



NJOHSP *at a glance*

YOUR WEEK IN REVIEW | August 3, 2015

Key West Arrest: First Terrorist Plot in the US to Target a Beach

The arrest of a Key West, Florida, man on July 27 disrupted the first known terrorist plot in the United States to target tourists at a public beach. Harlem Suarez, age 23, allegedly told a confidential source that he wanted to make a “timer bomb,” bury it at a public beach in Key West (see photo), and detonate it. He bought components for the device, which was to be packed with nails, hidden in a backpack, and remotely detonated by a cell phone. He was arrested after he took possession of an inert device.



Beaches have not previously been targeted in the United States. Internationally, on June 26, a gunman attacked a beach at a resort hotel near Sousse, Tunisia, killing 38 people – mostly British tourists. In April 2009, a bomb exploded on a popular beach in the southern Philippines, killing one person and wounding three. In November 2012, Egyptian police arrested five extremists who allegedly planned to attack British tourists at a Red Sea beach resort at Sharm el-Sheikh.

Beaches, with open, accessible areas and a relaxed atmosphere, are by nature vulnerable to attack. They are the type of “soft targets” that could be selected by unsophisticated lone offenders with little training or support. ***Personnel who are responsible for beach safety – including police officers, lifeguards, beach patrol members, and security staff – are encouraged to be vigilant for suspicious indicators of a potential terrorist attack,*** in addition to the usual beach security concerns.

Faith-Based Institutions: Explosions at Two New Mexico Churches

In Las Cruces, New Mexico, on August 2, explosions occurred at two churches about 20 minutes apart, during worship services. No injuries were reported. One explosion was in a mailbox near a Baptist church (see photo). The other, in a trash can near the entrance to a Roman Catholic Church, shattered the glass doors. Both places of worship appear to have multi-racial congregations. Investigators are assessing the explosive devices and are determining whether the two incidents are related.



OHSP and other organizations have advised places of worship to secure trash and trash cans a substantial distance from the main structure, and to ensure that the storage area is locked.

Law Enforcement: Memphis Police Identify Suspect in Murder of Officer

Memphis police have identified a suspect in the murder of Officer Sean Bolton, who was fatally shot during a traffic stop on the night of August 1. A warrant has been issued for the arrest of Tremaine Wilbourn, age 29, for first-degree murder. Police said Wilbourn was a passenger in the car that Officer Bolton pulled in front of for illegally parking. He got out of the vehicle, confronted Bolton and got into a physical struggle with him, then pulled out a gun and fired, hitting Bolton multiple times. The driver of the car turned himself in, was questioned, and was later released.

At this early stage of the investigation, it appears that there is no connection to domestic terrorism. Police believe that the traffic stop occurred during a drug transaction.

Contact Information

Any agency with information or comments/questions on this or other analytical products, please contact the NJOHSP Analysis Bureau at analysis@njohsp.gov or 609-584-4000.

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