted for.

For more information [click here](#).

## Minister Day Announces Passing of Legislation to Improve the Security Certificate Process

The Honourable Stockwell Day, Canada's Minister of Public Safety, announced on February 14, 2008 that the Senate has passed Bill C-3, which is legislation that amends the security certificate process under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).

"We introduced this legislation to maintain the use of security certificates and protect Canadians from threats, but also to strengthen the rights of those arrested under a security certificate," said Minister Day. "Now that this legislation has passed, security certificates - which would never apply to Canadian citizens - will continue to be used to arrest and deport foreign citizens who pose a threat to national security, and at the same time will respect individual rights and freedoms."

This legislation introduces a number of new measures to the process to address the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling in February 2007, including the introduction of special advocates. Special advocates - who will be qualified lawyers - will protect the interests and rights of individuals who are subject to security certificates, ensuring they are adequately represented during closed proceedings.

An online version of the legislation will be available at [www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca).

For more information [click here](#).



Public Safety  
Canada

Sécurité publique  
Canada

## MRTA Not Terrorist?

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (known by its Spanish acronym MRTA) could be benefited if the Council of the European Union (EU) excludes the group from its list of terrorist groups. With this, the MRTA will look to change its status to guerrilla group to attain impunity and obtain external cooperation.

The Council of the European Union has not yet made a definite decision in regard to the Peruvian request – formulated in 2004 and in 2005 – to include the MRTA among the terrorist groups recognized by the European Union.

The MRTA will try to argue that their activities are not conceived as terrorist acts; in addition they will seek to ensure that law enforcement and judicial cooperation between Peru and the European Union will not involve the monitoring of the MRTA.

The MRTA has sought to influence public opinion in Peru such that it should be considered a 'guerrilla' movement, and that its actions were carried out as part of a legitimate rebellion. They are also looking to obtain international recognition of their acts as "guerrilla" acts, which do not constitute a crime and would allow the MRTA to be considered a 'belligerent' group. For more information [click here](#) and [here](#).

## One dead and two harmed in bombing in downtown Mexico City

February 16. Mexico DF. One man died and two others were hurt as a consequence of a bomb blast in the center of Mexico City, close to Secretariat for Public Security in the capital.

The Mexican capital has been the target of explosive attacks over the past several years, generally thought to be perpetrated by various guerrilla groups. The majority of such attacks have been directed against bank installations, the head office of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (known as PRI in Spanish) and the Electoral Tribunal.

Analysts pointed that this explosion was likely related to drug trafficking after Mexican police confiscated large quantities of guns in the possession of assassins thought to be employed by the Sinaloa cartel.

Last January, the government of the DF committed to the fight to ensure that the Mexican capital does not become a refuge for drug traffickers.

For the past three years a wave of organized crime has left thousand dead throughout the country, mainly in northern states, but also in the capital city. For more information [click here](#).

## Germany fears over al Qaeda activity



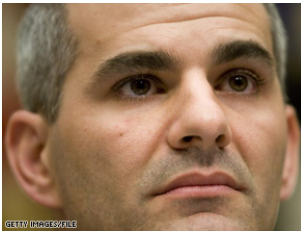
Al Qaeda has begun an online propaganda campaign targeting German-speaking Muslims with increasing amounts of terror-related content, German security officials informed CNN on February 13.

And while there is no evidence of specific plans against Germany and Austria, German State Secretary of the Interior August Hanning has said he is worried that the authorities "will not be able to thwart all terror plots in the future."

Jihadist videos obtained by CNN, and narrated and subtitled in German, call on German-speaking Muslims to join the "Holy War" against what they call an "American led coalition against Islam that Germany and Austria are a part of."

CNN has also seen excerpts of what German intelligence officials say is a 16-hour long, professionally produced bomb-making tutorial. For more information [click here](#).

## Al Qaeda-inspired extremism remains concern



U.S. vulnerability to al Qaeda-inspired extremism in Europe continues to be the key worry of the National Counterterrorism Center, the head of the agency told a Washington think tank Wednesday, February 13.

"Violent extremism in Europe remains at the center of our concerns -- both for the danger it poses to our European allies and our interests, as well as the potential danger it poses to the United States," said NCTC Acting Director Michael Leiter.

Although intelligence analysts indicate the United States does not face the same level of threat from al Qaeda that Europe does, Leiter said the nation "remains the top target for al Qaeda's operational planners." For more information [click here](#).

## Amtrak to beef up security



Amtrak passengers will be subjected to random screening of their carry-on bags as part of a new security initiative that will include armed officers and bomb-sniffing dogs patrolling platforms and trains, an Amtrak spokeswoman said Monday, February 18.

Unlike airlines, Amtrak has had few visible changes to security since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but in recent years trains have been the targets of terrorism.

In 2004, bombings of commuter trains in Madrid, Spain, killed 191 people. A series of bombings in London in 2005, most of them on subway trains, killed 52 people. And security experts have long pointed out the vulnerabilities associated with rail travel and the difficulty in securing trains. Amtrak plans to roll out the new "mobile security teams" on the Northeast Corridor between Washington and Boston, Massachusetts, its most heavily used route, before expanding them throughout the country. For more information [click here](#).

## Sentence on Madrid courthouse bomb plot

A Spanish court convicted on Wednesday, February 27, 20 men, mainly Algerians and Moroccans, of Islamic terrorist activity, but none was found guilty of the more serious charge of an alleged plot to destroy Madrid's anti-terrorism courthouse with a truck bomb, according to a copy of the sentence.

Those convicted were part of a group of 30 defendants who went on trial last October. The three-judge panel hearing the case -- in the very courthouse that prosecutors alleged was the target of the truck bomb -- began their deliberations for a verdict after the trial concluded on January 14. The sentences range from seven to 14 years.

For more information [click here](#).



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