COUNTER
EXTREMISM
PROJECT

Australia: Extremism & Counter-Extremism

On April 24, 2020, Sydney authorities arrest a man in Mount Lewis. The next day, a Parmatta court charges the suspect for allegedly fighting for Jabhat Fateh al-Sham—a group previously linked to al-Qaeda and formerly known as al-Nusra Front—in Syria from 2012 through 2013. The charges include two counts of engaging in hostile activity in a foreign state and seven counts of publishing false or misleading material to obtain property. (Source: *Guardian* *[1]*)

Overview

Australia faces an increasing threat from the radicalization of Australians drawn to Islamist ideology. More than 150 Australians have joined foreign jihadist groups. The Soufan Group said in its December 2015 report that unofficially 255 Australians have gone to fight in Syria and Iraq. At least 20 Australian foreign fighters have returned home, raising government concerns that Australians radicalized abroad will return to carry out domestic terrorism. (Sources: The Soufan Group [2], *Time* [3], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [4], United Nations [5])

The Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) has noted an increase in violent activity among left- and right-wing extremist groups in Australia. During the agency's first "annual threat assessment" speech on February 24, 2020, ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess warned that far-right extremism was growing in the country and cited the activities of far-right cells in suburban Australia. Additionally, the conflict in Ukraine has reportedly attracted several fighters from Australia who have been linked to white supremacist and ultra-nationalist movements. (Sources: ASIO [6], *Canberra Times* *[7]*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation [8])

The December 2014 hostage crisis at a Sydney café was part of a string of domestic extremist-related events. The country raised [9] its terrorist threat level from medium to high in September 2014 for the first time in 11 years in response to threats of an impending domestic attack. A massive terrorism raid that month uncovered an ISIS-related plot to behead Australians. (Source: News.com.au [10])

In February 2015, then-Prime Minister Tony Abbott proposed tougher counter-extremism measures in response to the December 2014 hostage crisis. The government previously enacted a series of laws in 2014 to increase border security and enhance domestic counterterrorism operations. It also canceled the passports of dozens of Australian citizens suspected of joining extremist groups such as ISIS to prevent their travel abroad. Additionally, Australia has enacted a series of community outreach programs to combat homegrown radicalization. On April 4, 2019, the Australian government passed legislation that threatened to fine social media companies and jail their executives if the platforms failed to "expeditiously" remove "abhorrent violent material." (Sources: Australian Attorney General's Office [11], *Telegraph* [12], *New York Times* *[13]*)

Radicalization and Foreign Fighters

Homegrown Radicalization

At least 23 Australians, mostly native-born, have been convicted of domestic terrorism charges since 2001. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) believes "several hundred" Australians advocate violent Islamist ideologies. (Sources: Australian Government: Living Safe Together [14], ASIO [15])

In 2014, the ASIO warned that nationalist and ethnic tensions could lead to future violence. Several anti-Islam groups have appeared in Australia, primarily online, since May 2013. These groups engage in "hostile, abusive and threatening online exchanges" with members of Australia's Muslim community. In February 2020, ASIO Director General Mike Burgess noted that, though violent Islamist fundamentalism remained the organization's primary concern, the threat of rightwing extremism was "real and growing." (Sources: ASIO [16], *Guardian* *[17]*)

The ASIO "strongly linked" domestic terrorism to political, ideological, and cultural conflicts abroad. International jihadist groups increasingly rely on the Internet and social media to encourage lone actors to engage in stand-alone domestic attacks and overseas extremism. Together with traditional extremist networks, these extremists justify their beliefs primarily because of the Syrian civil war, disagreements with Australia's overseas military operations, or a belief that

Australian values conflict with extreme Islamist views. (Source: ASIO [16])

Members of Australia's Muslim community have accused the government of feeding into radicalization. Community members said during a September 2014 protest they were terrified during anti-terror raids earlier that month. The president of the Islamic Friendship Association of Australia, Keysar Trad, blamed the government's "negative campaigns" against building new mosques for helping to radicalize Australian youth. (Sources: *Daily Mail* [18], News.com.au [19])

International groups and domestic terror networks have previously targeted Australia. The September 2014 raids resulted in the arrest of 15 Australians ready to kidnap and behead random people under the direction of an Australian ISIS leader. Three people were convicted after 2009's Operation Neath uncovered an al-Shabab cell planning to attack army barracks in Sydney. In 2004, authorities began a 17-month investigation, Operation Pendennis, after receiving a tip from members of the Muslim community. In November 2005, the investigation uncovered two extremist cells in Melbourne and Sydney planning domestic terror attacks under the direction of radical Islamic cleric Abdul Nacer Benbrika, a.k.a. Abu Bakr. (Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [20], Combating Terrorism Center at West Point [21], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [22])

Religious Indoctrination

Abdul Nacer Benbrika and other radical Islamic clerics have fueled homegrown extremism in Australia. Benbrika came to the country on a tourist visa in 1989 from Algeria. He claimed he loved the "Australian lifestyle" and became a permanent resident after marrying a Lebanese-Australian woman in 1992. He received a disability pension and did not work, so he spent his time immersed in Islamic studies. In an August 2005 interview prior to his arrest, Benrika denied his involvement in extremism and said he was teaching his followers the Quran. Benbrika told the media there were two laws, Australian law and Islamic law. Islam, he said, is the only law that needs to be spread. He also spoke of his admiration for Osama bin Laden. Benbrika became Australia's first convicted Muslim cell leader in 2009 when a judge sentenced him to at least 12 years in prison. (Sources: Reuters [23], *Sydney Morning Herald* [24], *Australian* [25], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [26])

Feiz Mohammad, a.k.a. Sheikh Feiz, is considered one of Australia's top radical Islamic preachers. He was tied to several members of the Melbourne and Sydney jihadist cells broken up in 2005. Mohammad founded the Global Islamic Youth Centre in a Sydney suburb where his violent and extremist sermons reached more than 4,000 Muslims. His sermons are available on YouTube and for sale on DVD. In one sermon, he criticized Australian Muslims for not shedding blood in the name of jihad. Boston Marathon bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev cited Mohammad as an inspiration. Mohammad left Australia for Lebanon in 2005, but continues to release his sermons online and on DVD. (Sources: *International Business Times* [27], News.com.au [28])

Musa Cerantonio

Musa Cerantonio [29] is an Australian Islamist preacher who has inspired numerous foreign fighters to join jihadist groups in Syria. Australian intelligence reportedly believes Cerantonio to be among the top three most important jihadist preachers in the world. According to the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR), Cerantonio is "an outspoken cheerleader for ISIS" and one of two English-speaking "spiritual authorities" influencing Westerners to fight abroad. Cerantonio used social media to correspond with ISIS foreign fighters, call for the assassination of U.S. leaders, and praise foreign fighters in Syria. He also briefly had an English-language television show called "Ask the Sheikh," in which he answered questions on sharia (Islamic law) from viewers around the world. The show aired on a Saudi satellite station. (Sources: *Herald Sun* [30], International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation [31], *Sydney Morning Herald* [32], *Guardian* [33], MEMRI [34])

Born Robert Cerantonio to an Irish-Catholic family, Cerantonio converted to Islam when he was 17 years old. He moved to the Philippines in 2013 where he used YouTube to call for jihad and praise ISIS, according to the Philippine police who deported Cerantonio in July 2014. Australian authorities have called Cerantonio's social media posts "offensive and disturbing" but said they do not violate Australian law. His Twitter and Facebook accounts have been shut down but many of his videos remain on YouTube. (Sources: *Daily Mail* [35], *Herald Sun* [36], Associated Press [37], Reuters [38])

Cerantonio and four others were arrested in Australia in May 2016 while allegedly attempting to sail to Indonesia.

According to Australian federal police, they intended to continue on to Syria to join ISIS. Arrested with Cerantonio were Kadir Kaya, Shayden Thorne, and two unnamed men. All five had previously had their passports revoked. They were each charged with one count of making preparations for incursions into foreign countries for the purpose of engaging in hostile activities. The charge carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. (Sources: *Guardian* [39], *Guardian* [40], *Telegraph* [41])

Khaled Cheikho and Family

Khaled Cheikho led the Sydney terrorist cell that authorities broke up in 2005. A court found the cell members possessed thousands of images and videos of executions. Four cell members pled guilty, while five denied the charges. They were later convicted. Cell members admitted at trial to possessing ammunition and trying to make an improvised explosive device. Cheikho received a 27-year sentence. His nephew Mustafa, who also belonged to the Sydney cell, received a 26-year sentence. (Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [42], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [22], *Sydney Morning Herald* [43])

Other members of Cheikho's family have also been tied to extremism. Cheikho's wife, Rahmah Wisudo, lives in Jordan with their son. A 2010 U.S. embassy cable [44] named Wisudo as one of 11 Australians to be placed on a no-fly list due to "demonstrated links" to al-Qaeda. The cable also named Wisudo's mother, Rabiah Hutchinson. Known as the "matriarch of radical Islam in Australia," Hutchinson is an Australian-born Muslim convert who spent time in Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. Hutchinson has been married several times, including to high-ranking leaders of Jemaah Islamiyah [45] (JI) and al-Qaeda. Australian authorities canceled her passport in 2003 because of her ties to these groups. (Sources: *Sydney Morning Herald* [43], *Australian* [46])

Hutchinson spent time in Indonesia working for a school created by JI cofounder Abu Bakar Bashir. She moved to Afghanistan in 2000. Osama bin Laden recommended Hutchinson go to Kabul. There Hutchinson ran an al-Qaeda-affiliated health clinic. She married Mustafa Hamid, a member of al-Qaeda's Shura Council, and became close friends with the wife of future al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. Hutchinson and her family fled Afghanistan after the September 11, 2001, attacks and ended up in Iran. The ASIO returned Hutchinson and her family to Australia in 2003. Hutchinson has not been officially charged, but authorities believe she has "directly supported extremist activities." The book *The Mother of Mohammed* details Hutchinson's life. (Sources: *Sydney Morning Herald* [43], *Australian* [46], *Australian* [47], *Australian* [48], BBC News [49])

Wisudo's half-brothers Illias and Abdullah Ayub were also named in the 2010 cable for their links to al-Qaeda. The brothers are the sons of Hutchinson and her third ex-husband, former JI cell leader Abdul Rahim Ayub. The brothers were detained in Yemen in 2006 for allegedly transporting guns to Somalia as part of an al-Qaeda cell with Marek Samulski of Sydney. Illias Ayub has since become a fighter for ISIS in Syria under the name Mohammad Ayub. He has appeared in several social media photos featuring guns and ISIS flags. (Sources: *Sydney Morning Herald* [43], *Australian* [46], *Australian* [50], *Daily Telegraph* [51])

Foreign Fighters

According to the ASIO's 2014 Report to Parliament [15], the number of Australians "training and fighting with, or otherwise assisting, groups" in the Middle East conflicts "is at an unprecedented level." Australian authorities stopped 230 suspected jihadists from leaving the country for the Middle East in March 2015 alone. Earlier that month, ISIS posted an online step-by-step guide on how to leave Australia to join ISIS. The guide included instructions to bypass Australian security, routes to get to Syria, and even packing tips. It also included a list of ISIS-affiliated Twitter users to act as a support network. (Sources: Associated Press [52], News.com.au [53])

The ASIO claims that the Syrian civil war is the primary reason behind Australia's increased terrorism threat. Australians have shown up on the battlefield in Iraq and Syria and in leading roles training fighters. Analysts estimated in December 2015 that 255 Australians had thus far joined the fighting in Syria and Iraq. As of March 2017, Australian authorities believed 100 Australians were still currently fighting in Iraq and Syria. The ASIO believes Australia's foreign fighters have largely joined the Nusra Front and ISIS, which desire English-speaking recruits to carry out attacks in the West. In September 2014, ISIS called [54] on its followers to exact revenge against Australia and other countries participating in airstrikes against the terror group. (Sources: The Soufan Group [2], *Daily Telegraph* [55], BBC News [56], *Time* [57], *Time*

[58], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [59], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [4], ASIO [15])

Women reportedly account for one-fifth of all Australian foreign fighters. Up to 40 women had gone to Syria and Iraq to participate in terrorism or marry jihadists as of February 2015. (Source: BBC News [56])

The ASIO's 2017-2018 report indicated that authorities expected "a very small number" of Australian foreign fighters to return to the country voluntarily or through deportation. Nonetheless, the government remains concerned foreign fighters will pose a national security threat if they return to Australia. The ASIO warned that returning foreign fighters hold a higher status among Australia's Islamist extremists, which they could exploit to radicalize and recruit others. Former Prime Minister Abbott believed Australians who fight alongside ISIS have sided against Australia and should be considered enemies of the state. Abbott also revealed in October 2014 that 100 Australia-based "facilitators"—e.g., recruiters and fundraisers—were supporting Australians fighting in Iraq and Syria. (Sources: ASIO [60], BBC News [56], *Time* *[57]*, *Time* *[58]*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation [59])

The Succarieh family of Brisbane provides an example of the relationship between foreign fighters and facilitators. Authorities charged Omar Succarieh in September 2014 with funding the Nusra Front. According to police, Omar began sending thousands of dollars to his brother Abraham in the Nusra Front between August 2013 and September 2014. Omar had reportedly planned to travel to Syria to avoid arrest and join the fighting. Abraham Succarieh flew from Brisbane to Dubai on September 10, 2013, to join the Nusra Front in Syria. A third brother, Ahmad, became Australia's first suicide bomber in Syria that same month. (Sources: *Brisbane Times* [61], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [62])

On December 9, 2019, Australian national Agim Ajazi was arrested in Australia after being extradited from Turkey. He had traveled to Turkey after fighting with internationally sanctioned terrorist group Jabhat Fateh al-Sham [63] in Syria. Ajazi faces five charges including providing support to a terrorist organization, advocating terrorism, and membership of a terrorist organization. (Sources: Kurdistan 24 [64], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [65])

Australian Suicide Bombers

At least three Australians have become suicide bombers in Iraq and Syria. Ahmad Succarieh, a.k.a. Abu Asma al-Australi, killed 35 Syrian soldiers when he drove a truck filled with 12 metric tons of explosives into a checkpoint close to Syria's Deir Al Zour military airport on September 11, 2013. The Nusra Front released a video on YouTube showing Succarieh preparing for the attack. On July 17, 2014, an 18-year-old from Melbourne known as Abu Bakr al-Australi killed three people and wounded dozens at a Baghdad market. (Sources: UPI [66], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [59], *Sydney Morning Herald* [67])

Twelve car bombs exploded simultaneously across Iraq on March 11, 2015, killing at least 17 people and wounding 38. Shortly after the attack, ISIS identified Abu Abdullah al-Australi as one of at least seven suicide bombers responsible. Australian authorities recognized al-Australi as 18-year-old Jake Bilardi, a Melbourne teen who the Australian media had dubbed "the white jihadi" after he appeared in a December 2014 ISIS video. (Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [68], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [69], *Guardian* [70], CNN [71])

Bilardi had maintained a blog in which he described his radicalization from "an Atheist school student in affluent Melbourne to a soldier of the Khilafah preparing to sacrifice my life for Islam." Though Bilardi was just 5 years old during the September 11, 2001, attacks, they sparked his interest in al-Qaeda and similar ideologies. He later wrote how he empathized with Iraqi and Afghan insurgents fighting against Western forces. He grew to believe "that violent global revolution was necessary to eliminate this system of governance and that I would likely be killed in this struggle." Bilardi, who initially intended to join the Nusra Front, made online contact with a Syrian jihadist who helped him get to the country in August 2014. His family reported him missing and police discovered bomb-making materials after searching his home. Australia canceled his passport that October. The blog has since been deleted. (Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [68], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [69], *Guardian* [70], CNN [71])

ISIS Propaganda

Several Australians have appeared in ISIS propaganda threatening violence against the West. Seventeen-year-old Abdullah Elmir disappeared from his Sydney home in June 2014 and reappeared under the name Abu Kaled in an ISIS YouTube

video later that year. Dressed in military fatigues and holding a rifle, Elmir promised the militants would not stop fighting until "we reach your lands and until we take the head of every tyrant and until the black flag is flying high in every single land, until we put the black flag on top of Buckingham Palace, until we put the black flag on top of the White House." (Source: *Guardian* [72])

Abu Yusseph, a.k.a. Zia Abdulhan, left his ex-wife and child in Brisbane to join ISIS in Aleppo, Syria. Yusseph has actively promoted ISIS on social media by posting pictures of himself and other foreign fighters. Additionally, Melbourne resident Abu Khaled al-Cambodi has appeared in several ISIS videos. A June 2014 video called "There Is No Life Without Jihad" featured him and two other Australians: Abu Yahya ash Shami, believed to have been killed shortly after the taping, and Abu Nour al Iraqi. (Sources: *Daily Mail* [73], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [4])

Neil Prakash

Neil Prakash [74], also known as Abu Khaled al-Cambodi, is an ISIS recruiter and was reportedly the most senior Australian fighting with ISIS. Australian Attorney General George Brandis has labeled him "the most dangerous Australian we knew of" fighting with the terror group. Prakash left Australia for Syria in 2013. Australian authorities tied him to a failed April 2015 terror plot in Australia targeting the Anzac Day parade. Prakash had a prolific Twitter presence in which he recruited for and promoted ISIS. In August 2015, Prakash used Twitter to call for an attack on Australia and announce the death of fellow Australian ISIS member Khaled Sharrouf. Also that month, Prakash posted a spreadsheet online with the names, addresses, and passwords of people working in the British Foreign Office, as well as almost 1,500 U.S. military personnel. (Sources: *Sydney Morning Herald* [75], *Daily Mail* [76], *Sydney Morning Herald* [77], *Telegraph* [78], *Telegraph* [79])

Australia issued an arrest warrant for Prakash in August 2015. Prakash was erroneously reported killed in an April 2016 U.S. airstrike in Iraq. Australian media revealed in November 2016 that Prakash had been arrested in Turkey while trying to cross into Syria. In July 2018, Turkey rejected Australia's extradition request on terrorism charges, raising concerns in Australia that Prakash could go free. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has pledged to continue fighting for Prakash's extradition. Prakash faces a potential life sentence in Australia. (Sources: *Herald Sun* [80], *Sydney Morning Herald* [75], *Daily Mail* [76], *Telegraph* [79], News.com.au [81], Guardian [82], Associated Press [83], *Sydney Morning Herald* [84])

On December 29, 2018, Australian Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton announced that Prakash had been stripped of his Australian citizenship. Dutton reiterated that Prakash was instrumental in ISIS's operations in the Middle East. According to the BBC, Prakash, who also holds Fijian citizenship, is the 12th dual citizen to be stripped of Australian citizenship. (Source: BBC News [85])

Khaled Sharrouf

Khaled Sharrouf had been a member of the Sydney terrorist cell arrested in 2005's Operation Pendennis. Sharrouf had a history of mental illness and came from an abusive home in Western Sydney. In 2009, he pled guilty to the plot and said that he had believed at the time that it was his responsibility as a devout Muslim to kill infidels. A court psychiatrist believed his mental health had improved and he was unlikely to return to terrorism. The court sentenced him to time served and released him.

Sharrouf, whose passport was revoked, used his brother's passport to travel to Syria in 2013. His wife and their five children soon followed him. Sharrouf has since moved to Iraq to fight alongside ISIS. In August 2014, he tweeted a picture of his 7-year-old son holding a severed head with the caption, "That's my boy!" Australian authorities believe Sharrouf to be dangerous, but say they are more concerned by Australian ISIS fighters who have not identified themselves and might return to the country unnoticed. (Sources: *Time* [58], *Australian* [86], News.com.au [87], *Washington Post* [88])

Sharrouf reportedly died in a June 2015 drone strike in Iraq that also killed Australian foreign fighter Mohamed Elomar. (Source: *Daily Mail* [89])

Abu Sulayman al Muhajir

The Nusra Front released a video in March 2014 of one of its senior sharia officials, Abu Sulayman al Muhajir ("the immigrant"). Abu Sulayman, whose real name is Mostafa Mahamed, is Australia's highest-ranking al-Qaeda member. Abu Sulayman had encouraged young men in Sydney to take up arms in Syria in 2012. He arrived in Syria in 2013 and became a "magnet" for foreign fighters, according to Australian officials. Combat photos of Abu Sulayman appeared on a Nusra Front Twitter account in 2014. He has appeared in several Nusra Front videos condemning ISIS for "stealing the right" of Islamic clerics to consult on the declaration of an Islamic state. ISIS fighter and fellow Australian Khaled Sharrouf has accused Abu Sulayman of being an ASIO informant and offered a $10,000 bounty for him on Twitter. (Sources: *Daily Telegraph* [90], *Sydney Morning Herald* [91], *Australian* [92])

Ashley Johnston

Twenty-eight-year-old Australian Ashley Johnston died on February 24, 2015, fighting ISIS alongside the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in Iraq. ISIS fighters ambushed Johnston, a.k.a. Heval Bagok Serhed, and other YPG members after their truck broke down. Johnston reportedly sacrificed himself so others could escape. His body was flown back to Australia on March 14 after a funeral in Iraq where mourners waved Australian flags and held up pictures of Johnston. He was reportedly the first Westerner to die fighting against ISIS.

Johnston was a former Australian army reservist from Queensland. He had gone to Europe in October 2014, telling his family and friends he was going to Greenland. His mother, Amanda Johnston, told Australian media she learned her son was in Iraq from a December 30, 2014, text message he sent her. She thought her son was doing humanitarian work with the Kurds, not fighting against ISIS.

Johnston would have faced a 20-year prison sentence if he had returned to Australia. The Australian Kurdish community hailed him as a hero, but Australian authorities are worried his death will encourage other Australians to go to Syria. According to the U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the YPG does not actively recruit foreigners, but its ranks include people from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Spain, Holland, and France. (Sources: *Daily Mail* [93], *Sydney Morning Herald* [94], BBC News [56])

Far-Right Extremism

On February 24, 2020, during a presentation of the ASIO's "annual threat assessment," Director-General Mike Burgess cited small right-wing cells in Australian suburbs that met to salute Nazi symbols and conduct weapons and combat training. ASIO also reported that Australians were joining international white supremacist groups such as The Base [95]. The group uses online platforms to spread extremist propaganda and encourage acts of violence. Though right-wing attacks in Australia are deemed to be of "low capability"—such as with a knife, gun, or vehicle—more sophisticated attacks are a possibility. (Sources: *Canberra Times* [7], *Guardian* [17])

In an undisclosed case in early 2020, an Australian individual was prevented from leaving the country to join "an extreme right-wing group on a foreign battlefield." The ASIO declined to reveal the would-be foreign fighter's identity. This was not the first such case, however. In October 2018, the Australian Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton and Australian Federal Police commissioner Andrew Colvin met with their Ukrainian counterparts, where they were presented with a list of five Australian citizens who had reportedly traveled to Ukraine to fight alongside a Russian-backed nationalist militia. The conflict in Ukraine has attracted extremists from around the world, many with ties to far-right or ultra-nationalist groups in their home countries. In 2017, Ethan Tilling, a member of Australian white supremacist group Right Wing Resistance, traveled to Ukraine and fought for six months before returning to Australia. Tilling claims he is no longer associated with the far right. In 2016, a former member of the Royal Australian Air Force Jared Bennet was inspired by social media to join Ukraine's radical ultranationalist Right Sector. (Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [96], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [8], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [97])

On March 15, 2019, alleged gunman Brenton Tarrant [98], an Australian citizen, killed 51 and wounded dozens of others in attacks at the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. Tarrant livestreamed the attack on Facebook Live. He has been detained in New Zealand's only maximum-security prison in Auckland. He faces a total of 90 charges for

murder, attempted murder, and engaging in a terrorist act. Tarrant remains in custody in New Zealand and will stand trial on September 12, 2020. (Sources: *Wall Street Journal* *[99]*, Al Jazeera [100], *New York Times* *[101]*)

Tarrant is believed to have financial ties to far-right groups in Europe, including the anti-immigrant Identitarian Movement. In September 2017, Tarrant reportedly donated 1,000 euros to the French branch of the Identitarian Movement. In early 2018, he donated $1,700 to the Austrian Identitatrian Movement. Before carrying out the attacks, Tarrant disseminated his manifesto in which he promoted a white nationalist theory called the Great Replacement, which posits that non-white migrants are threatening to replace the dominant European—i.e., white—culture. On March 25, 2020, Tarrant pleaded guilty to 51 charges of murder and 40 charges of attempted murder for carrying out the 2019 Christchurch shootings. (Sources: *Washington Post* [102], Counter Extremism Project [103], The Conversation [104])

Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents

Meat Grinder Bomb Plot

On July 15, 2017, two Lebanese brothers, Khaled and Mahmoud Khayat, attempted to sneak an improvised explosive device (IED) hidden in a meat grinder onto an Etihad passenger plane. A third brother, Amer, had been scheduled to take the flight departing from Sydney and destined for Beirut via Abu Dhabi. Khaled and Mahmoud planned to have Amer unknowingly carry the device onto his flight, which would then explode in mid-air. However, Amer's luggage exceeded the airline's baggage limit and Khaled removed the IED, abandoning the plot. Two weeks later, Israeli intelligence authorities alerted Australian authorities to the aborted plan, prompting Australian police to arrest Khaled and Mahmoud in Sydney. According to Australian Federal Police, the two men were directed by a senior member of ISIS. (Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [105], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [106])

At the time, a fourth brother named Tarek was an ISIS commander in Syria, according to Lebanon's interior minister. Tarek used an encrypted mobile messaging application to send instructions and bomb-making videos to Khaled and Mahmoud. In December 2019, the two brothers who built the device were found guilty in Australian court of conspiring to plan a terrorist act. Khaled received 40 years in prison and Mahmoud was sentenced to 30 years in prison. Tarek was captured in Iraq in April 2018 and has been sentenced to the death penalty, but was issued a reprieve because he has lung cancer. Amer, who was arrested upon landing in Lebanon and spent two and a half years in prison in Beirut, has been cleared of all charges and is estranged from his brothers. (Sources: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [107], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [105], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [106])

Parramatta Police Shooting

On October 2, 2015, 15-year-old Iranian immigrant Farhad Jabar shot and killed Curtis Cheng, a police finance worker who was leaving work at the main police station in the western Sydney suburb of Parramatta. Police shot and killed Jabar following the attack. Jabar was born in Iran and moved to Australia with his family as a child. Police were uncertain of Jabar's motives, but they suspected Cheng's murder was politically motivated and therefore linked to terrorism. On October 7, 200 police officers searched homes in Parramatta and arrested four men believed to be connected to the shooting. Police arrested 18-year-old Raban Alou and 22-year-old Talal Alameddine in the days following the attack on suspicions that the two men armed Jabar and helped him prepare. (Sources: Associated Press [108], *New York Times* [109], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [110])

Australian media reported that Islamist advocacy group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) may have radicalized Jabar. HT denied the accusation and condemned the shooting as "wrong," but blamed "Western foreign and domestic policy" for extremist violence. Australian media alleged that Jabar used the pseudonym "Abu Zaid" to communicate with ISIS fighters over Facebook. Jabar had also reportedly been in contact over Twitter with Australian ISIS recruiter Neil Prakash [74]. According to media reports, Prakash radicalized Jabar over a period of several months. New South Wales police denied the link between Prakash and Jabar. (Sources: *Daily Telegraph* [111], *Daily Mail* [112], *Daily Mail* *[113]*)

Sydney Hostage Crisis

On December 15, 2014, Man Haron Monis took 17 people hostage in Sydney's Lindt Chocolate Café. He forced some of the hostages to hold up a black-and-white Islamist flag in the café's window. Authorities said the flag had the *shahada*, the Muslim testimony of faith, imprinted on it. Commandos stormed the cafe after a 16-hour standoff, resulting in the deaths of Monis and two hostages. (Sources: CNN [114], ABC News [115])

Monis was an Iranian refugee who received asylum in 1996. His original name was Manteghi Bourjerdi. Monis was a self-proclaimed Islamic cleric who described himself as a Shiite Muslim who had converted to Sunni Islam. The local Muslim community considered him unstable, however, and had disavowed him. Authorities convicted Monis in 2009 of sending offensive letters to the families of Australian soldiers who died serving in Afghanistan. At the time of the café siege, Monis was out on bail for being an accessory to his ex-wife's November 2013 murder. He also faced more than 40 sexual and indecent assault charges stemming from a 2002 incident involving a Sydney woman. Monis's former attorney, Manny Conditsis, called him "a damaged goods individual who has done something outrageous." (Sources: BBC News [116], BBC News [117], *New York Times* [118], *Sydney Morning Herald* [119])

September 2014 ISIS Plot to Behead Australians

About 800 officers conducted a massive overnight manhunt in Sydney and Brisbane on September 17 and 18, 2014, in response to intelligence about a plot to kill non-Muslims. Police charged 15 people with conspiring to commit a terrorist act with senior Australian ISIS militant Mohammad Ali Baryalei. Fourteen ISIS recruits were reportedly ready to leave Australia for Syria. Baryalei instructed them to instead stay, kidnap people off the street, and videotape their beheadings for propaganda. Authorities believe Baryalei died fighting [120] for ISIS in October 2014. The fifteenth member of the group was 22-year-old Omarjan Azari, whom police charged later in the year for sending thousands of dollars to ISIS. (Sources: *Time* [3], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [20], *Daily Telegraph* [121])

Anti-Turkish Terrorism

Australia was also the setting for Armenian anti-Turkish terrorist activities in the 1980s. In December 1980, members of the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide killed the Turkish consul general, Sarik Ariyak, and his bodyguard in Sydney. Police stopped two other attacks that month. On November 23, 1986, a car bomb exploded in the basement parking lot of Melbourne's Turkish consulate. Only one of the bombers, Hagob Levonian, was killed. Co-bomber Armenian-Australian Levon Demirian received a 10-year sentence for conspiracy. (Sources: News.com.au [122], Turkish Consulate General [123])

Hilton Hotel Attack

Australia's first terrorist attack occurred on February 13, 1978. A bomb planted in a garbage truck exploded at Sydney's Hilton Hotel where Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and 11 foreign leaders were staying for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Two garbage collectors and a police officer were killed and many more were wounded. Investigators tied the attack to the Australian branch of religious sect Ananda Marga. The sect had been leading international protests against the Indian government for imprisoning its spiritual leader, Pabhat Ranian Sarkar, for murder. Ananda Marga was later cleared of the bombing and the perpetrators have not been caught. The attack spurred Australia to create its first counter-terrorist assault force in 1979. (Sources: *Herald Sun* [124], *Sydney Morning Herald* [125])

- **November 9, 2018:** A knife-wielding man stabs three people in Melbourne, killing one.
  Police fatally shoot the attacker. Police discover gas canisters in the attacker's car, which caught fire just before he began the attack. Authorities identify the attacker as a Somali immigrant who was previously known to authorities but do not release his name. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, calling the attacker a soldier of the Islamic State but providing no clear evidence linking the group to the attack. Sources: *New York Times* [126], *Wall Street Journal* [127], *Guardian* [128], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [129]
- **December 21, 2017:** A 32-year-old Australian man of Afghan decent rams his car into a train station in Melbourne, wounding at least 19 people.
  Police call the attack deliberate but do not immediately declare it terrorism. Police arrest the driver, Saeed Noori, at the scene as well as a second man who filmed the incident while carrying a bag of knives. Police do not believe the second individual is connected to the vehicle attack. Authorities note that the suspected driver had a history of assault, drug use, and mental problems. Police charge Noori with 18 counts of attempted murder and one count of endangering life. Sources: CNN [130], SBS News [131], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [132], Reuters [133]

- **July 28, 2017:** Sydney police arrest four men during multiple raids in Sydney. The men are accused of planning a bomb attack on aircraft.
  Source: NPR [134]
- **July 15, 2017:** Two Lebanese brothers, Khaled and Mahmoud Khayat, attempt to sneak an IED hidden in a meat grinder onto an Etihad passenger plane.
  A third brother, Amer, is scheduled to take the flight departing from Sydney and destined for Lebanon via Abu Dhabi. Khaled and Mahmoud plan to have Amer unknowingly carry the device onto his flight, which would explode in mid-air. Amer's luggage exceeds the airline's weight limit, prompting Khaled to remove the IED and abandon the plot. Australian police arrest Khaled and Mahmoud two weeks later. According to Australian Federal Police, the two men were directed by a senior member of ISIS. Sources: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [107], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [105]
- **June 5, 2017:** Yacqub Khayre calls a female escort to an apartment building in the Melbourne suburb of Brighton. hayre kills a man employed by the escort company and takes the woman hostage in the apartment building. After a two-hour standoff, police kill Khayre and free the hostage. ISIS claims Khayre as a "soldier," but police believe he acted alone. In the May 2017 issue of its English-language propaganda magazine Rumiyah, ISIS recommended its followers lure victims into traps using ruses similar to Khayre's. Khayre immigrated to Australia as a child refugee from Somalia. In 2010, a jury acquitted him of planning a suicide attack. Khayre had previously been incarcerated for arson, drugs, and violent crimes. He was released on parole in November 2016. Sources: *New York Times* [135], *Rumiyah* [136], Associated Press [137]
- **December 23, 2016:** Following a series of overnight raids, the Australian Federal Police announce they have foiled a plot to set off multiple bombs around Melbourne on Christmas Day.
  Police described the threat as an "imminent terrorist event" inspired by ISIS. According to the police, the suspects had been under surveillance for two weeks. Source: Reuters [138]
- **December 19, 2016:** Hizb ut-Tahrir holds a rally in Western Sydney to protest the massacres in Aleppo, Syria. Protesters hold signs against "The Axis of Evil: Russia, Iran, Syria, USA," and call for the removal of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. One speaker at the rally calls for building "a solid independent path built solely upon Islam, built solely upon Islam to the exclusion of everything else." According to Hizb ut-Tahrir's Facebook page, 249 people attend the rally. Sources: News.com.au [139], *Daily Telegraph* [140]
- **October 2016:** Authorities arrest 31-year-old Phillip Michael Galea and charge him with collecting or making documents to prepare for terrorist acts and carrying out acts in preparation for a terrorist act.
  Galea is believed to have links to the far-right groups Reclaim Australia, United Patriots Front, Patriots Defence League Australia, the True Blue Crew, and Combat 18. Authorities believe that between September 2015 and August 2016, Galea had been planning and preparing to bomb several "left-wing premises." Source: *Guardian* *[141]*
- **September 10, 2016:** Ihsas Khan reportedly stabs and seriously wounds 59-year-old Wayne Greenhalg in a park in the Sydney suburb of Minto.
  The 22-year-old Khan then allegedly tries to stab a police officer through a car window after police arrive on the scene. Police call the attack a "deliberate act" inspired by ISIS. Khan is charged with committing a terrorist attack and attempted murder. Sources: *New York Times* [142], Australian Broadcasting Company [143], Australian Broadcasting Company [144]
- **September 5, 2016:** ISIS releases the first issue of its new propaganda magazine *Rumiyah*, in which it calls for lone-wolf attacks in Australia, "a land cloaked in darkness and corrupted by kufr [unbelief], fornication, and all forms of vice."
  ISIS lists several targets—including the Melbourne Cricket Ground and Sydney Cricket Ground—in Australia and calls for followers to "stab them, shoot them, poison them and run them down with your vehicles." ISIS also eulogizes convicted Australian terrorist Ezzit Raad, who served four-and-a-half years in prison for a failed 2005 plot to bomb the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Raad left Australia in 2013, and was killed while fighting in Syria. Sources: *Guardian* [145], *Rumiyah* [146], *Australian* [147]
- **October 2, 2015:** Farhad Jabar, a 15-year-old Iranian immigrant, shot and killed police finance worker Curtis Cheng as he was leaving work at the main police station in the western Sydney suburb of Parramatta.
  Police shot and killed Jabar following the attack. Police suspected Cheng's murder was linked to terrorism. Sources: Associated Press [108], *New York Times* [109], Australian Broadcasting Corporation [110]
- **May 8, 2015:** Australian Federal Police and Victoria Police arrest a man and six women in Melbourne's suburbs.
  Police also arrest a 14-year-old boy in Sydney and another teenage boy in Melbourne who had reportedly posted support for ISIS on Facebook. All nine suspects had allegedly intended to detonate three improvised explosive devices in Melbourne on May 10, Mother's Day. Source: *Daily Mail* [148]
- **April 18, 2015:** Melbourne police arrest five teenagers during antiterrorism raids.
  Authorities uncover a plot to attack police during Anzac Day celebrations honoring veterans on April 25. Police say that two of the five, aged 18 and 19, were inspired by ISIS and connected to Abdul Numan Haider who had been killed while trying to stab Melbourne police officers in September 2014. Of the other three teenagers, one is arrested on weapons charges and two are taken for further questioning. Source: *Wall Street Journal* [149]
- **April 2, 2015:** British police arrest a teenager in Blackburn, Lancashire in the United Kingdom.
  The 14-year-old had messages on his phone about a pending attack in Australia. Australian police confirms that

messages ae linked to five teenagers' plans to target Australian police on Anzac Day. Source: BBC News [150]

- **February 10, 2015:** Police raid the homes of two men in a Sydney suburb after receiving a tip they are planning an "imminent attack" on behalf of ISIS.
  Authorities discover a homemade ISIS flag and a video featuring one of the men discussing plans to carry out an attack. Source: *New York Times* [151]
- **February 2015:** Khodr Moustafa Taha pleads guilty to 11 weapons possession and assault charges, including against his mother.
  Authorities detained Taha in January after he tweeted to police, "I'm going to hurt your officers" in late 2014. Police reportedly discovered ammunition and three swords in his home. Taha, who is of Lebanese decent, also allegedly posted support for ISIS and al-Qaeda on Twitter. Sources: *Herald Sun* [152], *Herald Sun* [153], *Age* [154]
- **December 15, 2014:** Man Haron Monis takes 17 people hostage in Sydney's Lindt Chocolat Café.
  Commandos storm the cafe after a 16-hour standoff, resulting in the deaths of Monis and two hostages. Sources: *Time* [155], ABC News [156]
- **December 15, 2014:** Police charge two Sydney men for allegedly transferring $15,000 to ISIS in August 2014 and being "key facilitators in the movement of funds" to pay for Australians to travel to Iraq and Syria.
  One of the suspects, 22-year-old Omarjan Azari, had been charged that September with plotting to behead Australians. Source: *Guardian* [157]
- **September 30, 2014:** Police arrest a 23-year-old Melbourne man for allegedly sending $12,000 overseas to help a U.S. citizen fight in Syria for a terrorist organization.
  The raid is the culmination of eight months of cooperation between the FBI, Australian Federal Police, and local police. Source: *Australian* [158]
- **September 23, 2014:** Police shoot dead 18-year-old Abdul Numan Haider after he stabs two police officers at a Melbourne police station.
  Haider had been under surveillance for three months. Authorities had agreed to meet with him to discuss the cancellation of his passport. Haider attacks two officers with a knife upon arriving. Police discover a larger knife and an ISIS flag after searching Haider's body. Sources: *Guardian* [159], *Sydney Morning Herald* [160]
- **September 17, 2014 - September 18, 2014:** Police arrest 15 people planning to kidnap and behead Australians for ISIS after about 800 officers conducted a massive overnight manhunt in Sydney and Brisbane.
  Source: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [20]
- **August 2009:** In Operation Neath, Australian authorities arrest five al-Shabab members planning to attack the Holworthy Army Barracks in Sydney.
  Three of the men, Wissam Fattal, Saney Edow Aweys, and Nayef el-Sayed, are convicted. Source: Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point [21]
- **June 2006:** Faheen Khalid Lodhi becomes the first Australian to be convicted of planning a terrorist act.
  Authorities arrested him in October 2003 on suspicions he was planning to attack the national electricity grid or a defense site. Police said he possessed maps, chemicals, and instructions for poisons and homemade bombs, as well as jihadist doctrine and terrorist training materials. Source: *Sydney Morning Herald* [161]
- **November 8, 2005:** Authorities arrest 17 members of two jihadist cells in Melbourne and Sydney after a 17-month-long counterterrorism investigation called Operation Pendennis.
  Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [22], *Sydney Morning Herald* [43], *Australian* [46]
- **November 23, 1986:** A car bomb explodes in the basement parking lot of Melbourne's Turkish consulate, killing only one of the bombers, Hagop Levonian.
  Source: News.com.au [122]
- **December 1980:** Members of the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide kill the Turkish consul general, Sarik Ariyak, and his bodyguard in Sydney.
  Source: News.com.au [122]
- **February 13, 1978:** A bomb explodes at Sydney's Hilton Hotel where Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and 11 foreign leaders are staying for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.
  Two garbage collectors and a police officer die. Source: Parliament of New South Wales [162]

Domestic Counter-Extremism

Since September 2014, Australia's security threat level has been listed as "probable," indicating intelligence alluding to the intention and capability to carry out a terrorist attack in the country. According to Australia's security agency, the ASIO, the most likely form of attack in Australia is an individual or group using simple, low-cost methods such as a knife, firearms, or vehicle ramming. Between the end of 2017 and late 2018, the ASIO resolved or investigated more than 14,000 counterterrorism leads, according to the agency's 2017-2018 report to parliament in October 2018. The agency investigated more than 400 terrorism cases between the end of 2014 and late 2015, according to the agency's October 2015 report. (Sources: ASIO [60], ASIO [163])

Australia's government sought to increase counterterrorism and counter-extremism measures following the December 2014 Sydney café hostage crisis. In July 2017, Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull called on Internet providers to block extremist content and comply with government requests for encrypted information in an effort to combat extremism. Turnbull said in October 2015 that anyone who cannot abide by Australia's core value of "mutual respect" is free to leave the country. During a meeting with security chiefs that month, Turnbull said it is "absolutely critical" for security and government officials to engage with Australia's Muslim community to prevent radicalization. (Sources: Bloomberg [164], News.com.au [165], BBC News [166])

Legislation and Financing

Following the March 15, 2019, terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, Australia's government passed the "Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material" bill on April 4, 2019. The legislation seeks to hold social media companies responsible for the content on their platforms, threatening to fine companies up to 10 percent of their annual profit and jailing executives for up to three years for failing to "expeditiously" remove illegal content. The bill also creates a regime for the eSafety Commissioner to notify tech companies that they are hosting abhorrent violent material, triggering an obligation to remove such content. In February 2020, the director general of the ASIO said that online messaging applications were used in nine out of 10 priority counterterrorism cases in the country. On March 24, 2020, it was reported that Australia's eSafety commissioner will now be allowed to order Internet providers to block websites hosting terrorist content. Following the March 2019 Christchurch shootings in New Zealand—where the Australian-born shooter livestreamed the attack on Facebook—Australia did not have any legal basis to prevent the dissemination of extremist content online. To be eligible for blocking, the websites must feature content that promotes or incites acts of terrorism or violent crimes. (Sources: *Guardian* [167], *New York Times* [13], *Guardian* [17], Sydney Morning Herald [168])

In mid-July 2017, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull proposed to increase the military's ability to address domestic terror incidents. Turnbull hopes to create a more flexible and effective response force to any future terror attack in Australia by removing a provision which prohibited military involvement in attacks until the police requested assistance. (Source: Al Jazeera [169])

In December 2016, Turnbull approved a new law permitting authorities to extend the prison sentences of convicted terrorists at the end of their prison terms. Turnbull justified the law because 55 people had been accused of terrorism since 2014. A court order is required to extend the sentence. A parliamentary committee would review the new law after six years. (Source: Associated Press [170])

In July 2016, Australian law enforcement and information agencies were combined into the new Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) in an effort to increase counter-extremism cooperation. (Source: U.S. Department of State [171])

In September 2015, former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott proposed new hate speech legislation prohibiting speech deemed "advocacy to genocide." The law would provide prison sentences of up to seven years for offenders who publicly "counsel, promote, encourage or urge" genocide. According to Attorney General George Brandis, the proposed law is aimed at groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir, which Abbott had unsuccessfully called to be banned. The government introduced the law in parliament on November 12, 2015. (Sources: *Daily Telegraph* [172], *Guardian* [173], *Daily Telegraph* [111], *Australian Jewish News* [174])

Following the October 2015 shooting of a police accountant by a 15-year-old Iranian-Australian, the government began exploring lowering the minimum age a suspect can be subjected to control orders, and restrictions on movement and communications. The proposal would lower the minimum age from 16 to 14. While the legislation was under consideration prior to the shooting, Brandis said the shooting demonstrated the need to lower the age for restrictions. (Sources: Australian Attorney General's Office [175], *New York Times* [176])

In May 2015, the Abbott government unveiled a $1.2 billion security package to combat extremism and prevent Australians from joining foreign conflicts. The package allocated $450 million "to strengthen intelligence capabilities and to counter extremist messaging." Another $131 million was designated to help telephone and Internet companies adjust to new data retention laws. The package also included $296 million for intelligence agencies to upgrade their information technology systems. The government also set aside $22 million to fight online extremist propaganda. Another $750 million was

apportioned to expand Australia's Middle East military operations including in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Sources: *Guardian* [177], *Business Insider Australia* [178])

Abbott announced a series of tougher counterterrorism measures in February 2015. The "threshold for action" against Lindt Café gunman Man Haron Monis had been "set too high," according to Abbott, who said Monis should never have been admitted to Australia or released on bail in his ex-wife's murder case. Abbott promised Australia would no longer allow its "enemies to exploit our decency." (Sources: *Financial Times* [179], Reuters [180], BBC News [181], Associated Press [182])

Abbott's plan called for suspending or revoking the citizenship of dual citizens involved in terrorism, and suspending welfare, overseas travel, and other privileges of Australian citizens involved in terrorism. Authorities would also restrict hate speech by religious preachers. A new counterterrorism coordinator would oversee programs to promote Australian values and counter extremist propaganda. The Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security made a series of recommendations regarding the package in early November 2015. The Cabinet approved the recommendations. Parliament passed the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill that December. The new legislation allows the government to automatically strip dual nationals of Australian citizenship if they are involved in terrorism abroad. The government would also be able to strip the citizenship of dual citizens who have been convicted of engaging in terrorism abroad within 10 years of the law's passage. The legislation also allows Australia to strip citizenship from dual nations convicted of terrorism in Australia. But in March 2017, Australian lawmakers warned that only one foreign fighter had to-date lost his Australian citizenship, and loopholes within Australian law still allowed Australian foreign fighters to return to the country. (Sources: *Financial Times* [179], Reuters [180], BBC News [181], Associated Press [182], *Sydney Morning Herald* [183], Agence France-Presse [184], *Daily Telegraph* *[55]*)

In December 2014, the government passed a $630 million funding increase over a four-year period for police and security agencies to combat terrorism. This plan is separate to the May 2015 security package. (Source: *Guardian* [177])

In late 2014, the Parliament passed the Foreign Fighters Bill, which canceled welfare payments to people involved in terrorism and expanded security agencies' powers to combat extremism. The bill expanded the Australian Secret Intelligence Service's abilities to support the Australian Defence Force in military operations. It also expanded legal authority to act against people suspected of funding, enabling, or supporting terrorism. A key component that stirred debate in the country was a provision that made it illegal for citizens to travel to areas deemed to be combat zones. (Sources: United Nations [5], Reuters [185], Parliament of Australia [186], Australian Attorney General's Office [11], *Australian* [187])

Australia instituted a ban on travel to conflict zones in December 2014. The government barred its citizens from traveling to the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa, Syria, that month, and followed up in March 2015 by restricting travel to Mosul, Iraq. (Sources: Reuters [188], Reuters [189])

The prime minister announced a $64 million counter-extremism package in August 2014. The package included $32.7 million for a new multi-agency effort to monitor and disrupt foreign fighters and their supporters. It also included $13.4 million for counter-radicalization community engagement programs. Another $6.2 million would go toward creating a new federal police team to target returning foreign fighters. (Source: Sky News [190])

The 2005 Anti-Terrorism Act [191] gave authorities wider powers to obtain information about and detain terrorism suspects.

Government Programs

The government launched the Countering Violent Extremism Unit [192] within the Attorney General's Department in August 2014 to work with local governments and communal organizations fight extremist influences and decrease the threat of radicalization. The Unit oversees several de-radicalization programs and works with local governments to rehabilitate those imprisoned for terrorism offenses.

One of the Unit's initiatives is the Living Safe Together [193] website. The site provides information on the radicalization process, counterterrorism laws, and how to report extremism. The Living Safe Together grant program allocated $1 million

in 2014-15 for community-based non-government and local government programs—such as mentoring, counseling, and education programs—to counter violent extremism. (Source: Australian Attorney General's Office [194])

The government announced $1.6 million in grants to 34 community organizations on May 1, 2015. The government increased its allocation by $600,000 due to the multitude of requests. Groups that received grants included an at-risk-youth mentorship program by a Curtin University de-radicalization expert, a formal qualification program for aspiring Muslim mentors by the Australian Muslim Women's Association, and soccer clinics run by Football United to help youth develop social skills and feel part of the community. (Source: *Guardian* [195])

Student Efforts to Counter Extremism

As part of the U.S. State Department's "P2P: Challenging Extremism" competition, a team of students from Australia's Curtin University developed an app called "52 JUMAA." The free app allows users to create profiles and set goals for their personal and spiritual growth. The app provides users with weekly challenges to encourage them to connect with and give back to their communities. The app's creators believe it can challenge the lure of extremist groups that capitalize on impressionable youth exploring Islam. (Source: WAtoday [196])

Anti-Money Laundering/Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CTF)

Australia is a member of the international Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) is Australia's financial intelligence agency. A 2015 FATF assessment found Australia's AML/CTF policies to be a "mature regime" but nevertheless cited gaps in the country's AML/CTF policies, including failures to adequately monitor non-profit organizations that might be used to fund terrorism. A July 2018 report by AUSTRAC and the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity found Australia's AML/CTF legislation is "increasingly unfit for purpose in the face of emerging technology." The report called for "effective legislation" to "respond to both current and future needs." In response, a spokesperson for the Australian Home Affairs department told the *Australian* that the country's terrorism financing legislation has fully complied with international standards since the 2015 assessment. (Sources: FATF [197], FATF [198], *Australian* *[199]*)

International Counter-Extremism

Australia has participated in several overseas military campaigns to curb extremism, including the fight against ISIS, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and U.N. peacekeeping missions. In May 2015, the government allocated $750 million in its 2015 budget to expand Australia's Middle East operations. (Source: *Business Insider Australia* [178])

ISIS and Syria

Australia was one of the first countries to volunteer military support to the U.S.-led international coalition against ISIS. It launched its first combat mission on October 5, 2014. According to Chief of Joint Operations Vice Admiral David Johnston, Australian planes flew over Iraq dozens of times in 2014 and dropped bombs at least twice in raids that killed "multiple" members of ISIS. In October 2014, Australian personnel destroyed an ISIS facility in Iraq, killing several members. Australia has taken on a larger load of missions in Iraq to allow the U.S. and other coalition members to focus on Syria. (Sources: *Guardian,* [200] News.com.au [201])

As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, the Pacific Island Forum, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Australian authorities also work with other Southeast Asian countries to further develop and strengthen anti-ISIS operations in the region. Most recently, Australia sent two P3 Orion reconnaissance planes to assist in the Philippines' operation to retake the city of Marawi from the ISIS-affiliate Abu Sayyaf Group. (Sources: U.S. Department of State [171], Sky News [202])

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has called for a political solution to the crises in Iraq and Syria. As of November 2015, Australia has agreed to accept 12,000 Syrian refugees. (Source: *Herald Sun* *[203]*)

Iraq

About 2,000 Australian troops participated in the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003 to topple Saddam Hussein. On April 12, 2003, Australia launched Operation Baghdad Assist to provide medical supplies and other humanitarian support. On July 16, 2003, Australia launched Operation Catalyst to assist in Iraq's reconstruction. The bulk of Australia's forces left Iraq in 2008. (Source: *Sydney Morning Herald* [204])

In May 2015, the Australian government designated $382 million for its continued involvement with the international coalition in Iraq. As part of the international Building Partner Capacity (BPC) mission, Australia sent a contingent of 300 personnel in early May to train and rebuild Iraqi security forces. Australia's commitment to the BPC force is expected to last two years. (Sources: *Business Insider Australia* [178], Prime Minister of Australia [205])

Afghanistan

Australia openly supported U.S. action in Afghanistan and contributed troops to the U.S.-led coalition in late 2001. Australia withdrew its forces in December 2002 but redeployed in 2005. Australia contributed 1,550 troops to the coalition at the height of its participation in 2009. Australia withdrew its last troops in December 2013. (Source: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [206])

U.N. Peacekeeping Missions

Australia joined the first U.N. peacekeeping mission in Indonesia in 1947. Australians have since commanded six multinational forces. Australian helicopters participated in peacekeeping operations in the Sinai in the 1970s and '80s. The country also participated in missions in Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Iraq during the first Gulf War, Somalia, and Rwanda. Australia continues to participate in international peacekeeping operations. (Source: Returned Services League Australia [207])

Turnbull has raised the possibility of Australians acting as peacekeeping troops in Syria. He also said Syrians were more likely to accept peacekeepers who come from within the region. (Source: *Herald Sun [203]*)

International Aid

Australia maintains a robust international aid program that the government uses to aid recipients' abilities to fight domestic extremism, as well as to enhance their infrastructure. In the 2018-19 fiscal year, Australia allocated $4.2 billion (Australian) between five regions: the Pacific ($1.3 billion), Southeast and East Asia ($1 billion), South and West Asia ($284.8 million), and the Middle East and Africa ($258.5 million), and Latin America and the Caribbean ($5.9 million). The government views international aid as beneficial to the country's own national interests by contributing to the sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. (Sources: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [208], Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [209])

In its 2018-19 allocation, Australia's development assistance to the Pacific region included a $17.5 million allocation toward the creation of a new Australia Pacific Security College to provide security and law enforcement training for officials from across the Pacific Island region. In South and Southwest Asia, Australian aid is targeting violent extremism. In Bangladesh, Australia is providing assistance on countering terror financing. Additionally, the Australian Awards scholarship program promotes counter-radicalization through social media, according to the Australian government. In Pakistan, Australia funds the Radio Campaign for Women's Empowerment in order to support the role of women in countering violent extremism. Australia also contributes to Sri Lanka's Indo-Pacific Justice and Security Program, which is aimed at strengthening responses to transnational crime and violent extremism. (Source: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [209])

Public Opinion

An October 2016 poll on attitudes toward national security found that 45 percent of Australians were either "very" or

"somewhat" concerned about either themselves or a family member being the victim of a terrorist attack in Australia, and 56 percent believe the government could do more to prevent terrorism. The Australian National University (ANU) poll also found that 71 percent of Australians are concerned about increasing Islamic extremism in Australia, but 70 percent also believe that Muslims in Australia should not be subject to additional scrutiny because of their religion. (Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [210], Australian National University [211], Australian National University [212])

Regarding foreign fighters, the ANU poll found that 69 percent of Australians believed the government should prevent citizens from participating in foreign conflicts, and 85 percent supported canceling the citizenship of dual nationals involved in terrorist activities abroad. (Sources: Australian National University [211], Australian National University [212])

A November 2015 poll found that three out of four Australians believe a large-scale terror attack is likely in the country, while one out of four Australians believe such an attack is inevitable. Earlier in the year, the Lowy Institute's 2015 national poll recorded the lowest percentage of Australians who feel safe in the country in the poll's 11-year history. Sixty-nine percent of Australians view ISIS as a "high risk" to Australia's security. Australians also viewed terrorist attacks on Australians overseas (55 percent) and homegrown terrorism in Australia (53 percent) as high risks to Australia. A majority (69 percent) of Australians support Australian military action in Iraq, but only 20 percent believe it will make Australia safer from future terrorism. (Sources: *Guardian* *[213]*, Lowy Institute [214])

The Australian Muslim community has reportedly dealt with growing feelings of disenfranchisement over the years. A 2014 poll on immigration and social cohesion found that one in four Australians negatively view Muslims. Muslim leaders condemned the December 2014 Sydney café siege but said they felt targeted by prevailing anti-Muslim attitudes that blame the entire Muslim community for extremists' acts. (Sources: *Sydney Morning Herald* *[215]*, *New York Times* [216])

During a protest on September 18, 2014, Muslim community members said they had been terrified during massive anti-terror raids earlier that month. Protesters accused then-Prime Minister Abbott's government of politicizing the security situation. The president of the Islamic Friendship Association of Australia, Keysar Trad, blamed the government's "negative campaigns" against building new mosques for helping to radicalize Australian youth. (Sources: *Daily Mail* [18], News.com.au [19])

Senior Islamic leaders met with the attorney general to discuss homegrown extremism in July 2014. They promised to do what they can to prevent young Muslim Australians from traveling abroad to fight with extremist groups. (Source: Australian Broadcasting Corporation [217])

A 2012 study linked radicalization with increased workplace discrimination since the September 11, 2001, and 2002 Bali attacks. The study found that the unemployment rate among Muslim men in Australia is more than double the national average. The survey found that 58 percent of Muslims earned less than $400 per week compared to 41 percent of the Australian population. The Muslim community said it felt alienated after the 2005 passage of Australia's Anti-Terrorism Act. (Sources: *Australian* *[218]*, The Age [219])