METHODOLOGY

In an 11-month investigation, a worldwide team of Associated Press journalists tested freedom of information laws, tracking terror arrests and convictions around the globe. In a single week in January, AP reporters submitted questions about terrorism arrests and convictions, vetted by experts, to the European Union and the 105 countries with right-to-know laws or constitutional provisions.

Here are the records The Associated Press requested:
1. Any documents, memos, reports, or other records that would show how many people have been arrested and how many convicted each year for the past ten years under federal anti-terrorism laws.
2. Any documents, memos, reports, or other records that would show how many people have been detained without arrest each year for the past ten years for ties to terrorism.
3. Any documents, memos, reports, or other records that would show the current status of people convicted and the sections and subsections of crime under which they have been convicted under antiterrorism laws during the past 10 years.
4. Any documents, memos, reports, or other records that would show the nationality of those arrested and convicted under anti-terrorism during the past 10 years.
5. Any documents, memos, reports, or other records that would show the names, dates and circumstances for people arrested under federal anti-terrorism laws for the past ten years.
6. Any audits, surveys or studies of federal anti-terrorism published in the last 10 years.

Here are the definitions AP used to categorize responses.
Responsive: The country provided AP with numbers, dates and names of people arrested and convicted on terror charges.
Partially Responsive Useful: The country provided AP with at least some numbers, dates or names of people arrested and convicted on terror charges.
Partially Responsive Not Useful: The country responded with a promise to provide information but never did, or the information provided was not relevant in any way to what AP had requested.
Unresponsive: The country ignored AP's request.
Rejected: The country informed the AP it was not going to provide the information, either to protect national security or because the country claimed there was no data available.

Using responses to the requests, and other sources, the AP identified 119,044 terror arrests and 35,117 convictions in 67 countries. The cases were gathered by more than 140 AP reporters and editors who used Freedom of Information requests, law enforcement agency crime data, and hundreds of interviews. The countries include more than 75 percent of the people in the world.

The AP also used University of Maryland’s Global Terrorism Data to identify the top 30 countries in the world that have suffered fatalities _ victims and attackers _ as a direct result of terror attacks. In each of those countries, AP identified specific examples of alleged human rights abuses in the name of fighting terror.

The number of arrests and convictions is undoubtedly higher than suggested by AP's findings for several reasons. First, many countries detain suspects without formally arresting them. For example, people held for years in U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay and then released would not be counted. Also, some countries only counted individuals who were eventually prosecuted as "arrests," leaving out people who might have been jailed but later released without charges. Finally, many countries did not release data, or only released partial data. Israel, for example, only released arrests, and only for three years. Even so, those amounted to almost 8,000 cases. Pakistan only releases specific numbers for arrests, but authorities say they convict only 10 percent of all terrorism cases, so AP did the math: 29,050 arrests would lead to about 2,905 convictions. Because countries did not release complete data, AP's findings do not point to a global conviction rate.

AP defined terror arrests and convictions as each country's legal system does under their individual penal codes. China was an exception. AP used China's arrests and convictions under its Endangering State Security laws which include, but are not limited to, terrorism. China refused to disclose information about prosecutions under its other terrorism provisions.

AP discussed its methodology and findings with dozens of experts, including the highest ranking officials dedicated to counterterrorism at the United Nations and the State Department, and the highest ranking Freedom of Information experts in leading non-governmental organizations and at the Justice Department. AP also sought input from the key counterterrorism scholars _ and separately key FOI experts _ in the U.S. including the authors of the primary legal texts on the topic. AP took its data and methods to several social scientists and statistical experts, including George Mason University math professor Rebecca Goldin, who directs the school's non-partisan Statistical Assessment Service.

AP received hundreds of pages of previously undisclosed records in response to requests in 105 countries, providing new details about who has been arrested as a terrorist since 9-11. In the spirit of transparency, AP is also opening its notebooks, sharing raw data, spreadsheets and methodology. View all of these source documents here:
https://www.documentcloud.org/public/search/group:%20ap