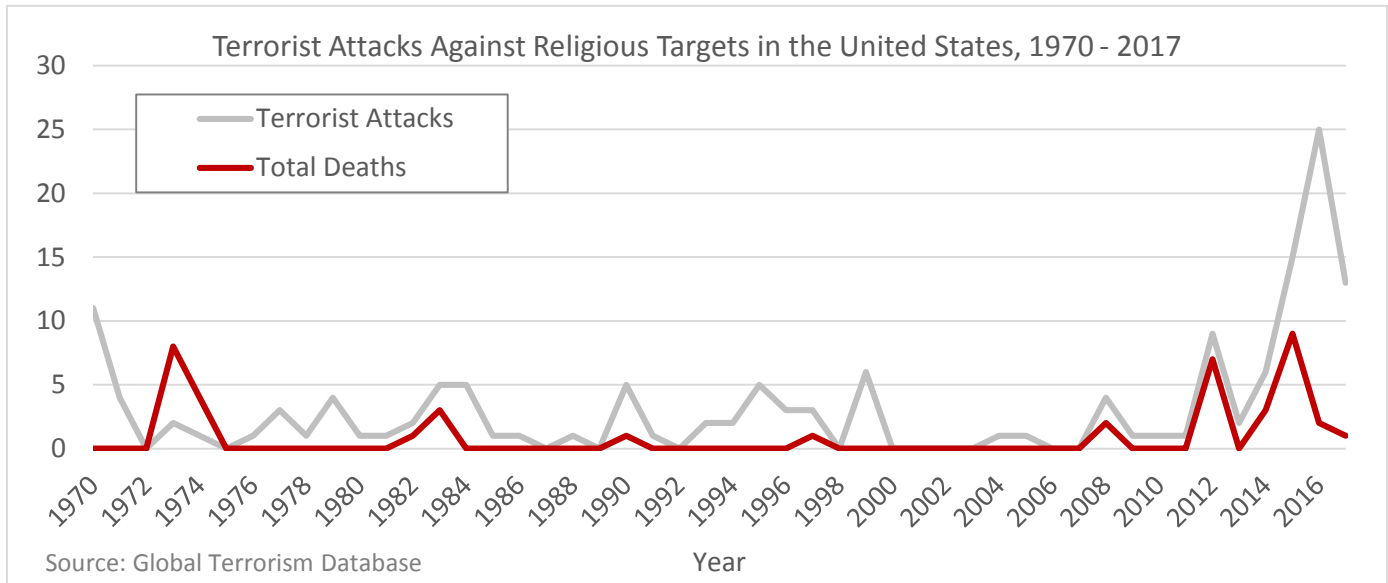
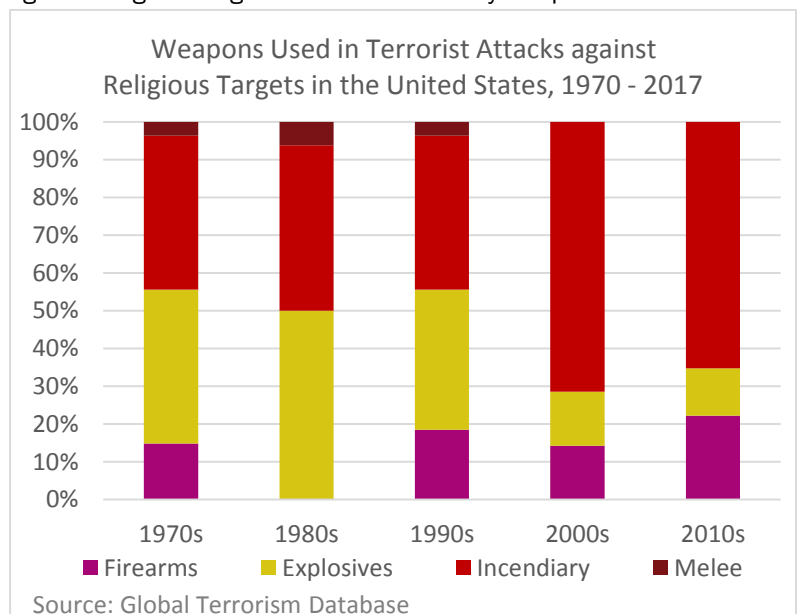


Terrorist Attacks against Religious Targets in the United States, 1970 – 2017

- Between 1970 and 2017, 150 terrorist attacks in the United States targeted religious figures and institutions. Fifteen of these attacks were lethal. They killed 42 people, including three perpetrators, and injured 38 others.



- The majority of these attacks (79%) targeted places of worship, including churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples. Fourteen percent targeted religious figures, including imams, ministers, priests, and rabbis; and 7 percent targeted religiously-affiliated institutions, primarily community centers.
- More than half (54%) of all the terrorist attacks against religious targets involved incendiary weapons—arson and Molotov cocktails. The proportion of attacks involving arson increased in the 2010s to 65 percent. Although several of the arson attacks resulted in extensive property damage, no victims were killed.
- The prevalence of attacks involving explosives decreased, from more than 40 percent in the 1970s and 1980s, to less than 15% in the 2000s and 2010s. Like the arson attacks, those involving explosives were almost never lethal.
- More than half (62%) of the terrorist attacks against religious targets involving firearms between 1970 and 2017 took place in the 2010s. These attacks were disproportionately deadly; they were responsible for 10 of the 15 lethal attacks and 36 of the 42 deaths that resulted from terrorist attacks against religious targets in the United States during this period.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The data presented here are drawn from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The GTD contains information on more than 180,000 terrorist attacks that have occurred around the world since 1970. For more information about the GTD, visit www.start.umd.edu/gtd. The GTD is a project of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The author of this Fact Sheet is Dr. Erin Miller. For questions about this report, contact infostart@start.umd.edu.

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is supported in part by the Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through a Center of Excellence program based at the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information, visit www.start.umd.edu. This research was supported by the Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through award number 2012-ST-061-CS0001. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Government.