

**Background Report: Suicide Attack at Moscow Airport**  
**January 24, 2011**

Following a suicide bombing at Domodedovo Airport in Moscow, START has compiled background information from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) on suicide terrorism, terrorist activity in Russia, and targeting airports worldwide.

- **SUICIDE TERRORISM**

Between 1981 and 2008, there were 1438 terrorist suicide attacks globally, accounting for 1.6% of all terrorist attacks during this period. The frequency of this tactic has increased in recent years, with over 90% of all suicide attacks occurring between 2000 and 2008, comprising 7.3% of all terrorist attacks during this time period.

**Table: Ten Most Frequent Locations of Suicide Attacks, 1991-2008**

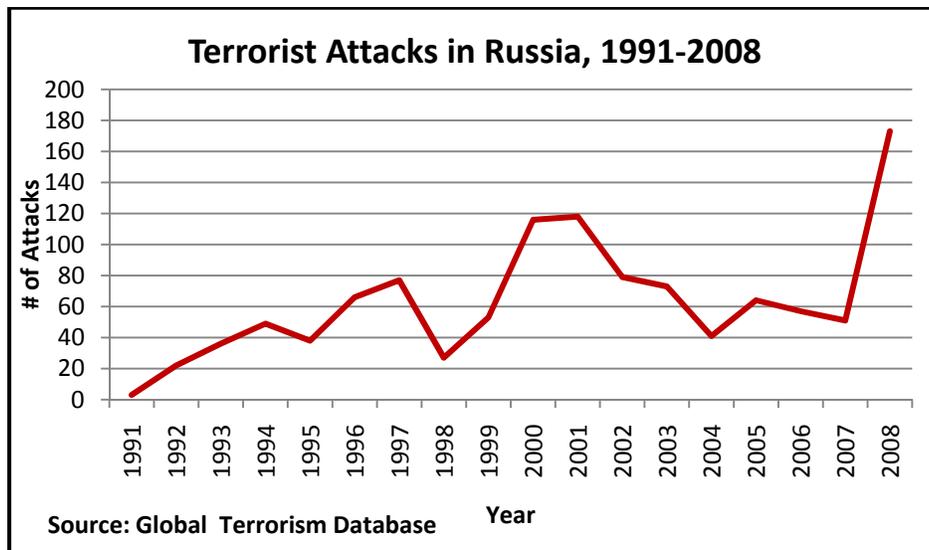
Rank	Country/Location	Total # of Suicide Attacks
1	Iraq	626
2	Afghanistan	190
3	Pakistan	116
4	Israel	113
5	Sri Lanka	80
6	West Bank and Gaza Strip	54
7	Russia	32
8	India	28
9	Turkey	28
10	Algeria	17

Source: Global Terrorism Database

Russia is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> among locations of suicide attacks between 1991 and 2008. All of Russia's suicide attacks have occurred since 1999, with the number of Russian suicide attacks peaking in 2000 with 10 such attacks, resulting in 89 deaths. All of these attacks in 2000 were perpetrated by known or suspected Chechen militants.

- **TERRORISM IN RUSSIA**

There have been 1107 incidents in Russia between 1991 and 2008, resulting in more than 3100 deaths and over 5100 injuries. During this time period Russia ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in terms of total attacks and 18<sup>th</sup> in terms of total fatalities among all countries. As indicated in the figure below, the frequency of terrorist attacks in Russia has been on the rise in recent years.



The most frequently attacked city in Russia is the Chechen capital of Grozny, with 186 incidents since 1991 (16.8% of all Russian attacks). However, Moscow ranks second in Russia with 127 attacks (11.5%). Moscow has experienced a number of highly lethal terrorist attacks in the past decade, including:

- On March 29, 2010, two female suicide bombers killed themselves and 38 others and wounded 95 when they detonated explosives on the Moscow subway in a coordinated attack.
- On August 24, 2004, two planes that departed from Moscow's Domodedovo Airport were destroyed by female suicide bombers, killing 100 people (GTD ID # 200408240001 & 200408240002).
- On February 6, 2004, a bomb exploded at a Moscow metro station during the morning rush hour, killing 40 people and wounding 122 (GTD ID # 200402060003).
- In October 2002, Chechen rebels took 850 hostages at a Moscow theater, prompting a three-day standoff with Russian forces that resulted in the deaths of 41 perpetrators and 120 hostages (GTD ID # 200210230004).

- **PERPETRATORS IN RUSSIA**

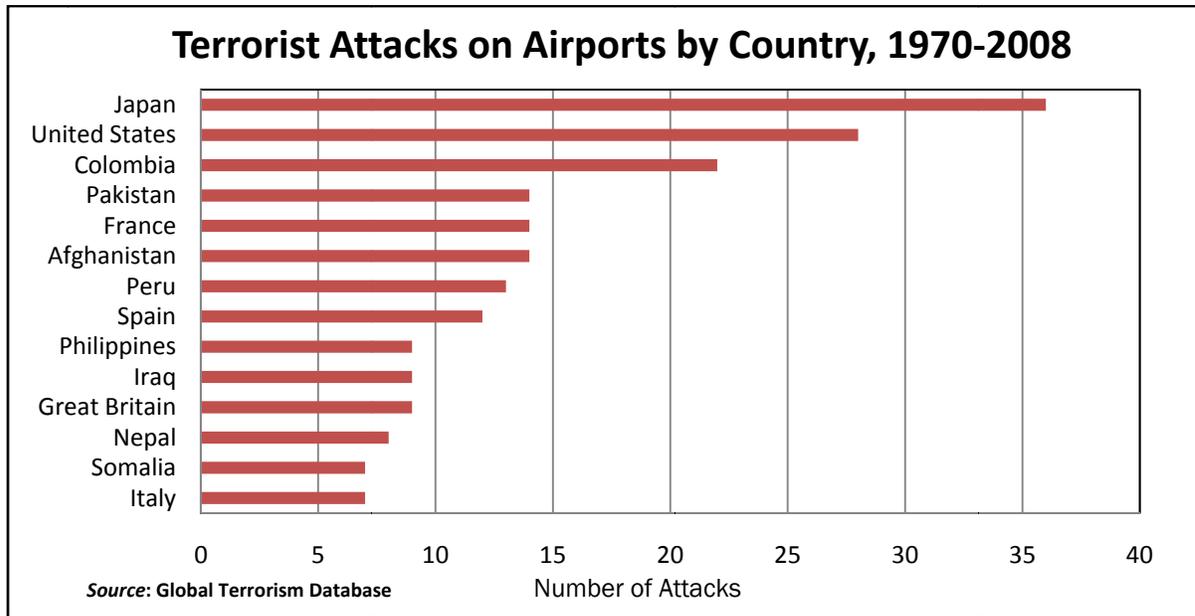
As of the time of this writing, information is not available on the perpetrators of the January 24 attack on Domodedovo Airport. Based on recent history, however, many in Russia suspect that Chechen militants were involved in the incident.

Chechen-associated terrorist groups, as well as individuals advocating the Chechen cause are responsible for over 90% of Russian attacks for which a perpetrator was identified. In recent years, the Chechen rebel group Caucasus Emirate has carried out several major attacks, including the 2010 subway attacks as well as two attacks in 2009—one on a train track between Moscow and St. Petersburg that caused a derailment killing 26 and injuring 100 and another near a police station at the Ingushetia Interior Ministry headquarters that killed 22 and wounded over 275.

- **TERRORIST ATTACKS ON AIRPORT TARGETS**

Worldwide between 1970 and 2008 there have been 777 attacks against airports and airline targets (excluding hijackings). Of these attacks, 329 targeted the airports themselves, as occurred in Moscow this week. These attacks in and on airports have targeted ticket counters, fuel sources, air-traffic control towers, hangars, passenger

lounges, terminals, and baggage areas. A high-profile airport attack occurred in Glasgow, Scotland in 2007, when two men believed to be inspired by and perhaps affiliated with al-Qaeda drove a vehicle packed with explosives into the entrance of the airport (GTD ID # 200706300003).



Airport attacks have occurred in 77 countries since 1970, but just 14 countries have account for more than 60% of these attacks (per figure above), with the United States the location of 9% of all airport attacks (28 in all). The attack on Domodedovo is the first recorded terrorist attack on an airport in Russia.

Attacks on airports are not typically highly lethal, with more than 70% of these attacks causing no fatalities. However, there have been exceptions in which more than ten people were killed in airport attacks—in Angola in 1986, India in 1984 and 2001, Iraq in 2006, Israel in 1972, Italy in 1973 and 1985, Nepal in 2002, the Philippines in 2003, and the United States in 1975.



These data were collected and compiled from the **Global Terrorism Database (GTD)**, [www.start.umd.edu/gtd](http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd). The GTD contains information on more than 87,000 terrorist incidents that have occurred around the world since 1970. An updated version of the database, with information on incidents through 2008, was released in May 2010.



GTD is a project of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence. START, based at the University of Maryland, College

Park, aims to provide timely guidance on how to disrupt terrorist networks, reduce the incidence of terrorism, and enhance the resilience of U.S. society in the face of the terrorist threat. The material presented here is the product of START and does not express the official opinion of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Additional information on START is available at: [www.start.umd.edu](http://www.start.umd.edu).

*For additional information on this release or the GTD, please contact START at 301.405.6600 or [gtd@start.umd.edu](mailto:gtd@start.umd.edu). For more urgent media requests please use [www.start.umd.edu/start/media/contact/](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/media/contact/).*

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