



NJOHSP *at a glance*

YOUR WEEK IN REVIEW | August 1, 2016

Europe: The Terror Threat Shifts to Small-Scale Attacks

The murder of a French priest in a church near Rouen (see photo) on July 26 illustrates a recent shift in attacks in Europe inspired or directed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)—from coordinated attacks against multiple targets, such as those in Paris last November and in Brussels in March, to smaller-scale attacks against single targets, conducted by one or two relatively unsophisticated attackers, using simple weapons. During the past two weeks, attacks in Europe claimed by ISIS included the attack on the Catholic church in St.-Etienne-du-Rouvray by two individuals with knives; an attack on Bastille Day celebrations in Nice, France, by a man using a truck as a weapon; a suicide bombing outside a music festival in Ansbach, Germany, by a man with explosives in a backpack; and an attack with an ax against passengers on a train bound for Wurzburg, Germany.



These attacks against a variety of soft targets, in diverse types of locations, using easily obtained weapons are extremely difficult for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect and disrupt. In some cases, these attacks are conducted by self-radicalized individuals responding to calls by ISIS for sympathizers to conduct attacks wherever they are. In other cases, there appears to have been a degree of planning and organization associated with the attacks. For example, police say that Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, who killed 84 people with a truck in Nice on July 14, had been planning the attack for several months, and five suspected accomplices have been arrested.

Germany: On High Alert, Conducts Raids in Lower Saxony

Germany is on high alert after four violent attacks in the southern part of the country within a week—three of which involved refugees and two of which were claimed by ISIS. On July 28, police in Lower Saxony, in northern Germany, searched a mosque and eight apartments in Hildesheim, about 20 miles south of Hanover (see photo). German officials said Hildesheim has long been a hotspot for Islamic extremism.



The Interior Ministry said several members of the mosque have traveled to Syria to join ISIS, and sermons call for “hate against unbelievers.”

Chancellor Angela Merkel last week proposed an “early warning system” to detect extremists among asylum seekers, but she defended Germany’s policy of offering sanctuary to those fleeing war zones, saying it is a moral duty.

Interfaith Issues: Egypt’s Coptic Pope Warns of Increased Attacks on Christians

In a meeting with a parliamentary delegation last week, Pope Tawadros II, the leader of the Coptic Christian church, warned that Egypt’s national unity is being “defaced” by increasing attacks on Christians. Citing a study compiled for the church, he said that in the past three years, there have been 37 attacks on Christians.

According to news media reports, violence against Christians has increased since late May, with at least 10 attacks, focused in Minya Province in southern Egypt, where more than a third of the population is Christian. Recent incidents include the torching of the homes of Christians, the stabbing of a Christian man, and the abuse of an elderly Christian woman because of a rumor that her son had an affair with a Muslim woman. Victims of these attacks claim that there has been little response from police. Attacks on Coptic Christians also spiked in mid-2013, after the overthrow of the government of President Mohammed Morsi.

Later in the week, according to Egyptian news media, Pope Tawadros met with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, who assured him that all Egyptians are equal under the constitution.

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.

TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY, CALL 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ