



# NJOHSP *at a glance*

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## **FBI Director Warns of “Terrorist Diaspora” to Europe and the United States**

At a hearing of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee last week, FBI Director James Comey warned that intelligence and law enforcement agencies are concerned that as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is defeated in Syria and Iraq, terrorists will leave those countries as part of a “terrorist diaspora” in the next two to five years, with many trying to come to Western Europe and the United States. To deal with this threat, he encouraged a closer counterterrorism relationship between the United States and the European countries. Director Comey also said that although fewer extremists are attempting to travel to Syria to join ISIS, homegrown terrorists, inspired by ISIS propaganda, remain a central concern for the FBI.

At the same hearing, Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, said the terrorist threat has evolved from terrorist-directed attacks to “a world that also includes the threat of terrorist-inspired attacks,” with self-radicalized individuals in the United States conducting attacks in their own country. He noted that these terrorist-inspired attacks are difficult to detect and can occur with little or no notice.

## **School Security: As the School Year Begins, Shootings Resume**

With the beginning of a new school year, school shootings have also resumed. On September 28, a teenager with a handgun opened fire at an elementary school in Townville, South Carolina, about 40 miles southwest of Greenville, fatally wounding a six-year-old boy and also wounding another male student and a female teacher. The deceased student died in a hospital three days after the shooting. Investigators believe the suspect killed his father at home, then drove to the school where he crashed the pickup truck (see photo) and began firing at children who were coming outside to play.



The South Carolina shooting follows an incident at a high school in Alpine, in west Texas, on September 9, in which a 14-year-old girl killed herself after shooting and wounding a 17-year-old female student. Police said last week the shooter intended to kill her 14-year-old stepbrother, but her plans were disrupted when she encountered the other girl, who saw her weapon, in a restroom. After wounding the 17-year-old, the younger girl fatally shot herself in the head.

In a recent gun-related incident at a school in New Jersey, a 15-year-old student at Absegami High School in Galloway Township (Atlantic County) was arrested on September 23 after school officials were told he was carrying a handgun on campus. As police approached him, the suspect appeared to grasp something in his pocket and then fled. When police apprehended him, he had no weapon on him, but a loaded .38-caliber handgun was found under the nearby bleachers.

## **Europe: ISIS Cell Disrupted by Five Arrests in Spain, Belgium, and Germany**

In a coordinated operation, security forces in Spain, Belgium, and Germany have disrupted a cell of ISIS supporters and arrested five suspects on September 28 on charges of spreading propaganda and trying to recruit fighters for ISIS, according to a statement from the Spanish Interior Ministry. The cell allegedly consisted of four Spanish nationals and a Moroccan citizen. Two of the suspects were arrested in Barcelona, one in Spain’s North African enclave of Melilla, one in Brussels, and one in Wuppertal, in western Germany (see photo). The cell allegedly used Spanish-language social media to spread ISIS propaganda. The suspects are also accused of commissioning terrorist attacks, recruiting militants for ISIS in Europe, and promoting Islamic militancy.



The European Union’s Counterterrorism Coordinator, Gilles de Kerchove, said the arrests demonstrated improved intelligence sharing in Europe.

## **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](mailto:analysis@njohsp.gov) or 609-584-4000.

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