



AL-QA'IDA

Background

- Al-Qa'ida is an Islamic extremist organization founded in 1988 by Usama Bin Ladin and other Arab foreign fighters who fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s.
- Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, al-Qa'ida fought to remove the US military presence from the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia. In 1996, Bin Ladin declared war against the United States because of its presence in the Gulf region.
- On September 11, 2001, al-Qa'ida hijacked and crashed four US commercial jets – two into the World Trade Center in New York City, one into the Pentagon, and a fourth into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania – killing nearly 3,000.
- After the attacks on September 11, 2001, al-Qa'ida expanded and established franchises primarily across the Middle East and South Asia.

Affiliate	Location	Year Affiliated
Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula	Yemen	2009
The Nusra Front	Syria	2012
Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb	North Africa	2007
Al-Shabaab	Somalia	2006
Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent	Indian Subcontinent	2014

Listed in order of operational capability

Threat to New Jersey: Low

Al-Qa'ida lacks the presence and capability to carry out an attack in the United States or New Jersey. Although al-Qa'ida remains intent on attacking the United States and US interests overseas, the group continues to experience a decrease in operational capabilities because of its involvement in regional conflicts and competition with other terrorist groups.

- The last al-Qa'ida-inspired plot in New Jersey was in 2007, when six individuals in New Jersey – commonly known as the Fort Dix Six – plotted to attack Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in Burlington County.
- In 2015, none of the detected attacks or plots in the United States had direct ties to al-Qa'ida. Although influenced by multiple terrorist groups, including al-Qa'ida, plots and attacks in New York, California, and Tennessee mostly drew inspiration from Salafi jihadism, a puritanical and literalist interpretation of Islam whose adherents view themselves as the only true Muslims and justify the killing of non-believers.
- Al-Qa'ida continues to compete with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) for recruits. Only two of the 29 US persons arrested in 2015 for traveling or attempting to travel to join a terrorist group attempted to join an al-Qa'ida affiliate – the Nusra Front. The rest joined or attempted to join ISIS.



Al-Qa'ida's flag

Intelligence Gaps

- How are individuals in the United States and New Jersey supporting al-Qa'ida?
- What is the depth of al-Qa'ida's leadership?

US Nexus

- In 2013, California authorities arrested a man attempting to travel to Pakistan to provide training to al-Qa'ida. Sinh Vinh Ngo Nguyen was sentenced to 13 years in prison.
- After attempting to detonate an inert explosive in Manhattan's financial district in 2012, Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis was sentenced to 30 years in prison.
- In 2011, Jose Pimentel was sentenced to 16 years for plotting to use pipe bombs in New York City. That same year, Rezwan Ferdaus was sentenced to 17 years for a plot to attack the Pentagon and US Capitol with remote-controlled planes on behalf of al-Qa'ida.



Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qa'ida's leader

Contact Information

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