Financial Crime and Material Support Schemes Linked to Al-Qa’ida and Affiliated Movements (AQAM) in the United States: 1990 to June 2014

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Background
This research examines the financial and material support schemes linked to Al-Qa’ida and affiliated movements (AQAM) in the United States between 1990 and June 2014. It supplements a previous overview of the violent crimes and plots committed or attempted by AQAM supporters in the United States between 1990 and 2013 (Gruenewald, Freilich, Chermak, & Parkin, 2014). Data come from the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB).

Key Terms
- Financial Scheme: An illicit financial operation involving activities carried out by perpetrator(s) to obtain unlawful gain or economic advantage through deliberate deception. Examples include money laundering, investment fraud, tax avoidance, identity theft, counterfeiting, and banking fraud.
- Material Support: An act taken to aid terrorist activities and groups, such as providing resources, supplies, equipment, training, personnel or other critical non-monetary support.

Findings
- 98 material support schemes and 52 financial schemes linked to AQAM were committed by 286 perpetrators between 1990 and June 2014.
- The majority of schemes involved material (65%) or monetary (19%) support for terrorism.
- More than 95% of material and monetary support schemes linked to AQAM were motivated by ideology, while 52% of other financial schemes were committed for a non-ideological goal, such as profit or greed.

Groups Linked to AQAM-Related Schemes in the United States
- Only 50% of perpetrators had a direct association with AQAM. 33% were sympathizers or supporters with indirect connections, and 17% were non-extremist collaborators motivated by non-ideological goals, such as profit.
- The fluid nature of associations between perpetrators involved in these schemes highlights the importance of examining broader networks of AQAM extremists and their associates.
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