

FSB: Russian Terror Threat Reduced Threefold in 2014

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A Chechen Interior Ministry servicemen stands guard at the site of the counter-terrorism operation, near a local media building known as the Press House, in the Chechen capital Grozny, on Dec. 4, 2014.

Less than a week after an attack on Grozny claimed 14 police officers' lives, the head of Russia's Federal Security Service said the nationwide terror threat has declined almost threefold since last year.

Alexander Bortnikov said at a meeting of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee on Tuesday that 59 planned terror attacks had been foiled over the year and 30 aspiring individual terrorists had been thwarted, TASS news agency reported.

“Thanks to the implementation of a range of counter-terrorism measures, the yearly trend of a reduction in the number of terrorist acts on Russian territory has been preserved: with a nearly three-fold decline as compared with last year's figures and a four-time reduction compared with 2012,” Bortnikov was cited as saying.

This year there have been 78 terrorism-related crimes recorded, he said. In comparison, there were 218 last year.

Bortnikov conceded, however, that a serious threat still remains, “and the events of Dec. 4 in Grozny are testament to that,” TASS reported.

In Russia's turbulent North Caucasus region, where security services have been battling members of an Islamist insurgency for years, 233 militants were killed this year and 637 militants detained, Bortnikov said.

He added that: “272 homemade explosives were confiscated while being illegally trafficked, as well as a significant number of firearms and other weapons.”

While Bortnikov noted significant progress in the nation's fight against terrorism this year, he said the security services would face a tough year ahead. Counter-terrorism work is set to be intensified in both the newly acquired Crimea and in the Arctic.

One of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee's priorities in 2015 will be to enhance counter-terror efforts in Crimea, with a regional system for fighting terrorism set to be established on the peninsula, Bortnikov said.

The Arctic has also gotten special attention from the FSB and the committee, Bortnikov said, with counter-terrorism drills conducted there for the first time ever earlier this year and a plan devised for responding to any terrorist threats in the region.

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