

Threat Assessment: The 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia



The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games will be held on February 7-23, 2014; and the Paralympic Games on March 7-16, 2014.

Russia has taken extreme and comprehensive steps to insure security at the Olympics; and the country's security and intelligence forces are capable of securing the sporting event. However, very active militant groups operate in the northern Caucasus, and do pose a threat. Those groups hit transportation networks and other soft targets, along with government and security personnel, typically using small explosive devices and small arms. However, the most likely location for a terrorist attack does not involve the venues themselves; rather, the most vulnerable areas are outside of the Olympic security perimeter dubbed the "ring of steel." Russian security forces are most highly focused on the Olympic zone; and this could leave other locations in Russia vulnerable. Large cities including St. Petersburg and Moscow, or areas just outside the Olympic security perimeter, are the most likely targets for an attack.

If terrorists do find a way to evade all of the security measures at the perimeter and inside the ring of steel, an attack is most likely at locations with large crowds. In this case, the most likely targets would include some of the more popular events at the Olympics, primarily the ice hockey, speed skating, and figure skating rinks, because the venues concentrate the spectators into fixed locations. Other potential target locations, if militants manage to penetrate the "ring of steel," may include the Adler/Sochi airport. The Olympic Park/ Coastal Cluster and the Olympic Mountain Cluster all

have tight security measures in place; however the transportation networks, particularly the railways, present greater vulnerability. Linear transportation infrastructure is very difficult to guard, for it requires an inordinate amount of resources and manpower to keep watch at all times. However, the Russians appear to have enough security personnel and surveillance technology on hand to get the job done.

Official medical facilities should meet Western standards. Visitors should purchase travel insurance, and develop an emergency evacuation plan.



Transportation networks will be extremely busy and long wait times are expected for visitors attempting to get to events.

At least one terrorist attack inside Russia is likely during the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games. An attack could receive a tremendous amount of media coverage if the Russians cannot keep it quiet. Beside casualties, propaganda value provides the greatest value in terrorist attacks for the militant organization; it is virtually certain that one or more groups will attempt to take advantage of the worldwide attention on the Olympics.

Visitors should stay within the "ring of steel" at all times, and not venture out to explore the greater region.

Terrorist organizations, both foreign and domestic, would risk a great deal to mount an attack inside the security perimeter on an Olympic venue. Locations where large crowds form, including at the events, present the most likely targets for state-sponsored terrorist groups, militant groups, or lone wolf attackers.

Major Security Concerns

Petty crime, including pickpocketing, robbery, assault, and fraud will be the most common security problem both inside the Olympic venues and in other locations in Russia.

Attacks from regional militant groups, “lone wolf” terrorists who act alone, or transnational terrorist organizations – inside and outside of the “ring of steel” security perimeter – present the greatest security concern; areas outside the security perimeter are the most vulnerable.

Civil protest against the Russian government, the Olympic Games, and Olympic sponsors are possible, although Moscow banned all demonstrations until the Paralympic Games conclude.

Security Measures

The Russian government stated that full security measures around Sochi would begin on January 20 and last until March 21, 2014.

Concentric rings of security surround Sochi from the Georgian border in the south to the Krasnodarsky krai region in the north and 200 miles east of Sochi. Over 100,000 security personnel, including 40,000 police officers and 30,000 members of the armed forces, are deployed to keep the Olympics safe. Security measures are comprehensive with air, sea, land, and cyberspace all covered with layers of security. All methods of transport in and out of the Olympics are secured by the FSB (which has primary responsibility) and the armed forces. Security zones are strongly enforced; and a person must have a ticket for the event, and a Spectator Pass, to gain entry. Security checkpoints will also be set up between security zones, and in many other locations inside the designated security perimeter.

Local militants do not appear to have the capability to attack hard targets in a normal operational environment, let alone during a maximum security effort. Local militant groups in the region use small explosive devices or small arms in the majority of their

attacks. They typically hit soft targets such as hotels, restaurants, subway stations, or shopping malls. These factors together indicate that a regional organization unable to plan and execute a large-scale assault on the Olympics.

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Security Zone

- The high security zone includes stationary checkpoints requiring identification cards; background checks of all personnel; and daily patrols by law enforcement of all villages in security zone;
- Hundreds of cameras (CCTVs) installed throughout the secure area;
- Ban on anyone without press credentials taking photographs. Personnel caught attempting to film or photograph events will be fined; have their camera or phone confiscated; and potentially removed from the venue, or banned from Sochi;
- Visas will be required for all personnel traveling to Sochi. Visas will not be issued at any Russian Ports of Entry (POE);
- Beside the need for a ticket to a venue for that day, visitors must have a Spectator Pass, which signifies permission to be in Sochi. Russian Federal Security Services will issue the Spectator Pass for visitors after background checks have been completed;
- All communications (email, text, telephone) will be monitored by the Russian Federal Security Services;

- Russian authorities have prohibited the following items in Sochi without prior approval by the Sochi 2014 committee: any explosive materials; compressed or liquefied gases; flammable liquids; oxidants and organic peroxides; toxic substances; caustic or corrosive substances; poisonous substances; pharmaceuticals of three or more different items in one package (including liquids of more than 100 ml); narcotic and psychotropic substances; weapons and ammunition; bladed weapons; hand tools; glass containers or bottles; thermoses; water bottles, food, and beverage products not purchased in Sochi); bicycles; tripods (photo or video), aerosols and sprays; laser pointers; animals; folding chairs or benches; handbags larger than 50cm x 50cm x 50cm (19.75in square); sports accessories; radio electronics; flags and banners; anything showing brand names; advertising materials; meteorological equipment; television and telecommunications equipment; and any device that creates excessive noise;
- The following items have been authorized and do not require prior permission: laptop computers; cell phones; mobile earth stations for satellite communications; remote control devices for automobiles; wireless technology; user receiving devices for GPS/GLONASS navigation systems; medical implants (medical documentation is required); and radio simulators for visitors that are hearing impaired (medical documentation is required).

Transportation

- Only vehicles officially registered in Sochi, accredited for the Games or essential services will be allowed entry and movement inside Sochi; All vehicles currently in Sochi will require accreditation to be allowed to remain and have freedom of movement while the security zone is in affect;
- Only 45 trucks per day may cross the border from Abkhazia, after receiving approval from authorities. Cargo vehicles must submit documents 72 hours prior to crossing the border;
- Visitors to any of the Olympic or Paralympic venues must use the Spectator Transport System (STS). The STS is comprised of nine transportation hubs (Sochi, Matseta, Khosta, Kudepsta, Adler, Airport and Olympic Park, Esto Sadok, Krasnaya Polyana, and Rosa Khutor).

International Security

Intelligence organizations and security branches of all participating countries will very likely have their own security procedures in place. The United States

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and United Kingdom have offered to provide continued intelligence and law enforcement information to the Russian government in support of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and Paralympics Games. Other nations have likely done the same. Additionally, the United States Department of Defense has said that two U.S. Navy ships are on station in the Black Sea, available to assist with evacuations and response if requested. Additionally, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security (DOS/DS) will have agents in Sochi to provide additional security to U.S. athletes.

Private Sector Security

The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Team requested Global Rescue to provide five aircrafts on standby, as well as guidance to U.S. athletes on security measures, in the event of an emergency that requires evacuations.

The Terrorist Threat

A terrorist attack in Russia during the Olympic Games is likely, although most likely outside the “ring of steel” security perimeter.

Small-scale terror attacks are common throughout the Northern Caucasus; over 1,500 have occurred in the last three years. Russian security forces and northern Caucasus militant groups continue to fight on almost a daily basis in Dagestan, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Ingushetia. Many of the attacks have occurred within 500 miles of Sochi.



Transportation networks and other soft targets are often hit by militants, along with government and security personnel. Small explosive devices and small arms are usually the weapons of choice.

Since the 1990's the terrorist group, Caucasus Emirates (also known as Imirat Kavkaz), has claimed responsibility for many of the attacks. Attacks have targeted not only government and security apparatus/individuals, but also have included civilian targets such as a ski resort, metro system, high-speed rail, an airport, and a theater, as indirect supporters of the government.

Recent Attacks by Caucasus Emirates in Russia:

- December 30, 2013 – Suicide bombing of the trolleybus in the Dzerzhinsky district of Volgograd
- December 29, 2013 – Suicide bombing of the Volgograd-1 station in the city of Volgograd

- October 21, 2013 - Suicide bombing on a bus in the city of Volgograd
- January 24, 2011 – Suicide bombing of the Domodedovo International Airport in Moscow
- March 29, 2010 – Suicide bombing of the Lubyanka and Park Kultury metro stations in Moscow

Militant groups in the region are capable and experienced organizations. However, the northern Caucasus militant groups have faced heavy pressure from Russian security forces for some time now; they may not have the ability to mount an attack on such a secure position as the Olympics.

While no attacks have occurred at Olympic or Paralympic venues, members of the Caucasus Emirates and its affiliates Vilayat Dagestan and Ansar al-Sunna (a Jihadist group operating in Iraq) have made threats videos released through social media. The videos do not specify a specific venue, time, or type of attack, but should be taken seriously.

On July 3, 2013, Doku Umarov (Leader of the Caucasus Emirates and recently announced as possibly deceased) released a four-minute video message that said in part:

“I call on you, every mujahid within Tatarstan, Bashkortostan or on the territory of the Caucasus, to use maximum force on the path of Allah to disrupt this Satanic dancing on the bones of our ancestors.”

On January 19, 2014, a second video was released showing two Russian men, who said:

“We’ve prepared a present for you and all tourists who’ll come over. If you will hold the Olympics, you’ll get a present from us for the Muslim blood that’s been spilled.”

Recommendations if in proximity to a terrorist incident:

- Before arriving in Sochi, be proactive and form a plan of action if a bomb explodes, or there is gunfire nearby.
- If possible, contact the appropriate embassy or consulate and ask for guidance.
- If there is a disturbance outside the hotel, keep the drapes closed and stay away from the windows. Turn off all lights. If some light must, turn on the bathroom light and crack the door. Assemble traveling companions in one room.
- If hearing an explosion or gunfire, stay away from windows. Seek shelter in the bathroom or, if possible, an interior stairwell.

- If shooting starts, drop to the floor or get down as low as possible and try to shield behind or under a solid object.
- Follow all instructions and orders from the attackers or rescuers.
- Do not move until certain the danger has passed.
- Do not attempt to help rescuers and do not pick up a weapon.
- If you must move, crawl on your stomach or as instructed by rescuers.
- Carry identification at all times and secure valuables in an inner pocket, preferably one with a zipper.
- Carry purses and handbags with the flap or zipper side next to your body.
- If using a private vehicle in Sochi, always lock the vehicle and, whenever possible, park in a protected, well-lighted area. Do not leave anything visible in the interior that would attract a thief's attention.
- In hotels, utilize hotel safe deposit boxes or in-room safes for storing valuables, and always lock the room door. Also, be vigilant about purses and briefcases when dining in hotel restaurants.

Crime, Protests, and Medical Resources

Criminals will target visitors, sponsors, and athletes at Olympic venues. Crimes most likely to occur inside and outside the Olympic venues include robbery, assault and fraud. The U.S. Government has issued fraud warnings and advised visitors they should only purchase tickets or merchandise from official offices and websites. Inside the venues, crime will likely be lower than normal because of the massive security presence.

Recommendations:

- Always be aware of surroundings.
- When traveling, never leave personal items unattended. Be discerning of individuals who offer to assist with the luggage.
- In an exterior pocket or purse carry a "throw-away" wallet containing a small amount of currency and one or two expired credit cards. If confronted by a thief, demanding money or valuables, hand the throw-away wallet to the thief. The thief likely will take it and leave.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Do not flaunt cash or jewelry. Leave unnecessary credit cards and other items at home. Do not bring on the trip any items you are not willing to have taken from you by a criminal.

Civil Protest

Social media websites have discussed civil action at Sochi Olympic sponsor locations in Russia in response to a Russian anti-homosexual law. Already vandals have damaged some sponsors' locations in Russia. However, protests are unlikely to occur during the Olympics, particularly in proximity with the venues.

If protests do develop, expect a strong security response. This may be particularly true of Coca-Cola, McDonalds, and VISA; protest groups have mentioned all three on social media, as companies to target and protest. The concern over the possible protests of official sponsors led President Putin to issue a presidential decree banning all protests.

Medical Care

Hospital No. 4 in Sochi and a medical facility in Krasnaya Polyana are two primary medical facilities for the Olympics. The medical services offered during the Olympics will be of high quality. Some analysts have warned the Russians did not prepare enough medical facilities, but this is unlikely. With that said, medical travel insurance with an evacuation package is a good idea for those heading to the Olympics in Sochi.

