

PENNSYLVANIA ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN #31

TARGETED ACTIONABLE MONITORING CENTER

8 JANUARY 2010

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

1. Follow-up: Possible Cracks in Iran Regime Confidence

According to unconfirmed information coming out of the pro-democracy movement in Iran, family members of the regime's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, including his son, daughter-in-law and grandson, have been secretly flown to Russia in recent days. Special security personnel have been assigned to maintain their safety. The move was allegedly prompted by concerns over continuing anti-regime protests and resistance.

The Iranian Students Solidarity organization, claiming tens of thousands of members in Iran, claims that the information came from contacts within the regime. The sources quoted by the ISS added that the Russians agreed to host the Supreme Leader's relatives an estate near Moscow "for as long as it is necessary."

An Iranian pro-democracy activist in contact with ITRR said that the information remains unconfirmed, but it appears reliable and credible. The latest report from within Iran, if true, is a clear indication of cracks in the regime's confidence regarding its future.

As noted in PAIB no. 30 (6 January 2010), the Islamic Republic of Iran is currently facing multiple threats from various quarters. One of these is the various anti-regime protest movements, which have sparked clashes with regime forces ever since the Summer of 2009. In fact, in early December Iranian pro-democracy sources claimed that Khamenei was spirited to a "secret location" for his own safety and that the nation's religious leaders were "scared." More recent reports include indications that some members of the nation's security forces are also joining the opposition, either openly or covertly. As ITRR reported in PAIB no. 30, on 26 December 2009 a previously unknown anti-regime group calling itself the National Iranian Armed Resistance Forces (NIRU), claiming to represent members of the armed forces, announced "Operation Azadi ('Freedom')" to militarily force "unconditional surrender of the occupying government and leadership."

ITRR analysts reiterate that, if it feels sufficiently threatened, the Iranian regime is likely to lash out with proxy terrorist or insurgent strikes throughout the region and beyond.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC THREATS, INDICATORS AND/OR WARNINGS

Sectors: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES; GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

2. Specific Targeting in Egypt

Recent incidents and jihadist communications confirm specific targeting of accessible Western-identified assets in Egypt.

A. On 6 January 2010 ITRR researchers identified specific targeting information that appears to identify the Sha'ar Hashamaym ("Gate of Heaven" in Hebrew) Synagogue in Cairo, Egypt as a preferred target for jihadist attacks.

The relevant jihadist communication states: "I tell you and remind you: the Jews in Cairo live in a known building with a symbol of a Star of David and there is a religious command to kill them. Those who are supposed to kill them are their neighbors. And I pass this on to those who sit and do nothing."

B. Also on Wednesday, around midnight, a gunman in a car opened fire with an automatic weapon on a crowd of Coptic Christians outside a church in southern Egypt. Six Christian worshipers and one Muslim security guard were murdered in the attack. Three people suspected of perpetrating the drive-by shooting were later arrested by Egyptian police.

The church's bishop told reporters that he had ended the Coptic Christmas (6-7 January) Midnight Mass early due to security concerns, including threats the church had received from Islamists in recent weeks.

*******ANALYSIS*******

T/I/W Rating: SEVERE

While ITRR analysts have identified the probable Jewish target described in the above jihadist communication, previous research indicates that the above indicator is just one part of a broader pronounced increase in the risk to Jewish, Israeli and Western personnel and assets in Egypt.

Regarding the above attack on Copts in Egypt, ITRR analysts note that past Islamist communications have mentioned this community as a suitable target for jihad, as well as Christmas as a preferred attack date. The community has claimed increasing discrimination and threats to its safety in recent years, with inter-religious clashes occurring in southern Egypt and elsewhere.

In addition to increasing risk levels for religious minority institutions within Egypt, ITRR analysts reiterate (as per PAIB nos. 20, 23 and 25) that the threat of terror attack in Egypt - especially Cairo and the Sinai Peninsula - remains elevated.

Pennsylvania students attending the American University in Cairo, Egypt (BEG), business travelers and tourists to religious sites should be advised of the current increased danger of terrorist activity. Government offices, major hotels and Sinai resorts are also preferred jihadist targets for VBIED attacks at this time. In addition, there remain increased indicators of jihadist intent to kidnap Westerners in Egypt.

Sectors: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

3. Africa: AQ and Related Kidnappings Continue

Those who work for Western-identified companies and NGOs face an increasing risk of abduction in North Africa and other African states where Al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has (or desires to have) a presence.

An Algerian national employed by Canadian company SNC-Lavalin was kidnapped, apparently by jihadist elements, on 3 January 2010. He was on his way to work for the high-profile company when an armed cell intercepted him. The Algerian government is reportedly negotiating the kidnapped engineer's release.

On 7 January 2010 the French Foreign Ministry confirmed the increased risk of kidnapping efforts targeting Westerners in North Africa. The French advisory specified the regions of Mali and Timbuktu as high risk areas, which tourists are generally advised to avoid.

***** ANALYSIS*****

T/I/W Rating: SEVERE

As noted in PAIB no. 23 (21 December 2009), there has recently been a great number of abductions or attempted abductions by AQIM targeting Westerners across North Africa. In PAIB no. 27 (30 December 2009) ITRR identified an Algerian youth who was purportedly seeking to offer himself to AQIM as a suicide bomber. While he may be deployed to attack in a major city in North Africa (especially in Algeria or Morocco), the threat extends to France due to that country's large North African population. The Algerian's preferred target was said by jihadist communications to be a nightclub.

In light of the updated and multiplied indicators, ITRR recommends that Pennsylvanian students, faculty, researchers and volunteers in North Africa enhance accountability, vary travel routines and increase situational awareness.

Sectors: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES; ENERGY

4. Learning 'Direct Action' Tactics for Carbon Trade Protests

Environmental activists are preparing for protests targeting the Second Annual Carbon Trade Summit at the Embassy Suites Hotel in New York City on 12-13 January 2010.

Groups such as Climate SOS, Beyond Talk, Institute for Social Ecology, The Change You Want to See Gallery and others are calling upon supporters to join them for a series of events leading up to the summit. The first is a "nonviolent direct action workshop and strategy session" to be held 9 January 2010 in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Panel discussions and presentations are slated for the following days.

Participants in the Carbon Trade Summit include executives from JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Duke Energy, representatives of the United Nations, officials from New York, California and New Jersey, and many others.

The aforementioned coalition of environmental groups is planning to hold a "rally and protest action" outside of the hotel where the summit will be held. "Never before in history has the need for a grassroots resistance movement been more urgently needed," an announcement from the eco-coalition said. They called for activists to "confront the true source of this emergency" at the summit.

*****ANALYSIS*****

T/I/W Rating: LOW

It is unknown at this time if the individuals involved have obtained a police permit for these actions.

ITRR analysts recommend that participants in the Second Annual Carbon Trade Summit from Pennsylvania make appropriate preparations in the event that eco-activist protests include "direct action" illegality, such as barricading or physically storming the venue, or violent clashes with law enforcement.

Additionally, while the immediate target of the Brooklyn "direct action workshop" is the Carbon Trade Summit, ITRR analysts believe that the lessons learned there and in the field will likely be applied in "actions" targeting industries singled out by environmental activists in Pennsylvania, as well. Assets so targeted may include Pennsylvania branches of corporations and other entities attending the Carbon Trade Summit, especially those named specifically in environmentalist communications such as JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and Duke Energy.

No actionable intelligence at this time for the following sectors:

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASES
HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH
NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND ICONS
BANKING AND FINANCE
WATER
CHEMICAL
CRITICAL MANUFACTURING
DAMS
EMERGENCY SERVICES
NUCLEAR REACTORS, MATERIALS, AND WASTE
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
COMMUNICATIONS
POSTAL AND SHIPPING
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

THREAT / INDICATOR / WARNING RATING	DESCRIPTION
LOW (Level 4)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements currently have little capability or intent to take action against the target. It is assessed that, although it cannot be ruled out, an attack or action is unlikely to be mounted based on current available intelligence.
MODERATE (Level 3)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements have the capability to take action against the target and that such action is within the adversary's current intent. It is assessed that an attack or action is likely to be a priority and might well be mounted.
SEVERE (Level 2)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements have an established capability and current intent to take action against the target and there is some additional information on the nature of the threat. It is assessed that an attack or action on the target is a priority and is likely to be mounted.
CRITICAL (Level 1)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements with an established capability are actively planning to take action against the target within a matter of days (up to two weeks). An attack or action is expected imminently.

END-CLASSIFIED-TAM-C-

For additional information, please contact the TAM-C of the Institute of Terrorism Research and Response at: +1.215.922.1080 or info@terrorresponse.org

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