

European Union
Terrorism
Situation and
Trend report
2020



EUROPEAN UNION TERRORISM SITUATION AND TREND REPORT 2020

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Contents

04

Foreword

06

Trends

07

Introduction

09

General overview

32

Jihadist terrorism

53

**Ethno-nationalist and
separatist terrorism**

57

**Left-wing and
anarchist terrorism**

63

Right-wing terrorism

79

Single-issue terrorism

annexes

A1	Amendments in National Legislation on Terrorism in 2019	82
A2	Overview of completed, failed and foiled attacks in 2019 per EU Member State and per affiliation	84
A3	Arrests in 2019 per EU Member State and per affiliation	85
A4	Convictions and penalties	86
A5	Europol counter terrorism activities	89
A6	Methodology	93
A7	Acronyms	96

Foreword



It is a privilege for me to present the European Union (EU) Terrorism Situation and Trend report (TE-SAT) 2020, which provides an overview of the incidents and developments with regard to terrorism in the EU in 2019.

The attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday 2019 showed that the so-called Islamic State (IS) still looks to conduct large-scale attacks targeting EU citizens. In 2019 such plots have not materialised in the EU, largely due to the effectiveness of our law enforcement and security authorities, our international cooperation mechanisms and the collaboration between public and private actors in security matters.

In 2019 a wave of right-wing violent incidents that included the terrible attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand) and others in the USA also reached Europe, with attacks completed in Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom, a failed attack in Lithuania and a thwarted plot in Poland. In left-wing and anarchist extremist circles the readiness to use violence also seems to be growing.

While many right-wing extremist groups across the EU have not resorted to violence, they contribute to a climate of fear and animosity against minority groups. Such a climate, built on xenophobia, hatred for Jews and Muslims and anti-immigration sentiments, may lower the threshold for some radicalised individuals to use violence against people and property of minority groups as we have witnessed all too often in recent months. Like jihadists, violent right-wing lone actors

are embedded in wider online communities that preach hate and dehumanise certain groups of our diverse societies.

In the first months of 2020, lockdown measures introduced to combat the spread of COVID-19 could further escalate some of the trends identified in the TE-SAT, given the potential economic and social impact of the pandemic worldwide. These developments have the potential to further fuel the radicalisation of some individuals, regardless of their ideological persuasion. Activists both on the extreme left and right and those involved in jihadist terrorism attempt to seize the opportunity the pandemic has created to further propagate their aims.

My final thoughts are with those people and their families who suffered the consequences of terrorist and extremist violence. The ultimate goal of law enforcement officers is to save lives and minimise the number of victims of intolerance and political violence. This is what motivates us to continue our work to support EU Member States and Europol's partners in countering terrorism.

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, reading 'C. De Bolle'.

Catherine De Bolle
Executive Director of Europol

Trends



01

The overall number of completed, failed and foiled terrorist attacks continued to decrease in the EU in 2019 compared to the previous year, mainly due to a continued downward trend in ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorist attacks.

Seven jihadist terrorist attacks were carried out (completed or failed) in the EU in 2019. Twice this number of terrorist plots were thwarted by law enforcement, continuing a trend from 2018.



02



03

The situation in conflict areas outside Europe continued to impact the terrorism situation in Europe. Hundreds of European citizens with links to the so-called Islamic State (IS) remained in Iraq and Syria. IS, while losing its last enclave in Syria, transitioned to a covert insurgent group operating in Iraq and Syria and maintained its global network of affiliates. Al-Qaeda again displayed its intent and ambition to strike Western targets, while its regional affiliates aim to integrate and coordinate populations and armed factions in conflict areas.

The threat from radicalised prisoners manifested itself in the EU in 2019 in one failed and one foiled attack by prison inmates and the attack in London on 29 November by a terrorist convict released on licence.



04



In 2019 three EU Member States reported a total of six right-wing terrorist attacks (one completed, one failed, four foiled), compared to only one in 2018. Additionally, two attacks not classified as terrorism under national law but committed by right-wing extremists were reported by Germany and claimed the lives of three people.

In 2019 the right-wing attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand), Poway (USA), El Paso (USA), Bærum (Norway) and Halle (Germany) were part of a wave of violent incidents worldwide, the perpetrators of which were part of similar transnational online communities and took inspiration from one another.



Both jihadist and right-wing extremist propaganda incite individuals to perpetrate acts of violence autonomously and praise perpetrators as 'martyrs' or 'saints', respectively.

Ethno-nationalist and separatist groups in France and Spain remained inactive, but radical fringe groups threatened to re-engage in violence.

The activities of Dissident Republican groups in Northern Ireland increased. Europe continues to be used by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) as a base to support its activities in Turkey.



The number of left-wing and anarchist terrorist attacks in 2019 (26) reached the level of 2016 and 2017 after a decrease in 2018. All attacks took place in Greece, Italy or Spain.

Introduction

The European Union (EU) Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2020 seeks to record basic facts and assemble figures regarding terrorist attacks and arrests in the EU in 2019. It is based on quantitative and qualitative data on terrorist offences in the EU and data on arrests of people suspected of involvement in those offences, as confirmed by EU Member States¹. In addition, Europol's cooperation partners in third-party countries provide valuable qualitative information and assessments that enrich the findings of the report. The report also includes information on convictions and acquittals for terrorist offences provided by Eurojust based on data shared by EU Member States.

The EU Directive 2017/541 on combating terrorism², which all EU Member States were obliged to transpose in their national legislation by 8 September 2018, specifies that terrorist offences are certain intentional acts which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation when committed with the aim of:

- seriously intimidating a population;
- unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act; or
- seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation.

The shared legal framework created by the EU Directive 2017/541 makes comparing data relating to terrorism from different EU Member States meaningful. On this basis, the TE-SAT provides statistical data on terrorism in EU Member States. On a national level, terrorism legislation varies within the limits set by this Directive, as EU Member States retain flexibility when legislating.

The TE-SAT reflects EU Member States' definitions of terrorist offences according to national legislation. In the statistics, violent incidents that are classified by national authorities as terrorism are counted as terrorist attacks. Included as arrests are those judicial arrests warranted by a prosecutor or investigating judge, whereby a person is detained for questioning on suspicion of committing a criminal offence for which detention is permitted by national law. Conviction rates in the EU are generally high, but the numbers of those arrested within the preceding year and those eventually convicted of terrorist offences may differ.

In addition, the TE-SAT mentions specific violent extremist acts and activities, as reported by EU Member States, to provide a more comprehensive picture of the terrorism situation. Whereas there is no universally agreed definition of extremism, extremists generally aim to replace the liberal democratic order and alter the fundamental constitutional principles linked to it. Terrorism, therefore, can be considered to be a set of violent tactics employed mainly by extremists.

¹ For this report, which covers the period of 2019, the United Kingdom is considered a Member State of the EU.

² Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017L0541>



Terrorism and violent extremism

In 2019 in several EU Member States, extremists carried out violent attacks, which were not prosecuted as terrorism under national law. France, for example, reported two attacks on mosques, which did not amount to terrorism. Other EU Member States reported violent right-wing activities directed at immigrants. Anti-Jewish violence was seen in many countries.

Other examples are the assassination of a German politician in June and the attack on a synagogue in Halle in October 2019. In both cases, the perpetrators were indicted with murder under German law, which defines terrorism exclusively as group-based violence³. With regard to the June murder, the German Federal Prosecutor-General's Office stated on 27 June 2019 that there lacked sufficient evidence that the three suspects arrested had formed a right-wing terrorist organisation⁴. Similarly, concerning the attack in Halle, the Federal Prosecutor General's Office stated on 10 October 2019 that there was no sufficient evidence that the perpetrator was a member of or linked to a right-wing terrorist organisation⁵.

In practice, acts which amount to terrorism under national legislation in one EU Member State might not have crossed this line in another. A clear distinction between terrorism and other forms of extremist violence is sometimes difficult to draw.

The TE-SAT does not require EU Member States to systematically report incidents of violent extremism that are not categorised as terrorism under national law. However, the TE-SAT mentions specific violent extremist acts and activities as reported by EU Member States, when these aim to intimidate a population or compel a government or have the potential to seriously destabilise or destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country. However, these incidents are not considered in the statistical data on terrorism in this report, which exclusively reflects incidents reported as terrorism by EU Member States.

Not all forms of extremism sanction the use of violence. The TE-SAT refers to non-violent forms of extremism, in particular ideologies inciting hatred of specific groups or populations, as reported by EU Member States, in case these have the potential of inciting acts of terrorism or violent extremism.

Despite the common legal framework embodied by EU Directive 2017/541, discrepancies between what constitutes terrorism persist among EU Member States. The TE-SAT is testimony to these variations. At the same time, the report shows that all EU Member States face similar challenges in defining the line between violent behaviour and terrorism, with regard to, for example, the role of mental conditions or the role of incitement of lone actor terrorism. Increased law enforcement cooperation and harmonisation of terrorism legislation and jurisprudence among EU Member States will contribute to consolidating the EU's area of freedom, security and justice.

³ The German Penal Code criminalises the formation of a terrorist organisation and terrorist offences committed by members of a terrorist organisation (section 129a). An association is 'a structured association of more than two persons, established to exist for a longer period of time, regardless of whether it has formally defined roles for its members, continuous membership or a developed structure and whose purpose is the pursuit of an overriding common interest' (Section 129(2)). German Penal Code, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_stgb/englisch_stgb.html

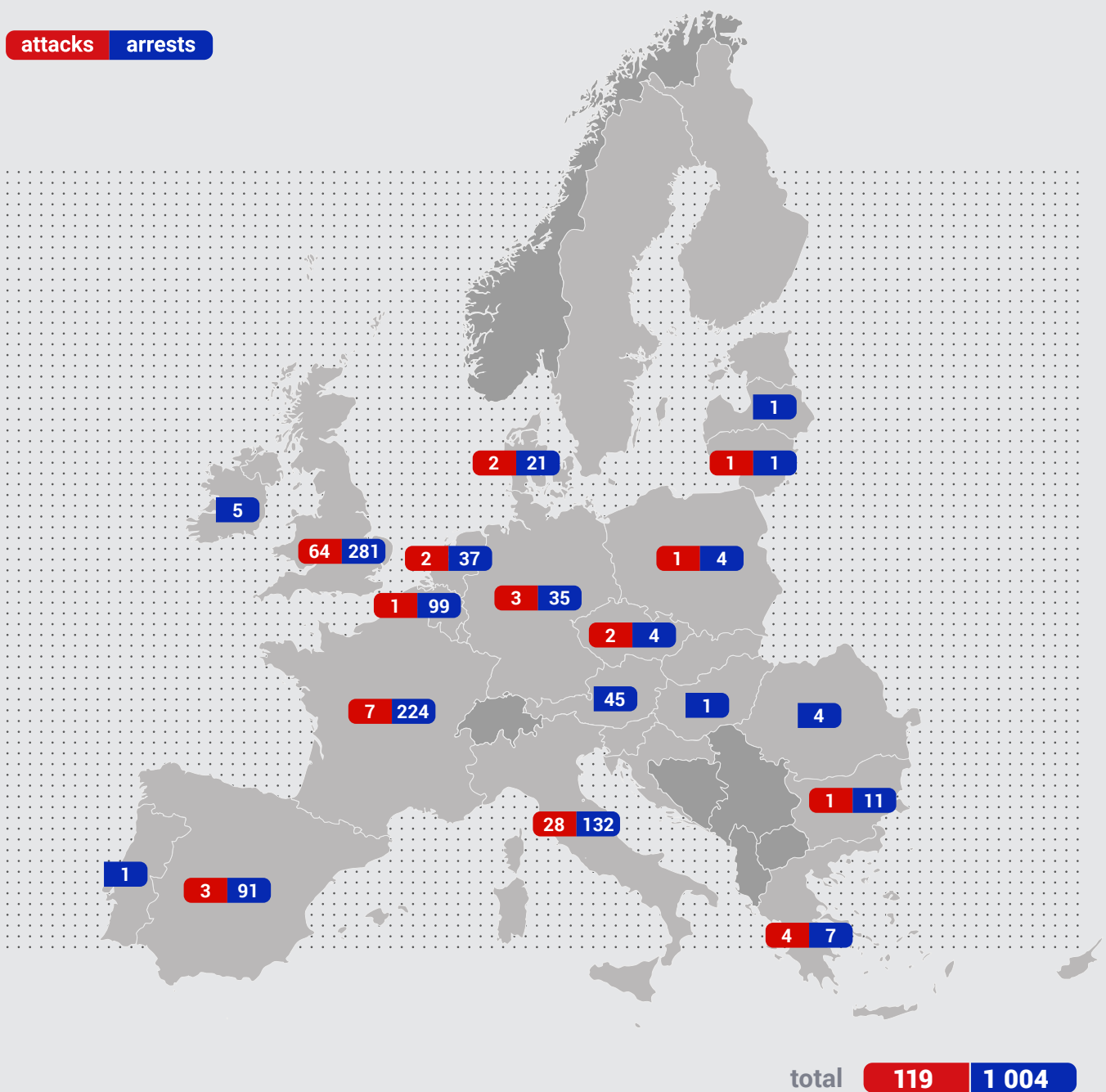
⁴ The German Federal Prosecutor General's Office, *Mitteilung zum Stand der Ermittlungen im Ermittlungsverfahren wegen des Mordes zum Nachteil des Kasseler Regierungspräsidenten Dr. Walter Lübcke*, 2019, <https://www.generalbundesanwalt.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2019/Pressemitteilung2-vom-27-06-2019.html>

⁵ The German Federal Prosecutor General's Office, *Mitteilung zum Stand der Ermittlungen im Ermittlungsverfahren wegen des Anschlages in Halle (Saale) am 9. Oktober 2019*, 2019 <https://www.generalbundesanwalt.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2019/Pressemitteilung2-vom-10-10-2019.html>

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Terrorist attacks and arrests

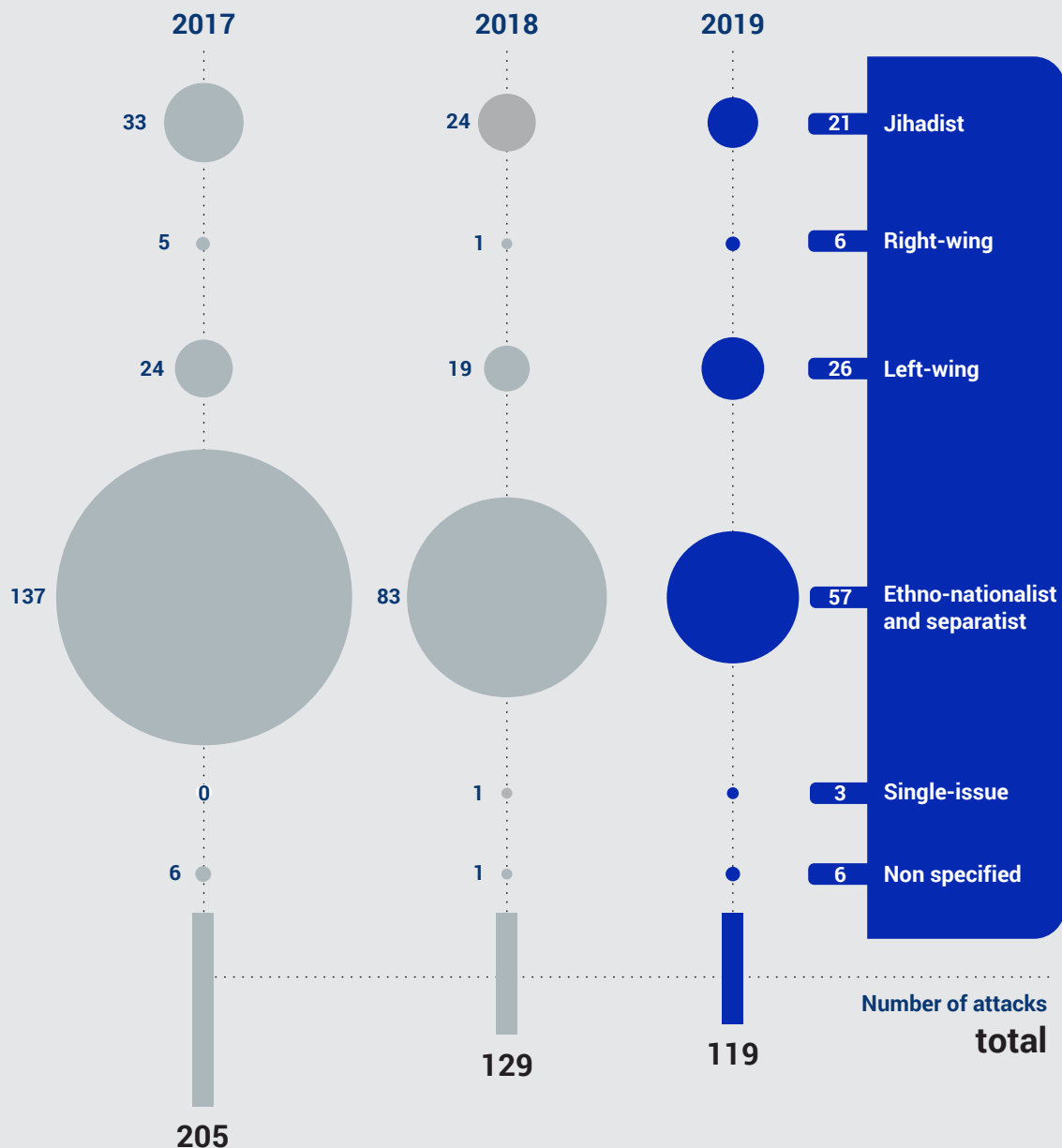
Attacks and arrests in EU Member State in 2019.



For the territory of the EU, a total of 119 completed, failed and foiled terrorist attacks in 2019 were reported by a total of 13 EU Member States.

Ten people died as a result of terrorist attacks in the EU and **27 people were injured**. All deaths and the injuries of 26 people were the result of jihadist attacks; one person was injured in a right-wing terrorist attack. In addition to these terrorist attacks, Germany reported two major violent extremist attacks that killed three people and injured several others. Outside the EU, 17 civilians from EU Member States died in a terrorist attack (in Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019).

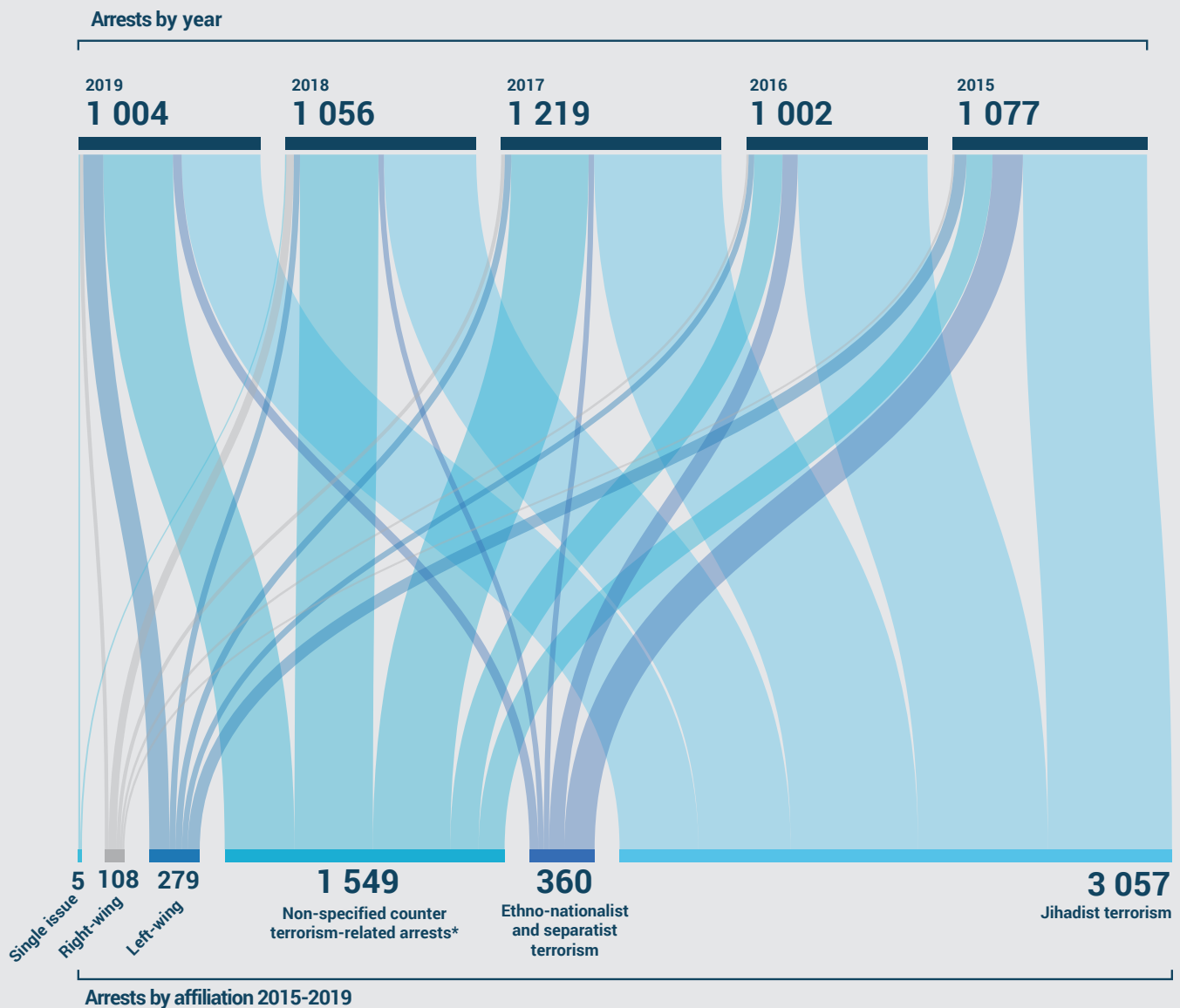
Terrorist attacks from 2017 to 2019.



In 2019, 1 004 individuals were arrested on suspicion of terrorism-related offences in 19 EU Member States, with Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and the UK reporting the highest numbers.

The **overall number of arrests decreased slightly** for the second consecutive year in 2019, but the figures show that terrorism remained geographically widespread in the EU..

Terrorist arrests in the EU per affiliation/year.



* These terrorism-related arrests were not broken down by type of terrorism in contributions to Europol. They include 86 arrests reported by Belgium and 281 arrests reported by the UK. The 281 arrests reported by the UK do not include 147 additional arrests made in Northern Ireland.

Individuals prone to criminal activities, including those currently imprisoned, who radicalise to violence and engage in terrorism, represent a serious security threat. Several attacks within prisons in 2019 are demonstrative of this threat.

Prisons

EU Member States reported that individuals imprisoned for terrorist offences and prisoners who radicalise in prison pose a threat both during their imprisonment and after release. In 2019 the failed attack on 5 March in a French prison, the thwarted 23 July attack on prison guards in France and the 29 November attack in London (UK) by a recently released prisoner, are indicative of the threat.

France reported that more than 500 terrorist convicts live in French prisons alongside 900 radicalised individuals. Between mid-2018 and the end of 2019, a total of four attacks in French prisons were foiled. Five inmates who formed a jihadist cell among prisoners in two Spanish prisons were indicted in February 2019 for indoctrination and terrorist recruitment. In Belgium, just over 200 people were being formally monitored in prison in 2019 on account of their radicalisation.

In many EU Member States, a number of radicalised individuals will soon be released, thereby increasing the security threat. Belgium observed that some prisoners prefer to serve their entire sentence without request for early release as no conditions or probation measures can be imposed after their release. The Netherlands is concerned that jihadists in prison have the potential to create new networks which may strengthen the jihadist community following their release or give rise to jihadist networks abroad that pose a threat to the Netherlands.

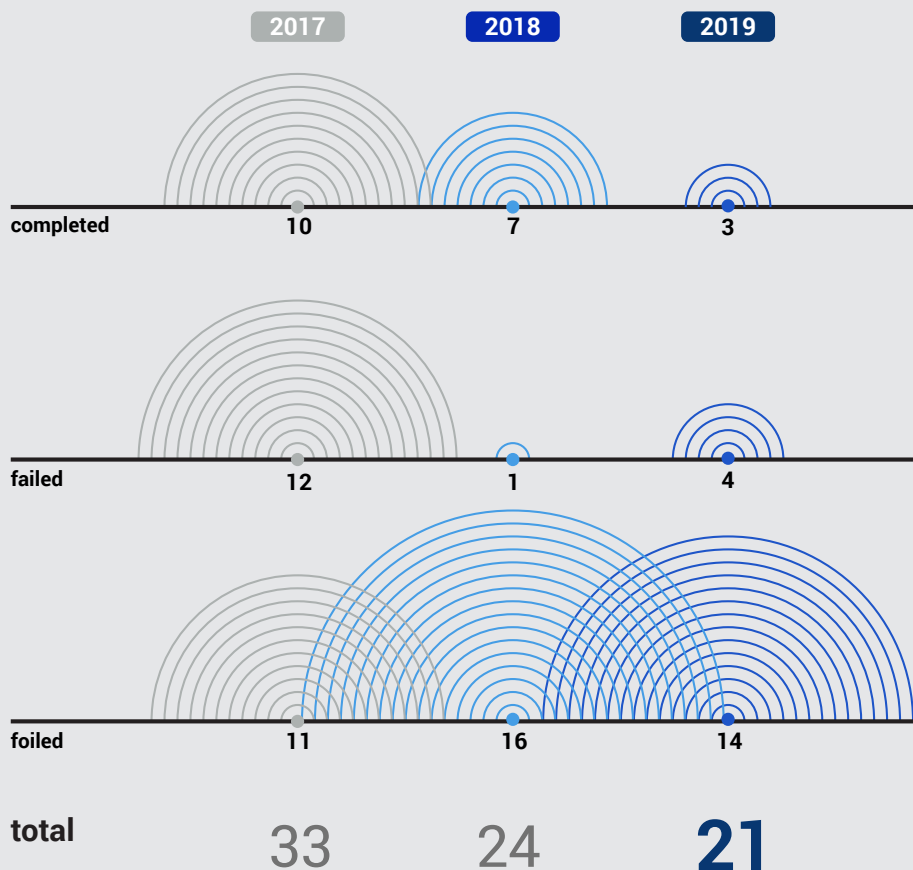
In Spain, a high percentage of incarcerated non-terrorist offenders were radicalised by jihadist ideology. Denmark is concerned that radicalised inmates in contact with people from organised crime circles may pose an increasing risk of jihadists gaining access to weapons.



Overview of types of terrorism

The TE-SAT categorises terrorist organisations by their source of motivation. Although usually one ideology or motivation dominates, some groups have a mixture of motivating ideologies. The categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Jihadist terrorism



Jihadist terrorist attacks from 2017 to 2019.

The total number of jihadism-related incidents in the EU decreased slightly (21 in 2019; 24 in 2018), but continued to be geographically widespread. Eight EU Member States suffered completed, failed or foiled jihadist terrorist attacks, the same number as in 2018. Notably, for the second year in a row, the number of foiled jihadist plots significantly outnumbered completed and failed jihadist attacks.

All but one of the seven completed or failed attacks were committed by individuals acting alone, while most foiled plots involved multiple suspects.



Public places and military or law enforcement personnel continued to be among the **most frequent targets for jihadism-inspired attacks**. Whereas all bombing plots failed or were thwarted by authorities, stabbing and shooting attacks resulted in deaths and/or injuries.

Most **jihadism-inspired attackers and would-be attackers** (almost 70 %) were between 20 and 28 years old. The youngest perpetrators were 16 and 17 years old. Although the majority of jihadist terrorists were male (85 %), eight female perpetrators were also reported by EU Member States. With regard to citizenship, nearly 60 % of jihadist attackers were citizens of the country in which the attack or plot took place⁶.

Similar to the trend observed in previous years, a significant proportion of the **overall arrests were related to jihadist terrorism**. The majority (15) of the 19 EU Member States reporting terrorism-related incidents in 2019 registered arrests linked to jihadist terrorism. Membership of a terrorist group and terrorist conspiracy, terrorism financing and facilitation were the most frequent offences leading to arrests, irrespective of gender. Notably, terrorist attack planning and preparation activities almost exclusively involved male suspects. In terms of age, both male and female suspects were aged between 21 and 38 at the time of the arrest in more than 60 % of known cases. In more than 70 % of arrests, for which citizenship was reported to Europol (242 of 335), the country of arrest and the citizenship of the perpetrator were the same⁷.

Jihadists in Europe are connected mainly through loose networks. These are embedded in a wider Muslim extremist milieu, which can act as a conduit towards terrorist engagement. Networks are largely home-grown and without organisational links to terrorist groups like al-Qaeda or the so-called Islamic State (IS). In addition, some individuals or small groups have been seen to self-radicalise, principally on the internet, without being part of wider networks.

⁶ Of a total of 54 attackers, no information on citizenship was provided to Europol for seven. Of the 47 attackers of known citizenship, 27 had the citizenship of the attacked country. The remaining 21 had varying nationalities, mainly from Muslim-majority countries.

⁷ A total of 436 individuals were reported arrested on suspicion of jihadist terrorist offences in 2019. Of these, no citizenship was reported for 101. EU citizens accounted for 242 of the arrest, whereas 93 were non-EU citizens.



Two travel attempts to join jihadist terrorist groups were reported to have been thwarted by EU Member States in 2019. Few individuals were observed to have returned from conflict zones, but undetected returns cannot be excluded. There are no signs of a systematic use of irregular migration by terrorist organisations.



The situation in conflict areas outside Europe continued to impact the terrorism situation in Europe. Hundreds of European citizens with links to IS – and their family members, who may not be Europeans but might want to claim European citizenship – remained in Iraq and Syria. IS, while losing its last enclave in Syria, transitioned to a covert insurgent group operating in Iraq and Syria, with affiliated groups active across Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The terrorist group continues to pose a threat, despite the death of its leader in October 2019.

Al-Qaeda again displayed its intent and ambition to strike Western targets, while its regional affiliates aim to integrate and coordinate with populations and armed factions in conflict areas in line with its overall strategy of building local support bases.

For more information, see the chapter on jihadist terrorism. >>

Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism

As in previous years, the attacks specified as ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism represented the largest proportion (57 of 119) of all terrorist attacks. Their number decreased compared to 2018 (83). All but one incident were related to Dissident Republican (DR) groups in Northern Ireland, whose activities increased. The UK reported 55 security-related incidents in Northern Ireland and one additional attack outside of Northern Ireland.

The separatist terrorist group Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain continued to be inactive in 2019. Despite the group's disarmament claims, two weapons and explosives caches were discovered. Only one terrorist incident was linked to separatist activism. In Corsica (France), no separatist terrorist attacks were committed in 2019. The emergence of offshoot groups advocating violence, however, raised concerns.

The Kurdish separatist terrorist group Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK) continued using EU territory for propaganda, recruitment, fundraising and logistical support activities. Suspected members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were arrested in Germany on charges of serious criminal offences in Sri Lanka.

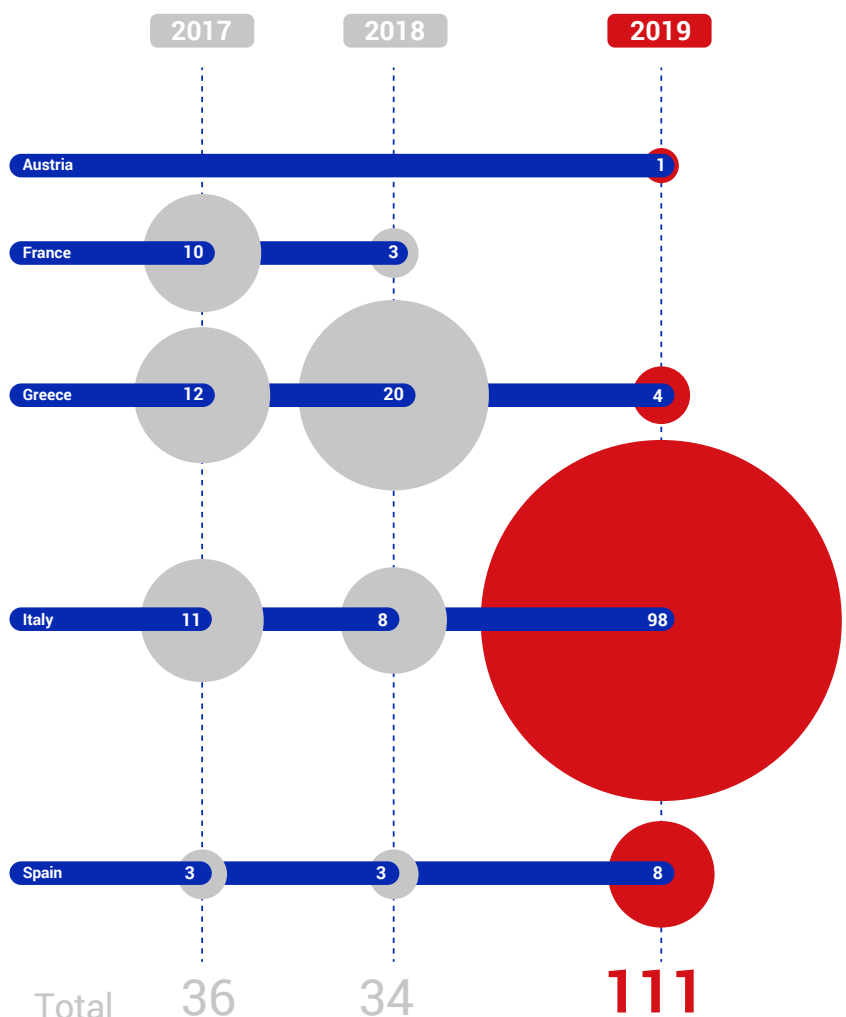
[For more information, see the chapter on ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism >>](#)

Left-wing and anarchist terrorism

Greece, Italy and Spain continued to be the epicentre for attacks carried out by left-wing and anarchist terrorists. The total number of reported attacks increased compared to 2018, and returned to levels recorded in 2016 and 2017. Private enterprises along with critical infrastructure and public/governmental institutions were among the most frequent targets for left-wing and anarchist terrorists and extremists. In the vast majority of cases, the perpetrators remained unknown, and responsibility for the attacks was claimed online.

The number of arrests on suspicion of left-wing or anarchist terrorism in 2019 more than tripled, compared to previous years. The majority of arrests were linked to violent demonstrations and confrontations with security forces in Italy (71 of 111) and were made on suspicion of preparation and commission of a terrorist attack, often combined with membership of a terrorist group. Male arrestees formed the largest group in total arrests.

Left-wing and anarchist terrorist arrests from 2017 to 2019.



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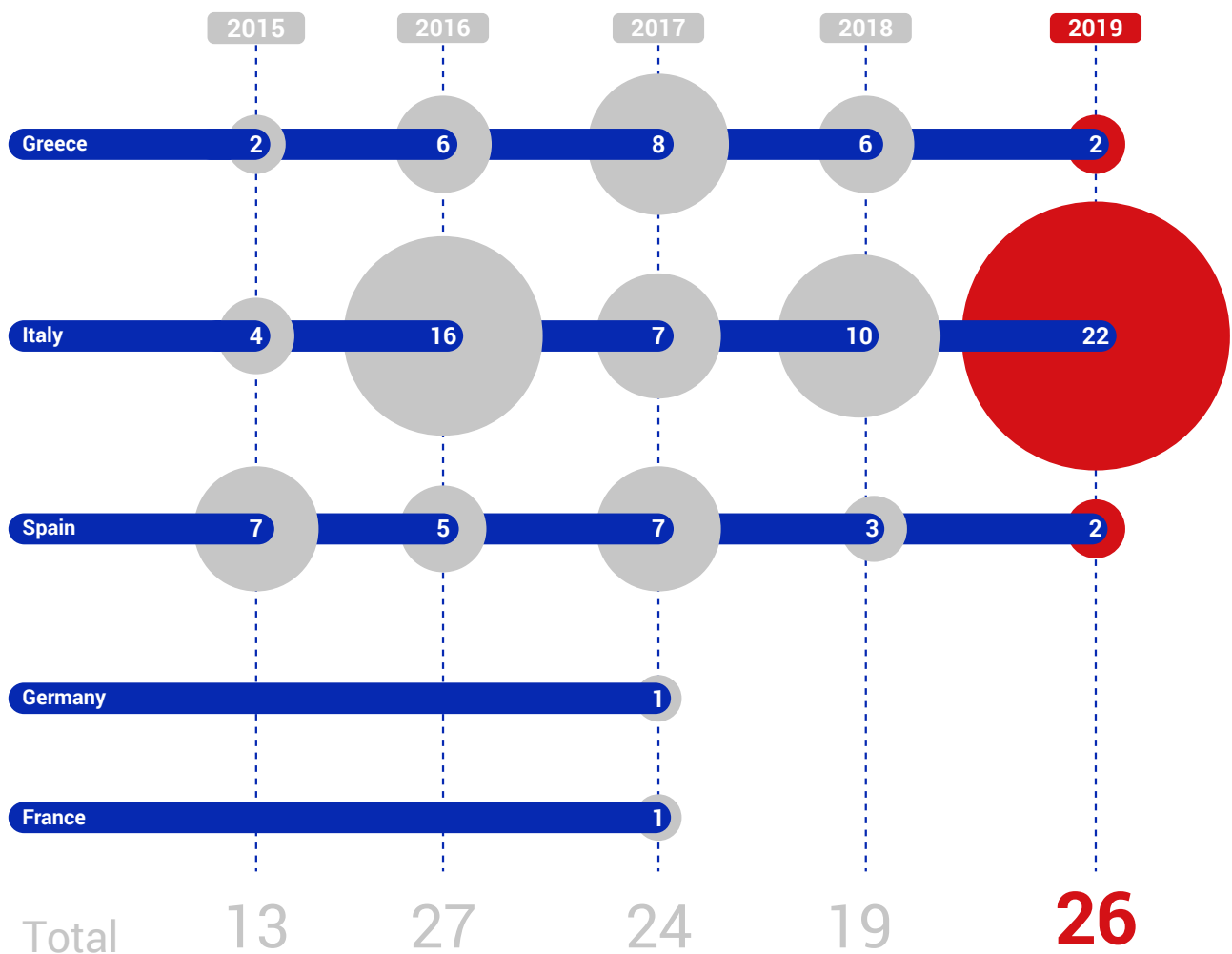
The number of arrests on suspicion of left-wing or anarchist terrorism in 2019 more than tripled, compared to previous years. The majority of arrests were linked to violent demonstrations and confrontations with security forces in Italy

Left-wing and anarchist terrorist attacks from 2015 to 2019.

In addition, violent left-wing and anarchist extremists continued to pose a threat to public order in a number of EU Member States. Support for Kurdish populations in Syria remained a central topic, and left-wing extremists and anarchists are believed to have travelled to join Kurdish militias in north-eastern Syria.

The Turkish Marxist-Leninist terrorist organisation Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (DHKP-C) continued using the EU as a logistical base to support the group's operations in Turkey.

[For more information, see the chapter on left-wing and anarchist terrorism >>](#)



Right-wing terrorism

After a decline in reported attacks in 2018, in 2019 three EU Member States reported a total of six right-wing terrorist attacks. The number includes one completed attack in the UK, one failed attack in Lithuania and four foiled plots (three in the UK and one in Poland). Two attacks committed by right-wing extremists were reported by Germany, but under national law could not be classified as terrorism. These claimed the lives of three people. As in previous years, all perpetrators motivated by right-wing ideology were male and nationals of the country in which the attack took place or was planned.

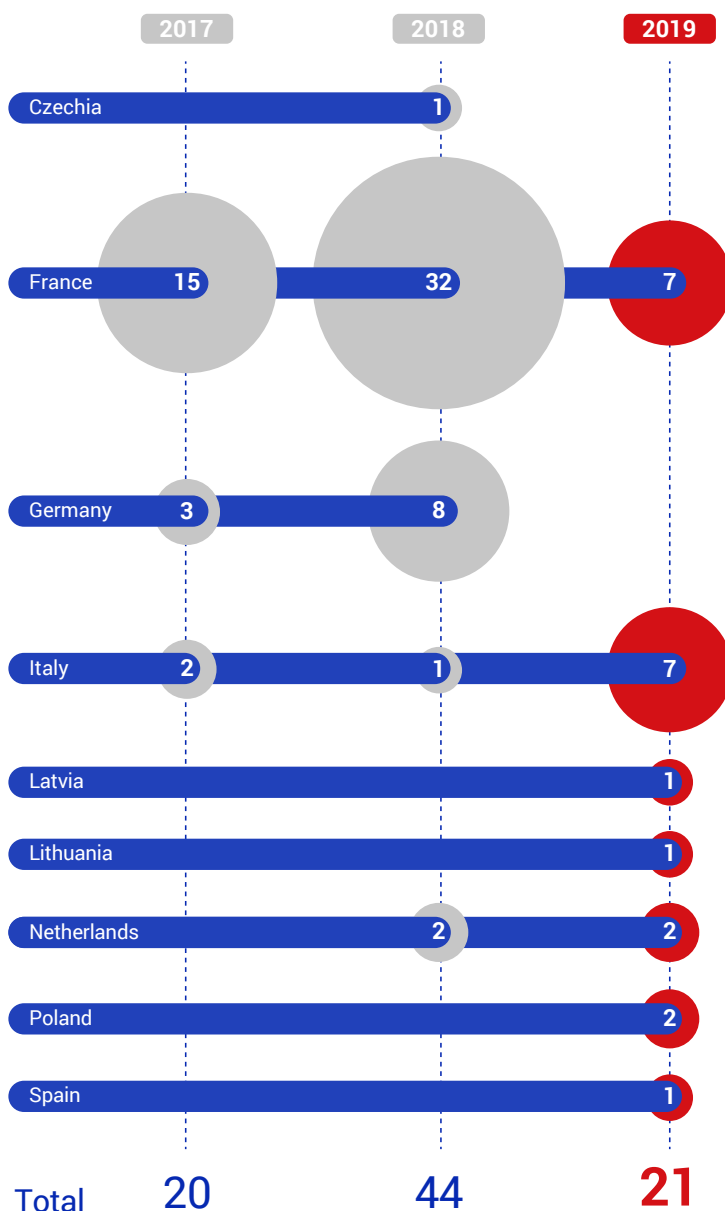
The number of arrests attributed to right-wing terrorism decreased compared to 2018 (21 in 2019; 44 in 2018). However, the EU Member States included two countries (Latvia and Lithuania) reporting right-wing arrests for the

first time. Attack planning and attack preparation, often accompanied by possession of weapons, were the most frequent offences resulting in arrests. The arrestees were predominantly male of widely varying ages, with 40 % aged between 22 and 30 at the time of arrest.

The attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand), Poway (USA), El Paso (USA), Bærum (Norway) and Halle (Germany) are part of a wave of violent incidents worldwide, the perpetrators of which were part of similar transnational online communities and took inspiration from one another.

Groups of right-wing extremists intending violent actions were arrested in EU Member States in 2019. Many communicated via closed online groups.

Violent right-wing extremists maintain international links, for example through participation in concerts and rallies marking historical events in a variety of EU Member States. Online communication was observed to strengthen international links between right-wing extremists.



Right-wing terrorist arrests from 2017 to 2019.

Several EU Member States, including Belgium, France and Slovenia, reported the emergence of paramilitary groups pretexting the impotence of the state to protect the population against the perceived threat from Islam and immigration.

Right-wing extremist ideology is not uniform; it is fed from different sub-currents, united in their rejection of diversity and minority rights. One element of violent right-wing ideology is the belief in the superiority of the 'white race', which will have to fight a 'race war'. This confrontation is deemed unavoidable to stop the alleged conspiracy by the 'system' to replace white populations through mass immigration.

Non-violent right-wing extremist movements, such as the Identitarian Movement, also encourage hatred and have the potential to inspire lone actor attacks, thereby posing a significant threat of radicalisation.

[For more information, see the chapter on right-wing terrorism >>](#)

Cross-cutting issues

Lone actors and terrorism

EU Member States assess for both jihadist terrorism and right-wing terrorism and violent extremism that the greatest threat emanates from lone actors or small cells carrying out violence on their own accord without being directed by larger organisations. As the figures presented above show, plots involving multiple suspects are more likely to be thwarted by law enforcement than attack preparation by individuals acting alone. Both jihadist and right-wing extremist propaganda incite individuals to perpetrate acts of violence autonomously.

The right-wing extremist doctrine of the 'leaderless resistance' provides justification for violent actors to perpetrate attacks without direction from a group. Under this doctrine, violent acts by individuals serve to instigate the anticipated 'race war'. Transnational violent right-wing extremist online communities celebrate perpetrators of lone actor attacks as 'saints' or 'martyrs' for the cause, which can incite others to act, as demonstrated by the wave of transnational right-wing attacks in recent years.

IS and al-Qaeda ideology has long incited individual supporters to perpetrate lone-actor attacks. Initially, IS recruited and directed potential attackers remotely, but as a reaction to decreased outreach capacities urged supporters to act without expecting remote support and guidance. The reward offered by IS was to declare attackers posthumously 'IS soldiers'. In addition, the prospect of becoming a 'martyr', as promoted by jihadist ideology, provided additional incentive.

Weaponry

In terms of weaponry, the use of firearms and explosives continued to prevail in ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorist attacks and violent attacks inspired by right-wing ideology. Jihadist terrorists were also observed to show a growing interest in the use of firearms and explosives in addition to bladed weapons. In left-wing and anarchist attacks, rudimentary improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and improvised incendiary devices (IIDs) continued to be used, causing damage to buildings and critical infrastructure.

Explosives

KEY FINDINGS

- › In 2019 nearly half of all reported jihadism-inspired attacks and disrupted plots involved the use of explosives. Terrorists mostly aimed to target civilians and places of mass gathering. All jihadist bombing attacks failed or were thwarted by authorities.
- › Right-wing extremists and terrorists seemed increasingly interested in the use of explosives. The Halle (Germany) attack demonstrated a lone actor's capability of manufacturing several improvised explosive devices.
- › Triacetone triperoxide (TATP) remained the preferred homemade explosive. However, the trend of using other mixtures continued.
- › Knowledge on the manufacture of explosives and improvised devices was mainly facilitated online. In 2019 an increased volume of online material inciting lone-actor arson attacks was noted.

Groups or lone actors linked to jihadist terrorism continue to pose the biggest threat to Europe with regard to the unlawful use of explosives in bomb attacks. Unlike other terrorist groups, which use a broad range of methods and targets, explosive-related jihadist attacks in 2019 were exclusively aimed at civilian targets and places of mass gathering (public events, shopping areas, churches, etc.). An example is the bomb attack in Lyon on 24 May, which targeted civilians in a busy shopping street with an improvised explosive device (IED) enhanced with metal fragments to maximise the lethality.

In 2019 nearly half of all reported jihadism-inspired attacks and disrupted plots involved the use of explosives. Terrorists mostly aimed to target civilians and places of mass gatherings. All jihadist bombing attacks failed (2) or were thwarted by authorities (8).

Homemade explosives (HMEs) continued to be used in

most of the explosive-related cases suspected of being linked to jihadist terrorism. As in previous years, triacetone triperoxide (TATP) remained the HME of choice, albeit in smaller amounts. The trend of misusing fertiliser-based mixtures⁸ and explosive mixtures (flash powder, black powder) sourced from readily available commercial pyrotechnic articles, continued in 2019.

Modi operandi with regard to the placement and use of explosive devices included concealment and remote controlled activation. Some bombing plots revealed a broader range of intended methods, such as time-delayed IEDs and person-borne IEDs in suicide vests or bags, as in the plot disrupted on 25 November with the arrest of two men in Zoetermeer and The Hague (Netherlands).

HME and IED-making knowledge was for the most part transferred or facilitated online, including via encrypted cloud-based instant messaging services and social networking sites.

In 2019 an increased volume of propaganda material inciting lone-actors to conduct various types of arson attacks was noted. The suggested methods included unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones, or balloon-borne⁹ incendiary devices (IIDs).

Right-wing extremists and terrorists appeared to be increasingly interested in acquiring knowledge regarding the use of explosives. As in previous years, the methods discussed and used included arson and explosive attacks with IIDs or IEDs constructed with readily available materials, such as Molotov cocktails, pipe bombs and pyrotechnics. In addition, the 9 October attack in Halle (Germany) showed the capability of a lone actor to gain knowledge, acquire explosive precursors and construct several IEDs. Other incidents showed the interest and capability of right-wing terrorists in manufacturing more complex HMEs, such as TATP, or combining IEDs with toxic materials.

The explosive devices used in left-wing and anarchist extremist attacks were made from an array of readily available materials. As in previous years, they utilised simple IIDs filled with flammable gases/liquids or IEDs mostly consisting of pyrotechnic mixtures and often with time-delayed activation.

The attack methods used by Dissident Republicans (DRs) in Northern Ireland (UK) vary across groups. Many attacks involved firearms, small IIDs or IEDs, such as Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs. DRs also deployed larger and/or potentially more destructive devices such as under-vehicle IEDs (UVIEDs) and explosively formed projectiles (EFPs) targeting law enforcement and other select targets. Compared to 2018, the number and diversity of attacks using explosives increased. A particularly concerning

modus operandi involved the deployment of a hoax device and a secondary IED intended to kill or injure officers responding to the initial incident.

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear substances

KEY FINDINGS

- Contrary to 2018, EU Member States reported no terrorist incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials for 2019.
- Attacks using CBRN materials continued to be discussed and encouraged online, and knowledge continued to be exchanged via closed online forums, sometimes benefiting non-terrorist criminals.

In 2019 EU Member States reported no terrorist incidents with chemical, biological, radioactive or other nuclear (CBRN) materials.

The intention to carry out terrorist attacks using CBRN materials continued to appear on terrorist online forums and social media. Closed online forums were used to discuss possible modi operandi and to share knowledge



⁸ For example, ammonium nitrate-based.

⁹ For example, similar to the widely utilised method in Israel recently, with balloon-borne incendiary devices launched from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel causing wildfires in forests, grasslands, agricultural fields and urban areas.

via handbooks, manuals, posters and infographics containing recipes to produce and disseminate various agents. Suggestions and encouraging statements are also part of terrorist propaganda.

The handling and containment of biological agents has been a challenge for terrorists. Nevertheless, technological advances along with knowledge shared online have reduced these barriers.

During 2019, a pro-IS group launched a campaign via a cloud-based instant messaging service promoting the use of biological weapons. Some of the content provided instructions on how to produce biological weapons and suggested how and where to deploy them.

No incidents using radiological isotopes for terrorist purposes were reported in 2019. However, stolen or lost nuclear and radioactive materials, known as 'out of regulatory control', continued to be a long-standing global concern.

Criminals continued to attempt to exploit the illicit demand for nuclear and radioactive material. In such cases they claimed to be able to supply non-existent radionuclides or misrepresented the nature or quantity of the trafficked material. In December 2019, for example, a joint Austrian-Moldovan operation led to the arrest of an individual claiming to be smuggling radiological materials¹⁰.

The nexus between terrorism and crime

KEY FINDINGS

- › In the EU, there is little evidence of a systematic nexus between crime and terrorism. Criminals and terrorists coexist in certain marginalised areas, within the same family structures or in prison, thereby enabling contacts and transaction-based cooperation. However, criminals are observed to be wary of terrorist suspects drawing attention to their activities.
- › Skilled criminals are attractive recruits for terrorist groups. Criminals might be attracted to terrorism by the promise of purification and redemption. In this context, prisons in which radicalised inmates and criminals live together are of concern.
- › A high proportion of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) have prior criminal records.

In the EU, there is little evidence to suggest that a nexus between organised crime and terrorism exists on a systematic and formalised basis. However, there are indications of a transaction-based convergence of low-level criminals and extremists, who frequently overlap socially in marginalised areas.

Skills and experience acquired from involvement in criminal activities, such as handling weapons, avoiding detection and familiarity with violence, make criminals attractive potential recruits for terrorist organisations. Jihadist groups, in turn, offer former criminals an opportunity for alleged purification and redemption from past sins, all the while justifying violence and crime under the pretext of *jihad* against Islam's enemies. Criminal and terrorist groups have been observed to recruit from socially and demographically similar environments, in particular economically disadvantaged and frustrated young people.

EU Member States observed that a substantial number of terrorists have a prior criminal record, mainly in different forms of non-organised crime. For example in Belgium, 86 % of FTFs were known to authorities for offences such as robberies, theft or drug dealing. In Sweden, nearly half of the jihadist individuals convicted of different forms of violent crime are travellers to, or returnees from the conflict zone. Hungary reported that many known members of right-wing extremist groups have previous convictions for violent crimes. In Ireland, known criminal elements have been identified as affiliated with right-wing protests. Family links and cultural background also play a role: in Austria, for example, closely interconnected Chechen family clans have members who are either jihadist sympathisers or engage in organised crime. Cooperation here might be linked to in-group solidarity rather than structural links between crime and terrorism.

Illicit acquisition of material resources, such as theft of weapons and documents, has been identified as directly contributing to terrorist activity. For example, Belgium observed that, on several occasions, persons involved in terrorist cases used genuine, but stolen documents (bearing physical resemblance to the real holder of the documents) to pass checks. Established separatist groups, such as Dissident Republican (DR) groups in Northern Ireland, have reportedly developed their own firearm acquisition patterns, including theft from security forces and illegal production¹¹.

¹⁰ Europol, *Crime group suspected of smuggling nuclear materials arrested in Vienna*, 6 December 2019, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/crime-group-suspected-of-smuggling-nuclear-materials-arrested-in-vienna>

¹¹ Duquet, N. and Goris, K., *Firearms acquisition by terrorists in Europe: Research findings and policy recommendations of Project SAFTE*, Flemish Peace Institute, 2018, https://www.flemishpeaceinstitute.eu/safte/files/vrede_syntheserapport_safte_lr.pdf

The social ties between individuals from criminal and jihadist milieus are frequently reinforced by stays in prison. This affects in particular EU Member States, in which extremists and terrorists are incarcerated with criminals in close proximity. Relationships created during detention may continue after release and may result in easier access of terrorists to illicit goods and services, such as false documents, weapons or money laundering. Nevertheless, the core motivation of crime and terrorism remains largely divergent. Austria observed that many released prisoners are unable to continue their criminal career, as their former contacts withdraw because of fear that known extremists attract the attention of security services to their criminal activities.

Financing of terrorism

KEY FINDINGS

- › Individual terrorists and small cells, but also foreign terrorist fighters, have limited financial needs and are usually able to fund themselves and their activities through legitimate sources of income, fraud or petty crime. In 2019 several cases of funding the return of foreign terrorist fighters were observed.
- › Right-wing and left-wing extremist groups receive funds from their respective bases of supporters through fees, events and donations. Right-wing extremists also use merchandising as a source of funding.
- › Funding for terrorist groups outside Europe decreased compared to previous years, likely as a result of reduced opportunities for transferring funds to IS. However, knowledge of generating funds – under the cover of legitimate business or charities, through crime or fundraising campaigns – and transferring them to terrorist groups is assessed to be widely spread in extremist communities.
- › Funds are transferred outside Europe mainly through cash, money services businesses or underground banking (*hawala*), but also through combinations of these methods. The abuse of virtual currencies, although promoted by some terrorist groups, has been observed mainly to cover expenses of individuals or small cells.

Self-financing cells

Individual terrorists and small cells have limited financial requirements. They do not need to maintain an infrastructure, and their operational costs are relatively low, especially if they limit themselves to simple *modi operandi*, like stabbing or vehicle ramming. Belgium observed that cells in Europe partially fund themselves through petty crime, such as petty theft, shoplifting and extortion. Some jihadist preachers have reportedly legitimised such offences if used to finance *jihad*.

With regard to virtual currencies, suspicious transactions that were detected appeared to cater more for the requirements of isolated cells or individuals present in Europe rather than terrorist organisations abroad. Belgium, for example, observed that virtual currencies can be used for purchases on illicit Darknet trading platforms, for example to procure false documents or air tickets, which are typical for isolated actors or small cells who lack connections in established physical markets.

In 2019 FTFs in conflict zones continued looking to seek financial support from persons in Europe for the purpose of covering their expenses or even for arranging their return back to Europe. Spain reported two cases in which funds were transferred to finance the return of FTFs and their families to Europe. In May, a 43-year-old Syrian citizen was arrested in Spain on suspicion of being a member of the financial apparatus of IS and transferring funds collected from jihadist sympathisers to Syria. The transfers were carried out through different transaction channels, but principally through *hawala* or underground banking. Funds collected in Europe were transferred to Syria and used to facilitate the travel of IS members to their countries of origin. In the second case, a 71-year-old Spanish citizen of Iraqi origin was arrested in November on similar charges: sending funds to ensure the return of jihadists from conflict areas to Europe and being in contact with IS intermediaries who were able to send and receive money from a multitude of Arab and European countries via *hawala*. Switzerland conducted several terrorism financing investigations into family members of jihadist travellers for sending financial support to their relatives in conflict zones. The Netherlands noted fundraising initiatives on the instant messaging platform *Telegram* in support of female relatives of IS fighters and their children living in detention camps run by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Syria.

Financing of terrorist and extremist groups in Europe

The financing of larger groups and hierarchically structured organisations differs substantially from financing terrorist attacks and activities committed by lone actors or small groups. Terrorist organisations need financial means to

prepare and commit terrorist attacks, but also to maintain infrastructure, recruitment, propaganda and operational capacities (training or indoctrination, salaries, financial compensations to relatives and logistics). Dissident republican (DR) groups, for example, have traditionally funded themselves through criminal activities, smuggling and organised collections in Ireland, the UK and the USA.

Extremist groups in Europe mainly receive funds from their base of supporters. Right-wing extremists, for example, continued to use a mix of traditional and innovative methods to finance their activities in 2019. Right-wing extremist groups collect fees from members and donations from supporters and sympathisers, via bank accounts, in cash during concerts or, rarely, through the production and distribution of propaganda material. Merchandising, for example through online stores selling clothes with right-wing extremist visuals and slogans, is a source of funding for Blood & Honour, as reported by Belgium. In contrast, on their website *Nordfront*, the Nordiska motståndsrörelsen (NMR, 'Nordic Resistance Movement') has encouraged its followers to donate bitcoin via various websites. In Ireland, several high profile right-wing extremist online figures ask for online donations, partially in cryptocurrencies.

Also certain anarchist groups, such as the Federazione Anarchica Informale/Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale (FAI/FRI, 'Informal Anarchist Federation/International Revolutionary Front') or the anarchist prisoner support group Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), has been observed to use cryptocurrencies.

Financing of foreign terrorist organisations through European sources

Terrorist organisations active outside Europe, some with an established territorial presence, use funds, including those generated in Europe, to establish health, social and educational services in areas under their control.

In 2019 Denmark observed that Islamist and jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria remained the primary recipients of terrorist financing from Denmark-based individuals. The scale of funding, however, decreased compared to previous years. This decrease is likely due to reduced opportunities for transferring funds to the so-called Islamic State (IS) – in the light of both IS's loss of territory and the relatively small number of individuals with ties to Denmark remaining in the conflict zone. It does not necessarily indicate that persons in Denmark are less inclined to finance militant Islamist and jihadist groups abroad. Denmark assessed that knowledge of methods for acquiring funds through economic crime and ways of transferring funds to terrorist groups have become more widespread in specific Sunni

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In 2019 FTFs in conflict zones continued looking to seek financial support from persons in Europe for the purpose of covering their expenses or even for arranging their return back to Europe

Dissident republican (DR) groups, for example, have traditionally funded themselves through criminal activities, smuggling and organised collections in Ireland, the UK and the USA

Muslim networks.

At times, complex criminal structures, mainly relying on close family ties, generate revenue, possibly from legitimate businesses, a part of which is used to support terrorism. In June 2019, for example, nine Spanish citizens (eight men and one woman) and one Syrian citizen were arrested in Spain. The organisation was led by a family clan, which for years had likely been using a legitimate enterprise structure to hide illicit operations aimed at laundering important sums of money. Subsequent investigations identified family links of the leaders with members of al-Qaeda in Syria¹².

The Lebanon-based Shi'i extremist organisation Hezbollah (Hizb Allah, 'Party of God') – whose military wing is listed a terrorist organisation by the EU – is suspected of trafficking diamonds and drugs and of money laundering via the trade in second-hand cars. Capital is sent to Lebanon through the banking system but also through physical transport of cash via commercial aviation. Investigations face the difficulty of demonstrating that the funds collected are channelled to the military wing of the organisation.

Romania reported that in 2019 the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK, 'Kurdistan Workers' Party') continued to be active in the collection of funds through their annual fundraising campaign.

There is also a likelihood that part of the proceeds resulting from the facilitation of illegal immigration is used to finance terrorism outside Europe. In late May 2019, four Somali citizens were detained in Italy on suspicion of collecting money in places of worship for terrorist purposes. The funds were to be sent to Somalia to finance terrorist activities and armed groups operating in the region, as well as to promote irregular immigration into Italy. Another Italian investigation in 2019 led to multiple people being arrested for illegal immigration offences. The

¹² Europol, *Counter-terrorist operation: Spanish National Police disrupts criminal organisation which financed al-Qaeda*, 19 June 2019, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/counter-terrorist-operation-spanish-national-police-disrupts-criminal-organisation-which-financed-al-qaeda>

investigation uncovered a Tunisian criminal association involved in this activity (in addition to the smuggling of tobacco from Tunisia to Italy). Among the cell's leadership, a Tunisian citizen was also arrested for online jihadist propaganda.

Means of transfer and facilitators

Funds generated in Europe are transferred outside Europe in various ways. To move funds, terrorists employ cash operations, *hawala* banking¹³, corporate structures and trade transactions, as well as money remittances. In practice, cash transfer, money services businesses and *hawala* are often used in combination, e.g. for cash compensation between different those involved in *hawala* (*hawaladar*).

Terrorist abuse of the internet

To have an impact, terrorist online propaganda requires access to the intended audiences and resilience against deletion. Commercial platforms usually offer wider reach than dedicated spaces created by terrorists themselves, but are more likely to be monitored by their owners, most of whom are averse to the hosting of terrorist content. Closed communication groups, including on encrypted messaging applications, have become preferred spaces for in-group communication, where radicalisation can be reinforced and lead to engagement in terrorism and attack planning.

Online communication has exponentially increased possibilities for terrorists and violent extremists to communicate across borders. Among jihadists, Arabic is the language with the highest prestige and that in which key treatises and communication are drafted. Much of this content is translated into relevant national languages by supporters, who believe that these efforts are part of the struggle. Meanwhile, English has become the *lingua franca* of a globalised community of violent right-wing extremists. Key treatises of right-wing extremists and terrorists were either drafted in English or available in translation.

In recent years, IS lost its dedicated online infrastructure¹⁴ and was forced to operate on social media platforms, many of which were hostile to the group's abuse of their services. As of late 2016, *Telegram* became the platform of choice, but in late 2019 the platform took steps to evict IS and other jihadist groups. IS and its supporters have since been seeking out alternative platforms on which to congregate and from which to expand into

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Extremist groups in Europe mainly receive funds from their base of supporters

At times, complex criminal structures, mainly relying on close family ties, generate revenue, possibly from legitimate businesses, a part of which is used to support terrorism

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public spaces. In addition, in 2019 official IS propaganda continued to decrease in volume. This decrease was partially supplemented by supporter-generated content and recycled material. Suspects arrested for jihadist propaganda frequently had a long involvement in jihadist activities, including attempts to travel to join IS and attack planning.

Despite a recent pushback, right-wing extremists continued to enjoy much greater freedom to act on major social media platforms in 2019 than, for example, jihadists; and these platforms remain important vectors for the spread of right-wing extremism. Right-wing extremists were early adopters of information technology and continue to use a large variety of platforms, including websites, online discussion forums and pseudo-news sites, to disseminate their ideology. In addition, fringe platforms, which are either dedicated right-wing extremist sites or have been colonised, constitute online safe havens for right-wing extremist movements. These are also used to design campaigns and as a launch pad to spread terrorist content onto mainstream platforms in order to insert right-wing extremist narratives into popular culture.

Left-wing and anarchist terrorists and violent extremists use websites as platforms to spread ideology, exchange ideas and post claims of responsibility. For communication, they reportedly use their own online infrastructure of commercially encrypted platforms, or avoid information technologies altogether.

¹³ *Hawalas* – sometimes referred to as underground banking – are informal remittance systems, which rely on networks of trusted individuals in the countries from which the funds originate and those to which the funds are transferred, without leaving formal records of the transaction. *Hawala* transactions are illegal in many, but not all, EU Member States. The informality of the system makes it attractive for the transfer of terrorist funds.

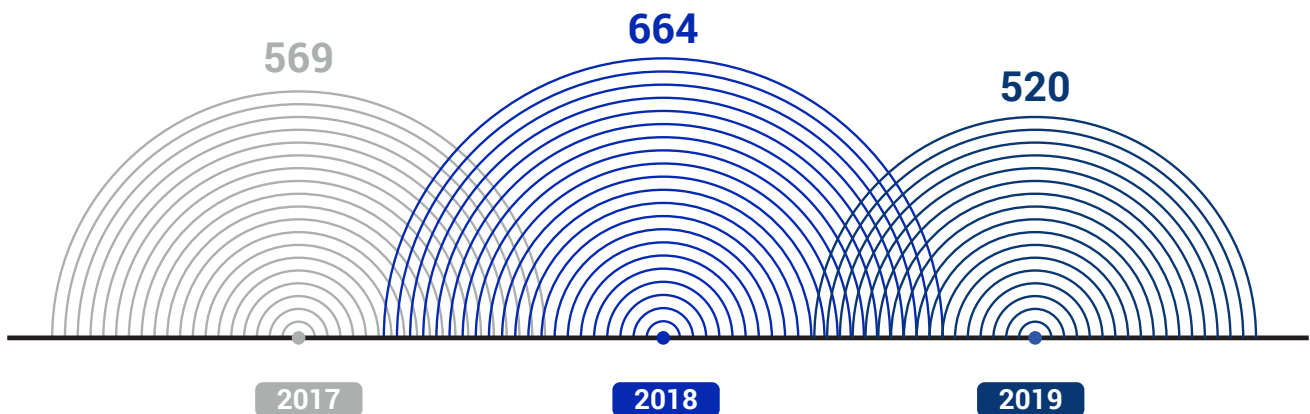
¹⁴ Europol, *Islamic State propaganda machine hit by law enforcement in coordinated takedown action*, 27 April 2018, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/islamic-state-propaganda-machine-hit-law-enforcement-in-coordinated-takedown-action>

Convictions and penalties

KEY FINDINGS

- › Similar to previous years, the majority of terrorism-related convictions in EU Member States concerned jihadist terrorism. Several trials involved women and minors who had joined IS in Iraq or Syria. Courts in Germany and the Netherlands convicted defendants involved in the activities of IS in Syria of both terrorism and war crimes charges, thereby addressing criminal activities committed by the defendants other than their participation in a terrorist organisation.
- › Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism-related convictions constituted the second biggest group, with the majority rendered in Spain for offences linked to ETA. A Belgian court ruled that, under Belgian law, the PKK can be considered as an armed group taking part in a non-international armed conflict, to which rules of international humanitarian law apply, thereby dismissing the charges for involvement in terrorism.
- › Convictions for left-wing and anarchist terrorism were handed down in Germany, Greece and Spain.
- › Right-wing terrorists were convicted in the Netherlands and Germany on charges of membership of a terrorist group and preparation to commit murder with terrorist intent, among others.

*Number of convictions and acquittals for terrorist offences in 2017, 2018 and 2019 as reported to Eurojust**



* The data for the previous years corresponds to the data reported in the respective TE-SAT reports.

Eurojust was informed of concluded court proceedings for terrorist offences in 2019 that took place in 12 EU Member States¹⁵. The court proceedings resulted in 520 convictions and acquittals for terrorist offences¹⁶.

In 2019 the greatest number of convictions and acquittals was reported to Eurojust by France (105), Spain (97) and Belgium (91). Some individuals convicted of terrorist offences in 2019 had previously been convicted of terrorism or other offences in the same EU Member State or abroad. Where allowed by the national legal system, some judgments for terrorist offences in 2019 were rendered *in absentia* of the defendant, if the defendant was at large or not officially declared dead.

Some of the verdicts reported in 2019 are final, while others are pending judicial remedy, as appeals have been submitted¹⁷.

Type of terrorism

Similar to the past few years, the majority (362) of convictions and acquittals in the EU Member States concerned jihadist terrorism. Most of them related to jihadist groups that were active in Syria at the time the offences were committed, including the so-called Islamic State (IS), Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya ('Ahrar al-Sham Islamic Movement'), Junud al-Sham ('soldiers of the Levant'); others related to the Taliban or Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin (HSM, 'Mujahid Youth Movement').

Courts in Belgium and France pronounced the greatest number of convictions and acquittals concerning jihadist terrorism in 2019 (89 and 87 respectively), followed by the Netherlands (49) and Germany (42). Convictions and acquittals for terrorist offences in 2019 in Denmark, Portugal and Sweden concerned jihadist terrorism only.

In the Netherlands, the District Court of The Hague sentenced a man to four years and six months in prison for participation in IS and for preparing to commit a terrorist offence. The defendant stayed with IS for more than two years and had been in various places in Iraq and Syria that were under the control of the terrorist group. Information on the defendant was included in an IS registration form, which indicated that the defendant was a fighter. There were also indications that he had been in an IS training camp, and photos showed him carrying a weapon and wearing combat clothing. Chat conversations used in evidence showed that the defendant had talked about

his 'good life' in Syria, the fight, and what was to happen if Turkey attacked. The defendant was acquitted of recruitment for the armed conflict. While the defendant previously had been convicted in Turkey in relation to his participation in IS, the court found no violation of the *ne bis in idem* principle, as the penalty had not been fully enforced in Turkey. The court, however, reduced the penalty with the time the defendant had served in prison in Turkey.

In a case in France, the High Court of Paris found one man guilty of participation in a criminal conspiracy with a view of preparing a terrorist act and sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment. The man had tried to travel to Syria to join his brother, who was fighting in the ranks of IS. He was arrested in Turkey and prosecuted for participation in a terrorist organisation. The Turkish court did not find the evidence sufficient and acquitted the man. The French court, however, declared him guilty in relation to the acts committed on French territory.

Several cases concerning persons joining or supporting the Taliban were brought before German courts in 2019. For instance, the Higher Regional Court of Munich sentenced an Afghan national to four and a half years' imprisonment. The court found him guilty of participation in a foreign terrorist organisation and document forgery. In another case tried by the Higher Regional Court of Hamburg, the defendant, also an Afghan national, was acquitted. He was suspected of having supported the Taliban in Afghanistan by spying out police routines for them and setting fire to police office containers, and by participating in punitive actions against small entrepreneurs through arson and transporting mines.

Female defendants continued to be brought before courts in EU Member States on jihadist terrorism-related charges. A Belgian court, for example, found a female defendant guilty of participation in the activities of a terrorist group. She left for Syria, via Germany and Turkey, to marry a Belgian foreign fighter convicted in 2016 by the Court of First Instance of Antwerp. He died shortly after their marriage. The defendant then married a Dutch fighter. By then, she had given birth to her first child. Her second marriage was terminated by an IS court because of violence. The defendant, pregnant at the time, attempted to leave Syria through the Turkish border. She was detained in December 2016 and deported to Belgium in March 2017. The court considered that by marrying a foreign fighter twice with the aim to start a family, she was guilty of providing assistance to a terrorist organisation. According to the court, she had clear intentions to populate and to strengthen the so-called caliphate. However, due to the fact

¹⁵ Eurojust received contributions containing information on terrorism-related court decisions in 2019 from the following EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. In case a verdict pronounced in 2019 was appealed and the appeal was concluded before the end of the year, Eurojust reported only on the latest/final verdict.

¹⁶ Please refer to the Annex for additional information and clarification on the numbers mentioned in this section.

¹⁷ According to Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, the information to be submitted to Eurojust is in relation to final convictions. Due to the specifics of reporting, some EU Member States submit information on final decisions only, while other EU Member States report also on not final decisions.

that she had no prior criminal record and acknowledged her guilt, but also in view of her re-integration and her conduct under probation, the court suspended her probation period of three years.

In another case, heard by the Spanish National Court, a woman was accused of belonging to a terrorist organisation. During the investigation, the authorities uncovered national networks engaged in indoctrination and recruitment, facilitation and the sending of women, sometimes minors, to IS. The defendant's husband left Spain for Syria, where he joined IS, trained at the group's training camp and later assumed internal security tasks as a member of the *shari'a* police. The man had begun preparations so that the defendant could follow him, together with their four children and a friend with his spouse and daughter. The trip did not go ahead due to reasons beyond their control. The defendant expressed on her social networks her intention to travel with her children to the conflict zone. She used social media to exchange messages with other women whose husbands were either integrated in IS or sympathised with its ideology. She published and disseminated IS audio-visual content, expressing her adhesion and support to the terrorist group, thereby playing a central role in the recruitment networks. She was sentenced to serve nine years in prison.

Some of the offenders convicted for offences concerning jihadist terrorism were minors at the time the offences were committed. In Germany, the Higher Regional Court of Stuttgart heard the case of an Iraqi national charged with participation in a foreign terrorist organisation. The defendant, born in March 2000, was prosecuted for joining IS in October 2014. He was part of the terrorist group until September 2015. In this period, in particular in June and July 2015, he took part in battles for the Iraqi city of Badashi, including the (attempted) killing of Iraqi soldiers and the demolition of the al-Fattah mosque minaret. In the autumn of 2015, he fled to Europe. The defendant was found guilty and sentenced to four years' youth detention.

In another case in Belgium, the Court of First Instance of Brussels (Dutch-speaking) convicted a female defendant of participation in the activities of a terrorist group. She left for Syria at the age of sixteen to join IS and to marry a fighter. After the death of her first husband (convicted as a leader of a terrorist group), she married another IS jihadist, with whom she had three children. In its ruling, the court held that by marrying an IS jihadist, submitting herself to IS authority and her daily support to one of its fighters by taking care of the household and raising the children, she actively participated in the activities of the terrorist group. The court sentenced her to five years in prison.

In France, the Children's Court of Paris issued a judgment against a French-Algerian minor charged with participation in a criminal conspiracy with the purpose of preparing a terrorist act. He was arrested in February 2017 by German police near the Austrian border. He was travelling together

with an individual under investigation in another proceeding on charges of participation in a criminal conspiracy with the purpose of preparing a terrorist act and regular consultation of terrorist websites. Although the defendant declared to police that his aim was to travel to Syria to join the Free Syrian Army, the investigation revealed that he was in possession of jihadist and IS propaganda. He used an encrypted application to communicate, and pictures representing police officers as potential targets were found in one of his devices. The court sentenced the defendant to three years' imprisonment, of which two years suspended with a probation term of three years.

Convictions and acquittals for separatist terrorism offences were the second biggest group rendered in 2019 (98). The majority of those convictions and acquittals were pronounced in Spain (61). In one of those cases, the National Court found a member of Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA, 'Basque Fatherland and Liberty') guilty of robbery with intimidation, three counts of illegal detention and possession of explosives, all of a terrorist nature. The court heard that he assaulted a caravan and hijacked the three occupants with the help of three other people, all wearing dark clothes and carrying firearms. The hijackers identified themselves as members of ETA. Their intention was to violently seize a large vehicle suitable for the transfer of explosives from France to Spain in order to perpetrate an attack on the Spanish Mediterranean coast. Furthermore, the French police identified an apartment located in Cahors (France), used by the terrorist organisation to maintain contacts and store explosives. The court sentenced the defendant to a total of 50 years' imprisonment: seven years for robbery with intimidation, 12 years for each of the three counts of illegal detention and seven years for possession of explosives.

Courts in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary and Italy also heard cases of alleged offences linked to separatist terrorist organisations. In Hungary, a male and a female defendant were tried for supporting the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK, 'Kurdistan Workers' Party') by providing logistical assistance, supplies and deliveries. Both defendants were sentenced to two years' imprisonment and expulsion from Hungarian territory for a period of eight years.

In Belgium, the Court of First Instance of Liège acquitted two Turkish nationals allegedly involved in activities of the PKK. The male defendant was charged with leading a terrorist group and his female co-defendant was suspected of participating in the activities of a terrorist group. The investigation was launched based on police information reporting that the PKK would organise a revolutionary tax collection in Liège for the year 2013. According to the court, the exemption provided in Article 141bis of the Belgian Criminal Code that excludes the Code's provisions on terrorist offences from applying to the activities of armed forces during a period of armed conflict, as regulated under

international humanitarian law, and the armed forces of a state in the exercise of their official functions, applied to the PKK. The court held that the hostilities between the PKK and the Turkish state began decades ago involving several thousand combatants and causing thousands of victims. It also noted that parts of the investigation confirmed that the PKK relied on a certain degree of military organisation, with a military command, military training of new recruits and the collection of funds. Accordingly, the court concluded that the PKK can be considered as engaged in a non-international armed conflict between a national government and non-state armed forces, as foreseen in the exclusion clause under Article 141bis, dismissing the charges of leading and participating in the activities of a terrorist group on which the defendants were prosecuted¹⁸.

In 2019 left-wing terrorism cases were brought before courts in Germany, Greece and Spain. The greatest number of convictions and acquittals for left-wing terrorism offences were handed down in Greece (45). In one of the cases, a defendant appeared before the Court of Appeal of Athens. He was previously convicted in 2016 for offences related to the group Epanastatikos Agonas ('Revolutionary Struggle'). The Court of Appeal upheld the first instance judgment and found the defendant guilty of a number of terrorist offences, including attempted homicide, dangerous bodily harm, supply, possession and manufacture of explosives, illegal possession and use of weapon(s), among other offences. The defendant was sentenced to imprisonment of 83 years, with 25 years to be served.

Two cases concerning members of Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (DHKP-C, 'Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front') were heard by the Higher Regional Court of Hamburg in Germany. In these cases, a Dutch and a Turkish national were each convicted of participation in a foreign terrorist organisation and were sentenced to imprisonment terms of six years and nine months and five years respectively. Both men held leading or supervisory positions within the organisation and had also been involved in or contributed to fundraising and propaganda activities. The Dutch national was also said to have been involved in the training of subordinate DHKP-C cadres, courier activities and human smuggling.

In the Netherlands, several convictions were pronounced in relation to right-wing terrorism. One defendant, for example, was convicted by a court of appeal for preparing to commit murder with terrorist intent, illegal possession of a weapon and ammunition, with the intent to commit a terrorist offence or of preparing or facilitating such an offence. He was associated with a Facebook profile of the group Anti-Terreur Brigade (ATB, 'Anti-Terror Brigade') that the court considered a right-wing extremist association,

within which violence against Muslims was considered justified and people were trained to use violence. This group also discussed actions against left-wing extremists. According to the defendant, he was the administrator of the group's Facebook page and partly responsible for the communication on the page. He also actively recruited new members for the group, based, among other things, on their willingness to 'fight against Muslims'. The defendant also possessed a firearm, which he stated in a chat conversation was suitable for shooting left-wing protagonists. The court sentenced the defendant to three years' imprisonment, partially suspended for 12 months, with a probation period of three years.

In Germany, one member of the terrorist group Oldschool Society (OSS) was sentenced to serve two years and four months in prison by the Higher Regional Court of Dresden.

Type of offences

The majority of proceedings concluded in 2019 concerned terrorist offences such as participation in (the activities of) a terrorist group, financing of terrorism, (self-)indoctrination or training for terrorist purposes, recruitment, incitement to or glorification of terrorism and humiliation of victims, threatening to commit terrorist acts. In some cases, in addition to the terrorist offences, defendants were also charged with weapons or explosives-related offences, document forgery, theft, swindling, offences against public health, drug offences, among others.

A number of cases concluded in 2019 concerned the preparation or the commission of terrorist attacks in different EU Member States. In the Netherlands, for example, the District Court of Amsterdam convicted a 20-year-old man to 26 years and eight months' imprisonment for carrying out a terrorist attack against two US tourists in August 2018 at Amsterdam central train station¹⁹. The attack was triggered by the defendant's anger at the announcement that a cartoon competition was to be organised in the Netherlands, which he found offensive to the Prophet of Islam Muhammad. In the defendant's opinion, the government of the Netherlands failed to prevent this event from taking place. He travelled from Germany to Amsterdam by train, with the intention to kill as many people as possible. At the train station, he stabbed two tourists and threatened three police officers. The tourists were severely injured and sustained permanent disabilities. The number of victims remained low thanks to the rapid action of the police officers. The court found that the defendant had been radicalised and had very extreme views. He never expressed regret or

¹⁸ The case was appealed and reached the Supreme Court, which pronounced on the application of Article 141bis in January 2020 and held that the exclusion clause applied to the PKK.

¹⁹ Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2019, p. 32.

repentance and repeatedly declared that he would act in similar ways, as long as his religion was being offended. The court found that there was a great risk of recidivism and sentenced the defendant to the highest possible imprisonment term applicable.

In other cases concerning the preparation of terrorist attacks, minor offenders were also tried. In France, the High Court of Paris heard the case of a French-Russian national charged with participation in a criminal conspiracy with the purpose of preparing a terrorist act. While the defendant was convicted in April 2018 by the Court of Appeal of Nancy to a two-year prison sentence for terrorism glorification, subsequent investigations revealed his involvement in a terrorist attack planned by three minors from Belfort in 2016. The minors supported jihadist ideas and had contacts with individuals in territories controlled by IS. They appeared before the Children's Court of Paris charged with participation in a criminal conspiracy with the purpose of preparing a terrorist act. For two of them, the court held that there was enough evidence to establish their involvement in a planned attack and sentenced them to five years' imprisonment, of which two years and ten months suspended with a probation term of three years. The third defendant was sentenced to a suspended two-year prison term with a three years' probation period. The French-Russian national, who provided tutorials and instructions on the fabrication of explosives, was also convicted by the same court for facts that happened before he reached the age of 18. The court imposed a sentence of three years' imprisonment to be served concurrently with the sentence ruled by the Court of Appeal of Nancy.

In the Netherlands, the District Court of Rotterdam heard the cases of several defendants investigated in relation to the discovery of a large amount of ammunition. The defendants were suspected of having been involved in the supply of (part of) the ammunition found in an apartment in Argenteuil (France) in March 2016. The apartment was searched by French police, after the arrest in France and Belgium of two men suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. One of the arrestees stated that he had been in the Netherlands earlier in March 2016. Two Dutch phone numbers were found on his phone. As a result of the execution of a mutual legal assistance request sent to the Dutch authorities it was revealed that the phone numbers belonged to two of the defendants. Information was also exchanged within the joint investigation team set up between Belgium, France and the Netherlands. Furthermore, the French authorities issued a European arrest warrant against another person suspected to be part of the same terrorist group, who was residing in the Netherlands and who was arrested on 27 March 2016 shortly after he left the apartment of one of the defendants. During the search of the apartment, a large amount of heavy ammunition was found, which was believed to be intended for two of the men investigated in France. On

8 April 2019, in separate judgments the court found two defendants guilty of complicity in participation in a terrorist organisation and sentenced them to 12 years and nine months' imprisonment respectively.

Similar to previous years, also in 2019 cumulative charges for terrorism and core international crimes, such as war crimes, were brought against defendants suspected to have been involved in both types of crime. In the Netherlands, for example, a prison sentence of seven years and six months was handed down to a man who travelled to Syria in October 2014. He was registered on the IS payroll as a member of a sniper battalion. The man appeared armed and in combat clothing on a number of photographs. One of them, which he posted on Facebook, showed him posing next to a deceased man, whose body was publicly displayed on a cross. According to the court, in doing so he violated the personal dignity of the deceased, which constituted a war crime. In addition to the war crime, the court also found him guilty of participation in IS and for preparatory acts to commit a terrorist crime. In another case in Germany, the wife of an IS fighter was found guilty of participation in a terrorist organisation abroad, war crimes against property and weapons-related offences. The Higher Regional Court of Stuttgart found that she joined IS at the latest in January 2014 and participated in several executions. Together with her husband and children, she lived in accommodations made available to them by IS, after their legitimate owners had fled. In addition to caring for their two children and looking after the common household, the woman was very active in spreading IS propaganda and promoting travel to join the terrorist group. She returned to Germany in 2018 and was arrested shortly after. The court handed down a five-year prison sentence.

The use of social media and various online platforms to spread terrorist content, glorify and incite the commission of terrorist acts was also addressed by courts in EU Member States in 2019 in cases concerning jihadist but also other types of terrorism. In Italy, the Court of Assizes of Turin sentenced an Italian-born Moroccan citizen to six years and six months' imprisonment for the participation in the activities of a terrorist group and public incitement to or provocation of terrorism. The suspect publicly disseminated videos and documents via social networks. He translated many documents in order to promote and support IS in Italy.

In Germany, the Higher Regional Court of Berlin sentenced a national of Bosnia and Herzegovina to serve one year and eight months in prison for providing support to a foreign terrorist organisation. He was involved in spreading propaganda concerning IS members or supporters on the internet (publication of IS propaganda videos, as well as production of supporter-generated content, SGC) and anti-Jewish activities.

In Spain, the National Court convicted a female defendant

of glorification of terrorism and humiliation of victims. The woman posted on her Facebook profile, without any privacy restrictions and on a recurring basis, threatening messages encouraging the continuation of the armed struggle of the terrorist organisation Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA, 'Basque Fatherland and Liberty') with the aim to maintain the perception of a terrorist threat among the public. The court sentenced the defendant to one year in prison.

Convictions and acquittals

All concluded terrorism cases reported by Denmark, France, Hungary and Portugal resulted in convictions. Also the vast majority of prosecutions in Belgium and Germany ended in convictions. Similar to previous years, in some cases, defendants were acquitted of terrorist offences but convicted of other offences²⁰.

The prosecutions for right-wing terrorist offences in 2019 were the most successful, with all resulting in convictions, similar to 2017 and 2018. The conviction rate in the concluded court proceedings for jihadist terrorism offences remained very high (87 %, slightly lower than 89 % in 2017 and 2018) and that for separatist terrorist offences increased from 71 % in 2018 to 90 % in 2019. In 71 % of the cases, prosecutions for left-wing terrorism offences resulted in convictions, which is similar to 2017 (72 %) and 2018 (70 %).

Penalties

The average prison sentence rendered for terrorist offences in the EU in 2019 was six years, one year less than in 2018²¹. The lowest prison sentence ordered by courts in the EU Member States in 2019 was one month and the highest life imprisonment.

A Belgian court, for example, convicted the perpetrator of the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels in May 2014 to life imprisonment. The court held that this terrorist attack was committed in a place of symbolic importance to the Jewish community. Following the attack, all places linked to the Jewish community were put on maximum security alert. The person who committed the attack had become radicalised and had previously travelled to Syria with the aim to engage in armed struggle.

In Austria, the Higher Regional Court of Innsbruck rejected

the appeal of a stateless person who was given a life sentence in December 2018 for having committed murder as a terrorist offence. Between 2013 and 2014, the convict killed at least 20 wounded soldiers of the Syrian army.

Prison sentences of up to five years were ordered by courts in the majority (71 %) of cases in which guilty verdicts were pronounced, a proportion which is higher than in 2018 (59 %). Sentences of ten or more years of imprisonment were handed down with 13 % of the convictions for terrorist offences, slightly less than in 2018 (15 %).

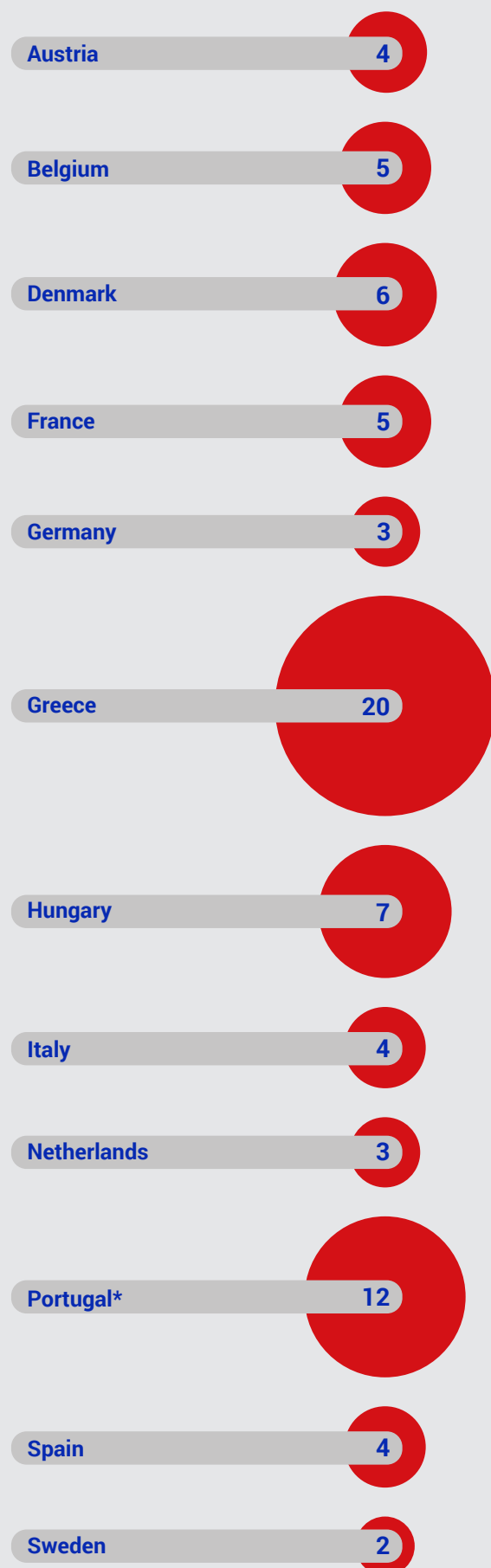
It should, however, be taken into consideration that the severity of the penalty in each case would depend on the legal system, the respective offence and specific circumstances and cannot serve any comparative purposes. Also, in some EU Member States, the average sentence is calculated on the basis of one conviction only, while in others it is based on a considerable number of convictions.

In 2019 the highest average prison sentence (19 years) was handed down with convictions for left-wing terrorism offences, confirming an upward trend from the past few years (10 years in 2017 and 16 years in 2018). The average prison term for jihadist terrorism offences in 2019 remained the same as in 2017 and 2018 (five years). Convictions for separatist terrorism offences were rendered with an average prison term of four years, equal to 2017 and less than in 2018 (eight years), while those for right-wing terrorism offences with a prison term of three years (compared to four years in 2017 and six years in 2018).

Similar to previous years, in 2019 courts in EU Member States ordered penalties or measures in addition or as an alternative to prison terms. Those included treatment in mental health institutions, monetary penalties, community service, restrictions on exercising certain civil rights or working in certain sectors (e.g. education), travel bans, expulsion from the national territory, fixed probation period upon release, confiscation of assets, among others. In some cases, persons convicted of terrorist offences were deprived of the nationality of the EU Member State that convicted them or included in national judicial databases for terrorist offenders. In some cases of underage offenders, juvenile penalties were imposed. In several other cases, the sentencing or the execution of the prison sentence was postponed upon certain conditions. Some of the prison terms were ordered to be served in full, while others were partially or fully suspended, often under strict conditions.

²⁰ Eurojust considers it one verdict if an individual is convicted of more than one terrorist offence within the same proceeding, or convicted of a terrorist offence and acquitted of another offence. If an individual is acquitted of a terrorist offence and convicted of another offence, the verdict is included in the overview as acquittal of terrorism.

²¹ For the purpose of the calculation of the average prison sentence, penalties exceeding 40 years of imprisonment and life sentences were counted as 40 years. In the cases where the court ordered a minimum number of years to be served, the sentence was included in the overview with the minimum number of years indicated.



*Average sentences (excluding non-prison penalties)
per EU Member State in 2019, as reported to Eurojust.*

* The average sentence in Portugal is based on one conviction.

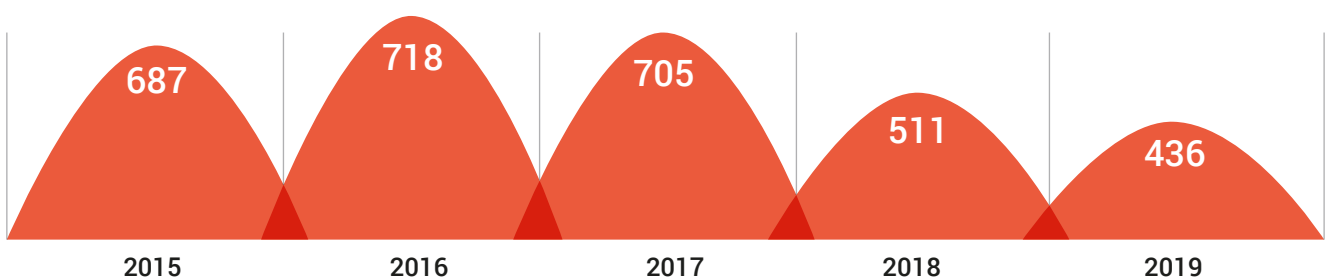


JIHADIST TERRORISM

KEY FINDINGS

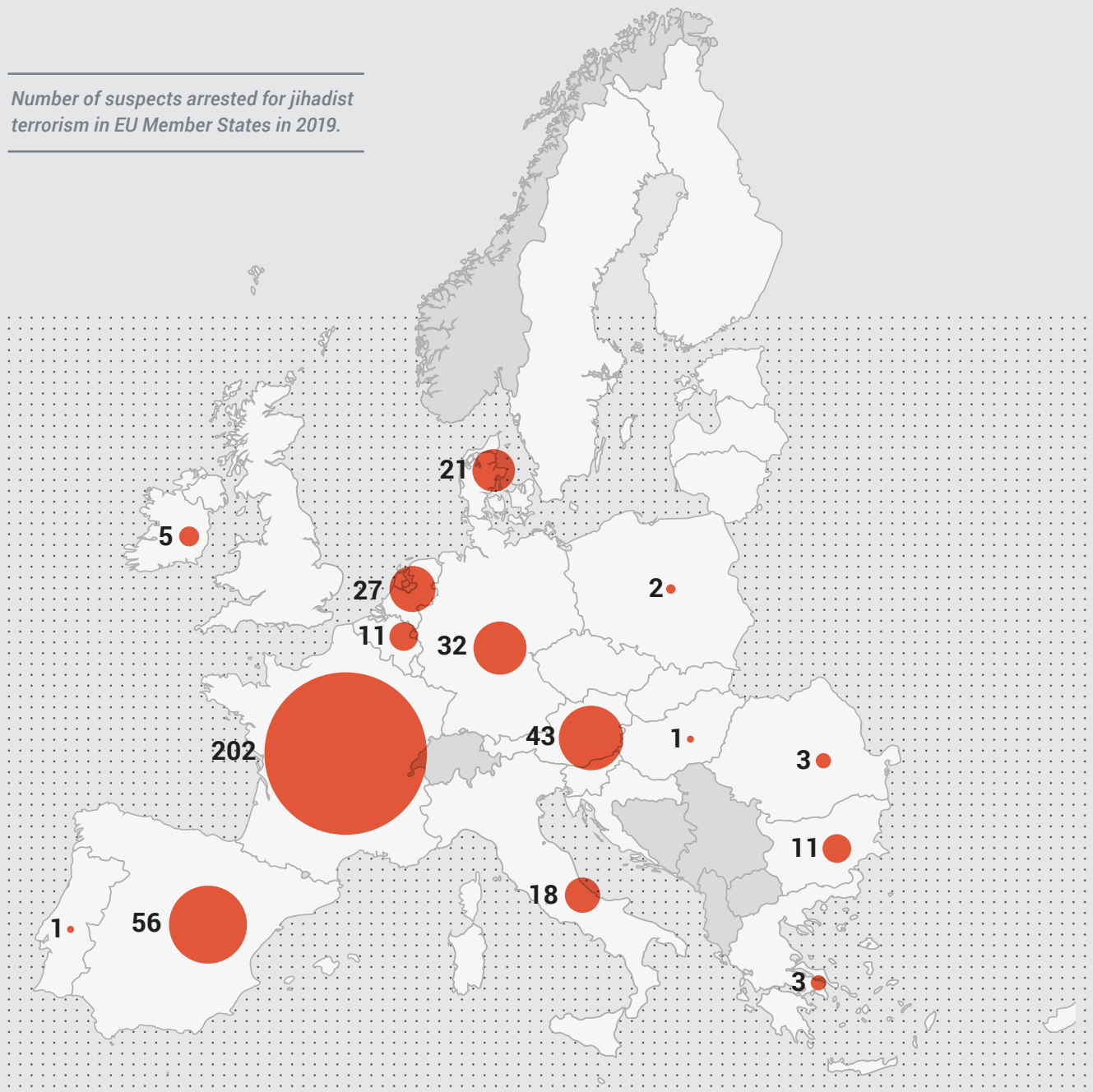
- › In 2019 the EU suffered three completed and four failed jihadist terrorist attacks, killing ten people. All but one were committed by individuals acting alone.
- › As in 2018, the number of attacks foiled by law enforcement (14) was double that of completed and failed attacks. Most of the foiled plots involved multiple suspects.
- › Jihadist terrorist activities were observed to differing degrees in EU Member States. While some noted little propaganda, recruitment or training, others observed no decrease in activities. In several EU Member States, returnees from conflict areas were arrested on terrorism charges.
- › Jihadists in Europe are connected mainly through loose networks. These are embedded in a wider Muslim extremist milieu, which can act as a conduit towards terrorist engagement. Networks are largely home-grown and without organisational links to terrorist groups like al-Qaeda or IS. In addition, some individuals or small groups are observed to self-radicalise, principally on the internet, without being part of wider networks.
- › IS official propaganda decreased in volume and impact. This decrease was partially supplemented by supporter-generated content and recycled material. Suspects arrested for jihadist propaganda sometimes had a long involvement in jihadist activities, including attempts to travel to join IS and attack planning.
- › Two attempted journeys to join terrorist groups were reported as having been thwarted by EU Member States for 2019. Few individuals were reported to have returned from conflict zones, but undetected returns cannot be excluded. There are no signs of systematic use of irregular migration by terrorist organisations.
- › The situation in conflict areas outside Europe continued impacting the terrorism situation in Europe. Hundreds of European citizens with IS links remained in Iraq and Syria. IS, while losing its last enclave in Syria, transitioned to a covert insurgent group operating in Iraq and Syria, with affiliated groups active across Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and continues to pose a threat, despite the death of its leader in October 2019.
- › Al-Qaeda again displayed its intent and ambition to strike Western targets in complex attacks, while its regional affiliates aim to integrate and coordinate with populations and armed factions in conflict areas in line with its overall strategy of building local support bases.

Number of suspects arrested for jihadist terrorism from 2015 to 2019.



Terrorist attacks and suspects arrested in the EU

Number of suspects arrested for jihadist terrorism in EU Member States in 2019.



For 2019, 21 jihadist terrorist attacks were reported by EU Member States. Three were completed, four failed and 14 were foiled. A total of ten people lost their lives as a result of the three completed jihadist terrorist attacks in the EU in 2019: four on 18 March in the Utrecht tram shooting; four on 3 October in a Paris police headquarters; and two during the 29 November Fishmonger's Hall/London Bridge attack. A total of 26 people were injured.

Completed and failed attacks

In **France, on 5 March**, a radicalised inmate, aged 28, attacked two guards at the Condé-sur-Sarthe prison with a bladed weapon shouting 'Allahu Akbar' ('God is great') during a visit from his spouse. The attack was reported by France as failed.

On **18 March 2019**, a 37-year-old man killed four people and seriously injured two others, when he shot fellow passengers in a tram in **Utrecht (Netherlands)**. It is believed that the perpetrator acted alone. He used a silencer that he had inscribed with texts referring to Islam, likely in emulation of the right-wing terrorist attack in Christchurch (New Zealand) on 15 March. He also left a note in a stolen getaway car, saying in Dutch: 'I am doing this for my religion. You kill Muslims and you want to take our religion away from us, but you will not succeed. Allah is great.' The suspect was known to the authorities as a (sometimes violent) repeat offender and possibly a psychologically unstable or disturbed individual, but not as an extremist. Two weeks before the attack he was on trial for a sex offence committed in 2017, and his provisional detention was conditionally suspended. The suspect's brother has been linked to a Turkish extremist network, known as the Caliphate State group or Kaplan Movement.

i

Jihadist terrorism defined

The TE-SAT uses a narrow definition of jihadism²². Jihadism is defined as a violent sub-current of salafism, a revivalist Sunni Muslim movement that rejects democracy and elected parliaments, arguing that human legislation is at variance with God's status as the sole lawgiver. Jihadists aim to create an Islamic state governed exclusively by Islamic law (*shari'a*), as interpreted by them. Major representatives of jihadist groups are the al-Qaeda network and the so-called Islamic State.

Contrary to other salafist currents, which are mostly quietist, jihadists legitimise the use of violence with a reference to the classical Islamic doctrines on *jihad*, a term which literally means 'striving' or 'exertion', but in Islamic law is treated as religiously sanctioned warfare.

They use the historical comparison with the Christian crusades of the Middle Ages to describe current situations: Sunni Islam is believed to be under attack from a global non-Muslim alliance, comprising Christians, Jews and other religions such as Buddhists and Hindus but also secularists. Governments of the Muslim world allied with these 'enemies of Islam', for example through membership of the United Nations (UN), are declared non-Muslims – an act known as *takfir* – and, therefore, legitimate targets. Some jihadists include in their spectrum of perceived enemies Shi'is, Sufis and other Muslim minorities.

In sum, the term jihadism refers to a violent ideology exploiting traditional Islamic concepts. It is preferable to the more vague term 'religiously inspired terrorism' used in previous editions of the TE-SAT.

²² Sedgwick, M., 'Jihadism, Narrow and Wide: The Dangers of Loose Use of an Important Term', *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 9, No 2, 2015, p. 34-41.



Mental health and terrorism

A number of recent terrorism cases have raised the question of the mental state of the perpetrators or suspected perpetrators and whether their acts should indeed be considered to constitute terrorism in the sense of politically motivated violence. In many cases, it is impossible to clearly distinguish between terrorist offences and violent acts perpetrated by people suffering from a mental disorder. Some individuals suffering from mental disorders display signs of radicalisation, which are a consequence of their illness rather than ideological conviction. Nevertheless, they might emulate *modi operandi* typical of, or promoted by, terrorist groups. Ultimately, multiple motives may underlie a decision to carry out an attack, and the intent to commit a terrorist act is only one of several factors to consider when assessing the threat posed by an individual.

In the trial of the individual who stabbed several people in The Hague (Netherlands) on 5 May 2018, for example, the court held that there was no terrorist motive and that the perpetrator's actions were the result of a psychotic disorder. According to the judgment, his radical and extremist thoughts 'were prompted' by his paranoid psychosis. The case had previously been treated as a terrorist incident²³. The perpetrator of the attack in Utrecht on 18 March 2019 was convicted for terrorism, but his personality disorder played an important part in motivating him to carry out the attack. Mental disorders were also suspected to have played a role in several right-wing extremist attacks in 2019.

In this context, the increase in hate speech and threats, for example against public figures, and fake news on social media may lead people who are mentally unstable or easily influenced to commit acts of ideologically motivated violence that could be characterised as terrorism.

It is not known whether the suspect himself played a role in this movement or whether he was a peripheral figure. The attack was referenced, but not claimed, by IS in its weekly newsletter *al-Naba'* (the news) on 21 March 2019. In March 2020, a Dutch court convicted the perpetrator of murder with a terrorist motive and sentenced him to life imprisonment. The court heard that the perpetrator was not primarily motivated by his personal belief but acted as a result of a personality disorder and his frustration about his own shortcomings. Racialisation offered him a new identity.

In another failed attack in **France**, on **24 May**, a 23-year-old Algerian male student, residing irregularly in Oullins, remotely detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) containing triacetone triperoxide (TATP), nails and screws, which was placed in a pedestrian zone in Lyon. The explosion injured 13 people.

In **Italy**, on **17 September**, a 23-year-old Yemeni man attacked an Italian soldier in the central station in Milan in an attempt on his life. The offender, acting alone, stabbed the soldier in the neck with a pair of scissors, shouting 'Allahu Akbar' ('God is great').

On **3 October**, a male IT specialist working for a police intelligence unit in **Paris**, stabbed and killed four officers inside a police headquarters before being shot and killed. He had converted to Islam in 2008, and had previously made disparaging remarks about the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* on the occasion of the jihadist attack on its editorial team in January 2015. The 2019 attack was referred to in IS's weekly Arabic newsletter *al-Naba'* on 10 October, albeit without a claim of responsibility.

Another failed attack was reported by **Italy**. On **4 November**, a 26-year-old Liberian citizen of no fixed abode, holding a resident permit for subsidiary protection, launched a bottle rocket against a wall in Rome when he saw an army patrol. The offender did not injure anyone and was immediately detained. He was carrying in his backpack another bottle filled with petrol.

On **29 November**, a 28-year-old British terrorist convict, who had been released from prison on licence, stabbed a number of people (with knives attached to his wrists and wearing a fake explosive vest) at an event in Fishmongers' Hall, **London (UK)**, killing two people. He then ran onto London Bridge where he was tackled by members of the public, before being shot and killed by police. IS claimed the attack via *A'maq News Agency* on 30 November, describing the perpetrator as an IS 'fighter'. This was the only attack in Europe in 2019 for which IS claimed responsibility.

²³ Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2019*, p. 31.

A total of 14 jihadist terrorist plots were foiled by law enforcement in 2019. This is double the number of completed and failed attacks. Most of the foiled plots involved multiple suspects.

Foiled attacks



JANUARY

30

On 30 January, three male Iraqi refugees (two aged 23 and one 26) were arrested in Germany on suspicion of planning an IS-inspired bomb attack using an improvised explosive device (IED).

MARCH

25

On 25 March, two men of French nationality, aged 21 and 31, were arrested in France on suspicion of planning an attack on school premises and against police. One of the suspects was allegedly inspired by the attacker who killed three children and a teacher at a Jewish school in Toulouse (France) in 2012.



APRIL

26

On 26 April, four male suspects were arrested in Paris (France) on suspicion of planning an IS-inspired attack on the French presidential palace and military forces. The suspects included a 17-year-old minor, who had previously come to notice for attempting to travel to Syria. A 16-year-old male was arrested on 7 May, on suspicion of being tasked with transmitting an allegiance video of the attackers after the planned attack²⁴.

JUNE

6

On 6 June, a 16-year-old Bulgarian male was arrested in Plovdiv (Bulgaria) on suspicion of having constructed an IED intending to carry out an IS-motivated attack.



JUNE

22

On 22 June, a 22-year-old Belgian male was arrested in Brussels (Belgium) on suspicion of planning a jihadist-motivated attack on the USA embassy.

JULY

3

On 3 July, a 28-year-old British man, recently acquitted of an attempted attack against police officers outside Buckingham Palace in central London (UK) with a sword in 2017²⁵, was arrested in Luton on suspicion of planning to attack Madam Tussauds, the Pride parade and tourists on an open-top tour bus in London. His sister was charged with failing to disclose information about acts of terrorism²⁶.



JULY

23

On 23 July, an attack involving the use of weapons on prison guards by three men, aged 27, 31 and 42, was foiled in France. The plot involved two inmates and an individual released from prison earlier in 2019. The men, one of whom was a convert to Islam, had been sentenced for glorification of terrorism and travel for terrorist purposes.

²⁴ Le Figaro, *Attentat déjoué contre la police : un cinquième suspect, mineur, interpellé à Strasbourg*, 7 May 2019, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/attentat-dejoue-contre-la-police-un-5e-suspect-mineur-interpelle-a-strasbourg-20190507>

²⁵ Europol, *EU Terrorist Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2018, p. 24.

²⁶ Casciani, D., 'The takeaway worker who plotted to attack Pride', *BBC News*, 10 February 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51405537>

SEPTEMBER

23

On 23 September, three French males, aged 21, 22 and 23, were arrested on suspicion of planning to attack iconic monuments in Paris (France).

France



United Kingdom



OCTOBER

16

On 16 October, a 36-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of plotting a suicide bomb attack on St Paul's Cathedral in London (UK). The suspect, who had converted to Islam in 2007 and later radicalised, is reported to have headed a significant pro-IS social media chat platform²⁷.

NOVEMBER

12

On 12 November, three men, aged 21, 22 and 24, were arrested in Offenbach (Germany) on suspicion of planning an IS-inspired attack. The suspects attempted to buy a weapon online and wanted to construct an IED.

Germany



Germany



NOVEMBER

19

On 19 November, a 26-year-old Syrian male was arrested in Berlin (Germany) on suspicion of planning an IS-inspired attack. The suspect acquired chemical materials necessary to construct a bomb and exchanged instructions on bomb-making online. He had entered Germany irregularly via Bulgaria in 2014.

NOVEMBER

25

On 25 November, two men aged 20 and 34, of Dutch and Iranian nationality respectively, were arrested in Zoetermeer and The Hague (Netherlands) on suspicion of preparing an attack. The suspects were planning to receive training in IED construction and to carry out an attack using suicide vests and car bombs in the Netherlands in December.

The Netherlands



Denmark



DECEMBER

11

On 11 December, 22 arrests were carried out in several locations in Denmark. At the time of writing, seven persons remained in custody, charged with planning and preparing two separate jihadist terrorist attacks in Denmark or possibly another European country. Additional persons were charged in the cases but not remanded in custody.

In addition to the arrests specifically reported as referring to foiled attacks, further arrests were related to attack planning at an early stage. For example, in February, a 48-year-old man was arrested in the Netherlands on suspicion of preparing a terrorist act. He was found to have a firearm and ammunition in his possession and was believed to be a supporter of IS. On 22 March, ten individuals, aged between 21 and 41 and most of German nationality, were arrested on suspicion of conspiring to attack a USA facility in Wiesbaden (Hesse) using a car and weapons, during Ramadan (5 May to 3 June

2019). In April, a Spanish citizen, aged 21, was arrested in Seville (Spain), where he was residing, on suspicion of intending to perpetrate a terrorist attack on the city's military museum. Several weeks prior to the arrest, an associate of the suspect – a 23-year-old Moroccan citizen, also a resident of Seville – was arrested in Morocco on suspicion of membership of IS and planning a suicide attack during the Semana Santa processions in Seville. This arrest is believed to have precipitated the Seville arrestee's alternative attack planning. The pair was likely directed by IS from abroad.

²⁷ BBC News, *St Paul's bomb plot: IS supporter Safiyya Shaikh pleads guilty*, 21 February 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-51583815>

Other terrorist offences

In 2019 the level of jihadist terrorist activities across Europe varied. For example, Austria, despite a total of 43 individuals arrested on jihadist terrorism charges, observed a downward trend concerning terrorist activities. In mid-December, Austrian media reported on an alleged foiled IS-inspired terrorist plot targeting locations in Vienna and Salzburg, including Christmas markets. At the time of writing, however, these allegations were not substantiated by investigations. In this context, two suspects of Chechen origin were arrested on suspicion of intending to aid a convicted jihadist to escape from prison. Austria, however, detected no propaganda, recruitment or training activities, possibly as a result of major arrests and convictions in 2014 and 2015, when the conviction of the most charismatic jihadist preacher in Austria convinced potential successors that it was preferable to keep a low profile. Long-term efforts to curb the growth of extremist circles also seem to have yielded positive results in Sweden, which took a number of targeted measures in spring 2019 against individuals identified as extremist key players. One measure taken involved applying for the expulsion of several influential individuals.

In other countries, there are no signs of decreasing terrorist activity. Spain noted an increase both in the number of terrorist cells dismantled (seven in 2019, compared to five in 2018) and the average number of individuals arrested per cell (five in 2019, compared to two in 2018). Except for the developing Seville cell, the groups were engaged in propaganda or support functions. Of the 56 detentions in 2019 in Spain, 34 were made in connection to groups, while the remaining 22 detainees were apprehended for acting alone. Most suspects were of Spanish or Moroccan nationality. Propaganda offences accounted for 47 % of the arrests, terrorist funding for 30 %. Within the dismantled groups, leadership and organisational functions were exercised by older members, and family ties played a role, as exemplified by the arrest in June of a father and four of his sons suspected of being members of the same cell.

Also in June, Portugal arrested a 41-year-old Portuguese male near Lisbon on suspicion of organising or otherwise facilitating travelling to join a terrorist organisation. Over the course of several years, the suspect had provided support and assistance to his two younger brothers, who had been IS members and were both reported deceased in separate incidents in mid-2018. The suspect, who had previously lived in London (UK) for twenty years, lent his legitimate Portuguese passport to one of his brothers to facilitate the latter's journey to Syria via Bulgaria and Turkey in 2013. The suspect was also charged with facilitating other terrorist activities of his brothers in Syria for Jabhat al-Nusra, which they had joined upon their arrival, and subsequently for IS.

In addition, a number of arrests were made in 2019 on charges related to terrorist activities abroad, many in relation to IS. For example, in September, Germany arrested a 35-year-old woman of German and Tunisian nationality on suspicion of IS membership. The suspect is believed to have travelled to Syria via Turkey in January 2015, taking along her three minor children. She lived in IS-controlled territory together with her husband, who fought for IS. She is reported to have urged other people to travel to IS territory in at least two cases. After her husband's death, she married a senior IS member in accordance with IS rules. In early 2016, the suspect and her children left IS territory and returned to Germany.

Another prominent female returnee from Syria was arrested in Ireland in early December. According to media reports, the 38-year-old former Irish Air Corps member, who converted to Islam in 2011 and left the army, is believed to have travelled to Syria in 2015, where she married a British IS fighter and lived under IS rules. She was deported by Turkey, accompanied by her two-year-old daughter, after having been in Ayn Isa (Ain Issa) camp in Syria at least since March 2019²⁸.

²⁸ O'Loughlin, E., 'Irish Ex-Soldier Who Married ISIS Fighter Is Arrested', *New York Times*, 1 December 12 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/01/world/europe/ireland-isis-bride-lisa-smith.html>



In Switzerland, a suspected former IS member was arrested in late October, together with ten other individuals, including five minors. The suspect was still a minor at the time of his departure to, and return from, the conflict zone²⁹.

In March, Italy arrested a 45-year-old Algerian national residing in the Caserta region, who had left Algeria to join IS in Syria in 2014. The suspect was extradited to Algeria. In June, a 25-year-old Italian-Moroccan FTF linked to IS was arrested in Italy after he was repatriated from Kobane (Syria).

The Netherlands arrested two individuals linked to al-Qaeda affiliated groups. In March, a Dutch man of Somali origin was arrested in Breda on suspicion of having been involved with Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin (HSM, 'Mujahid Youth Movement') in Somalia in 2017. He was released on parole pending his trial. In May, a 47-year-old Syrian with a temporary asylum residence permit was detained in Kapelle on suspicion of involvement in war crimes and terrorist offences. He is alleged to have been the commander of a Jabhat al-Nusra battalion in Syria.

In October, Greece arrested a Syrian national accused of IS membership and other charges. The suspect was identified as appearing in an IS propaganda video showing an extrajudicial execution. He admitted to his involvement in the organisation and appearance in the video.

²⁹ Swiss Office of the Attorney General, *Combating Terrorism: Coordinated operation*, 29 October 2019, <https://www.bundesanwaltschaft.ch/mpc/en/home/medien/archiv-medienmitteilungen/news-seite.msg-id-76840.html>



Groups and structures



The jihadist landscape in Europe is composed of loosely connected networks.

Extremist milieus in Europe – both physical networks and online communities – provide spaces for social and religious activities in which individuals can become radicalised.

The jihadist landscape in Europe is composed of loosely connected networks. The activities in which jihadist individuals and networks predominantly engage aim to facilitate terrorism, directly or indirectly, through financing, radicalisation and recruitment. These networks, however, lack a joint strategy. There are few charismatic leaders and only a limited number of people who act as a driving force. Various factors have forced it to reorient itself. Denmark assessed that the support for IS and al-Qaeda within the extremist milieus declined in 2019.

Extremist milieus in Europe – both physical networks and online communities – provide spaces for social and religious activities in which individuals can become radicalised. The more closed these spaces are, the more they can function as echo chambers, in which participants mutually affirm extreme beliefs without being challenged. In these closed spaces, individuals and small groups at the centre but also on the periphery, or even individuals who for different reasons have been excluded or turned away, might develop the intent to commit acts of terrorism.

Home-grown jihadist networks are multi-ethnic and multi-national. While they seem to be based mainly in and around major cities, due to activities on social media, they tend to cover a larger geographic area. Recruitment of terrorists is usually done through informal networks of friends and family members, as well as through social media. The focus on family ties is likely to increase the effectiveness of recruitment and decrease the risk of betrayal and information leakage. In addition to these structures, individuals or small groups that are not directly linked with larger networks have been noticed to radicalise, for example through online activities.

Terrorist propaganda

The impact of official IS media decreased, in terms of volume, content, potency and immediacy, following the loss of most of its territory, media production facilities and personnel.

However, its central media output did not disappear entirely. The major part of official IS releases consisted of short *A'maq News* claims and photo reports. In addition, IS managed to publish its Arabic newsletter *al-Naba'* largely on a weekly basis throughout the year. Statements by the leadership, including Abubakr al-Baghdadi and his spokesman, continued to be disseminated under the label of the *al-Furqan Media Production Company*. In 2019 IS propaganda, including the two audio messages by Abubakr al-Baghdadi in April and September, focused on the narrative that 'setbacks' are not indicative of defeat and that 'God rewards those who remain committed especially during times of weakness and hardships'.

As in previous years³⁰, IS used *al-Naba'* to comment on violent acts in Western countries in 2019, without necessarily claiming responsibility. In addition to the October attack at a police headquarters in Paris, this was observed, for example, after non-terrorist related stabbing incidents in Marseille (France), in February 2019, and Manchester (UK), in October. The only incident in Europe for which IS actually claimed credit in 2019 was the November stabbing attack in London. This approach was likely intended to maintain the impression among its members and supporters of a global jihadist response to the alleged conspiracy against Islam; to drive polarisation in Europe; and to encourage additional lone actor attacks.

In parallel, content supporting IS and containing threats continued to be produced by online supporters of the group under a variety of self-styled online propaganda outlets. Such supporter-generated content (SGC) and recycled material was continuously disseminated in 2019, thereby

partially supplementing the decreased production capacity of official IS media.

Suspects arrested for terrorist propaganda in Europe sometimes had a long involvement in jihadist activities. A number of them were known for earlier attempts to travel to join IS or had previous terrorist convictions. In July, for example, a 49-year-old man of Moroccan origin with a previous conviction for terrorism was arrested in Pamplona (Navarra, Spain) for disseminating violent propaganda. In particular, he administered several profiles and channels on social media, which he allegedly used to post videos produced by the principal media outlets supporting jihadist terrorist groups. In 2014 and 2016 he attempted to join IS and travelled to Turkey. In December 2016, he was arrested in Irún (Guipúzcoa), while driving a lorry, which he intended to use to commit an attack similar to those in Nice (France) and Berlin (Germany). Jihadist propaganda was found in the lorry.

Also in July, a 45-year-old Spanish woman was arrested in Vieiro (Lugo, Spain), after having been previously detained in October 2018. The suspect was a convert and was very active on social media including in closed groups on mobile messaging services. In addition to following the propaganda of different terrorist groups, she publicly praised the attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils (Catalonia, Spain) in August 2017 and other incidents. She also expressed her intention to carry out a similar vehicle-ramming attack in Galicia (Spain).

In October, two Spanish citizens, aged 23 and 53, were arrested in Parla (Madrid) on suspicion of being part of *Muntasir Media*, an SGC outlet supportive of IS and specialised in Spanish-language productions. One of the suspects was in charge of the platform in Spain and was assumed to be the author of all videos containing threats in Spanish, which were disseminated between late 2018 and October 2019. The first known *Muntasir Media* release was the video 'Precio caro. Pagado en Barcelona' ('High price. Paid in Barcelona'), published in December 2018 with audio in Spanish and Arabic translation. It contained explicit threats of new attacks in Spain. At the time of writing, *Muntasir Media* had released a total of 18 videos

³⁰ Europol, 'Caliphate soldiers and lone actors: what to make of IS claims for attacks in the West 2016-2018', *ICCT-Europol Research Paper*, April 2019, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/caliphate-soldiers-and-lone-actors-what-to-make-of-claims-for-attacks-in-west-2016-2018>



Supporter-generated content (SGC) and recycled material was continuously disseminated in 2019, thereby partially supplementing the decreased production capacity of official IS media

Suspects arrested for terrorist propaganda in Europe sometimes had a long involvement in jihadist activities

and nine infographics. Following the arrests, the media outlet maintained some activity, mainly through productions containing threats or references to Spain.

In the Netherlands, three persons were arrested for the translation, production and online dissemination of IS propaganda. The suspects were believed to be part of an international propaganda network.

SGC included threats against the West. For example, on the pro-IS *Telegram* channel *Greenb1rds*, a post showed an image of a church in the Netherlands in flames accompanied by a threatening text. This post was made in the context of heightened polarisation following the ban that came into effect in August 2019 in the Netherlands regarding the wearing of face-covering garments, such as burqas, niqabs or helmets, in government buildings, schools and public transport in the Netherlands. In the context of the growing importance of SGC, Spain observed a general increase in the dissemination of jihadist propaganda in Spanish.

Attempts by SGC outlets to project an idea of unity³¹ continued in 2019 but were hampered by internal controversies, in particular about the trustworthiness of particular outlets. For example, the seemingly pro-IS *Mu'ta* (or *Moata*) *News Agency* was severely criticised for not conforming to IS' official media feed of information. Furthermore, formerly pro-IS media outlets *al-Turath al-Ilmi* and *al-Wafa'* continued to focus on uncovering 'extremism' and 'corruption' within IS and reported that a number of IS clerics had allegedly been side-lined or assassinated by the

group as a result of their dissent³².

By contrast, the *Quraysh Media Centre* became more vocal as of October 2019, attempting to take over the role of an official media outlet – including by appearing to have insider knowledge (gleaned from interviews with IS officials) and providing on-the-spot reporting. An initiative of several SGC outlets, led by *al-Abd al-Faqir Media*, teaming up in 2018 to publish the *Youth of the Caliphate* magazine³³, was discontinued, with the last issue published in September 2019. The magazine requested readers to share ideas for future projects.

IS' weakened online presence was compounded, when on 21 and 22 November 2019, EU Member States and Europol coordinated an action targeting IS's online ecosystem³⁴. The action resulted in an extensive eradication of pro-IS accounts, channels and groups on *Telegram*, previously the primary source for terrorist propaganda online. IS supporters' subsequent attempts to regenerate their networks via the creation of new groups and channels were largely unsuccessful, as many of these were quickly disabled.

At the time of writing, official as well as supportive IS media outlets and groups appeared to have difficulties rebuilding their networks. Efforts to establish an IS presence online were continuing across several platforms, including *Telegram*. While supporters appeared to have flocked en masse to *TamTam* and *Hoop Messenger*, their attempts were met by increasing counter efforts by these platforms. IS also appeared to be present in more marginal apps, such as the blockchain messenger *BCM*, *RocketChat* and the instant messenger *Riot*. It also continued to call on supporters to exploit hashtags on *Twitter* and *Facebook*. In addition, the pro-IS Qimam Electronic Foundation promoted the encrypted messaging application *Conversations*³⁵, previously promoted by official IS propaganda due to its focus on secure communication.

The measures taken by social media platforms to counter the spread of terrorist propaganda led some groups, including al-Qaeda and its affiliates, to return to more 'traditional' ways of online communication, including websites and news portals.

³¹ Europol, *EU Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2019, p. 36.

³² Europol, *EU Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2019, p. 36.

³³ Europol, *EU Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2019, p. 36.

³⁴ Europol, *Europol and Telegram take on terrorist propaganda online*, 25 November 2019, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/europol-and-telegram-take-terrorist-propaganda-online>

³⁵ *Conversations* is based on the XMPP messaging protocol which enables users to set up accounts on their own XMPP server in order to safeguard their data or choose from a range of third-party servers, all of which are interoperable.

Travel for terrorist purposes



As stated in previous years, there are no signs of systematic use of irregular migration by terrorist organisations

In 2019 there were few attempts reported by EU foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) to travel to conflict zones reported to Europol, with only Austria and Spain confirming one prevented case each. This follows the pattern of the decreasing numbers of jihadists travelling from Europe since 2016.

Iraq and Syria are no longer attractive destinations for those wishing to join IS or al-Qaeda. The military defeat of IS has reduced its control to small pockets of territory which are difficult to reach by would-be FTFs. Additionally, there is a lack of funding and infrastructure, which previously supported many FTFs who wished to relocate to the conflict zones. Nonetheless, while many of the FTFs who already travelled are believed to have been either killed or confined in detention or refugee camps in north-eastern Syria, there are a substantial number of EU FTFs still unaccounted for.

The US withdrawal from Syria along with the subsequent military intervention by Turkey has made monitoring of detained FTFs in the region more difficult. Chaos and lack of information from the conflict zone have resulted in the information available to EU Member States about FTFs being limited and unverifiable.

Returnees

Few EU Member States reported FTFs returning to the EU in 2019. Restrictions in travel to and from the conflict zone from neighbouring countries have had a significant effect on the ability of FTFs to return without assistance from national authorities. In 2019, for example, six adults returned to the Netherlands, all of whom had reported themselves to the authorities in Turkey and to the Dutch

diplomatic posts. All were subsequently escorted home and arrested at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. However, Belgium highlighted that the difficulty in collecting evidence of offences committed in the conflict zone makes it difficult to establish the exact nature of an individual's involvement in the conflict.

While monitoring procedures and law enforcement measures for returnees exist in EU Member States, Belgium expressed concerns about the threat posed by undetected returnees. The trajectory for returnees from Syria can take unexpected routes relying on illegal immigration channels or facilitated by the use of false documents, thereby enabling clandestine entry into the Schengen area. However, as stated in previous years, there are no signs of systematic use of irregular migration by terrorist organisations and facilitators appear to be mainly motivated by financial gain.

The use of false documentation by returnees, whether EU or non-EU citizens, would allow them entry and freedom of movement in the EU. Spain commented on the possibility of undetected returnees with combat experience, tactical knowledge and expertise in handling weapons and explosives, creating sleeper cells. However, no such cases were reported in 2019.

It should be noted that FTFs joining IS were stripped of their original identity documents by the terrorist organisation. All the documents collected were placed in a common fund which could potentially be used to send IS agents to Europe.

Women and minors

The subject of returning women and minors is another source of concern recognised by a number of EU Member States. Many of the women who travelled to the conflict zones did not limit themselves to the role of wives and mothers. Due to differing national legislations, women are prosecuted (for offences such as providing support to IS) in some EU Member States, but not in others. The security

concerns relate to their high degree of radicalisation and, if not prosecuted or managed effectively, their ability to move freely within the Schengen area upon their return. This is also true of children who may be severely traumatised by exposure to radical beliefs and brutal acts of violence, bearing in mind that some of them have received military training, during which they have been taught how to kill and use a variety of weapons.

Imprisoned returnees/FTFs

Spain expressed concerns over returnees who have been imprisoned, noting that their status as foreign fighters could significantly increase their capacity to recruit followers. Austria noted that the threat posed by radicalisation in prisons rises proportionally with the increasing number of returnees and that the first releases of sentenced extremists could again change the dynamics of the jihadist scene.

Asylum seekers and irregular migrants

There is also a possible risk from radical Islamist groups in the EU attempting to take advantage of vulnerable asylum seekers. Belgium reported that during 2019 they identified asylum seekers linked to radicalism or terrorism, albeit in negligible numbers.

Routes

In 2019 the Eastern Mediterranean route was the most transited by migrants. Greece, due to its geographic position, serves predominantly as a transit point to Europe for migration/refugee flows. Greece noted that there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that terrorists are systematically exploiting refugee flows in order to enter Europe undetected, but that this possibility cannot be excluded.

Also of note during this year, Cyprus raised concerns with regard to migrants arriving from Syria, following a route from Turkey and Lebanon by sea and air. Cyprus assessed some as potential threats, based on external indicators such as scars, bullet wounds, amputations and material extracted from their phones. They also reported cases of

individuals stating affiliation to different factions fighting in Syria.

In addition, Romania stated that its territory has occasionally been used as a transit area, as part of a secondary route used by FTFs/returnees to/from Iraq and Syria, but that the migration flow did not influence the level of terrorist risk in Romania in 2019.

Moldova reported that it maintains its status as a transit zone. During 2019, five suspected FTFs were stopped in Moldova and sent back to their countries of origin. These persons were citizens of Israel, Tajikistan, France and Germany.

Travel to other destinations

Belgium noted that some IS fighters could move to new conflict areas rather than returning to their home country or remaining in Iraq or Syria. However, to date, there is no reliable information on systematic departure to other or new conflict zones. Austria referred to recent reports that identified the existence of two North Caucasian jihadist fighters from Austria in the conflict zone of eastern Ukraine. Other European FTFs might decide, or be obliged, to go to countries outside Europe, for example, North Africa, because of their background, such as having dual citizenship or being second or third-generation immigrants. However, there remains an information gap in relation to the current location of many FTFs, bearing in mind the low number of returnees.

Threat

While efforts to travel to war zones have all but ceased, returning jihadists, their children and those individuals prevented from travelling will continue to pose a long-term challenge for security services. Continued calls by IS and al-Qaeda to carry out attacks in countries of origin have meant that individuals who previously would have travelled might now be encouraged to perpetrate terrorist acts in their home countries.

Terrorist situation outside the EU

The terrorist situation in Europe continued to be influenced by developments abroad, in particular the continuing crises in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, but also in the Arabian Peninsula, the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, the Afghanistan-Pakistan region and South-East Asia. EU Member States' foreign engagements, including participation in military missions coordinated by the United Nations (UN) or the EU or within the Global Coalition Against Daesh, make them targets for jihadist terrorist groups.

Despite suffering military defeat in Syria and the death of IS leader Abubakr al-Baghdadi, the threat posed by IS-directed attacks in Europe has not entirely disappeared. Al-Qaeda also remains committed to carrying out attacks in the West. The terrorist groups still aim to attack the West, via their own networks or networks of sympathisers, and they remain capable of mobilising members of the global jihadist movement. At the same time, their ability to coordinate large-scale attacks in the West has been on the decline for some time.

The Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019 targeting churches, hotels and a housing estate demonstrated that Western citizens and interests outside Europe remain a target of jihadist terrorists.

The attacks, which were carried out by seven suicide bombers, killed at least 253 people. The victims included a minimum of 38 foreign nationals, 17 of whom were EU citizens: eight British, three Danish, three Dutch, two Spanish and one Portuguese. In the days following the

attacks in Sri Lanka, IS deployed what remained of its media capacities to claim and promote them as a major success. On 23 April, IS claimed credit for the attack through its *A'maq News Agency*. The initial statement came in the form of a 'breaking news' banner in Arabic. The banner stated that the attackers were IS fighters targeting Christians and citizens of the international anti-IS coalition. Shortly afterwards, an official IS communiqué announced the 'martyrdom' of seven perpetrators, who were mentioned by their *noms de guerre* and the roles assigned to them. Another item released by *A'maq News* contained a photograph showing eight individuals wearing dark robes and headscarves, said to be the perpetrators of the attacks. A video released by *A'maq News* contained what was alleged to be the pledge of allegiance of the perpetrators. The attack was also mentioned in the weekly IS newsletter *al-Naba'*. In a video released on 29 April, Abubakr al-Baghdadi renewed the claim of responsibility for the attacks and stressed that the attacks in Sri Lanka killed 'Americans and Europeans'.

In conflict areas, criminal and terrorist structures coexist and overlap, thereby increasing the risk of kidnapping and extortion of European citizens. For example, four Italian nationals were reported as being held hostage in West and East African countries and investigations were ongoing at the turn to 2020³⁶.

IS

IS lost its last enclave in March 2019 when it was defeated in Baghuz (Syria) near the Iraqi border by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)³⁷. Prior to the final SDF offensive, an estimated 20 000³⁸ people – mainly women and children, but also some male fighters – were evacuated and transferred to the al-Hawl detention camp. These included a number of European FTFs. Several hundred IS

³⁶ One of the four was reportedly freed in March 2020.

³⁷ The SDF is an alliance of Arab and Kurdish militias supported by the USA and other Western countries. It is dominated by the Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG, 'People's Protection Units'), which Turkey considers to be an extension of the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK, 'Kurdistan Workers' Party').

³⁸ McKernan, B., 'Endgame for the Isis 'caliphate' looms in small Syrian town', *The Guardian*, 20 February 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/20/endgame-for-the-isis-caliphate-looms-in-small-syrian-town>

fighters reportedly refused to surrender and were killed during the SDF assault, while others managed to escape³⁹. It was also reported that some IS members tried to move to the Idlib province (Syria) or to cross the border into Iraq.

Despite its defeat in Baghuz, IS appears to have transitioned to a covert insurgent group operating across various locations in Iraq and Syria.

This transformation started already before the group's military defeat. For example, an IS suicide attack targeting a restaurant frequented by foreign troops was carried out on 16 January 2019 in Manbij (Syria), killing 19 people, including four US soldiers. In Iraq, on 10 November 2019, an Italian military patrol engaged in the 'Inherent Resolve/Prima Parthica' mission was targeted by a bomb attack in the Kifri area while returning from a support mission. Five soldiers were seriously injured. The attack was claimed by IS through *A'maq News*. In addition to attacks against security forces, IS media extensively called for the assassination of *mukhtars* (village headmen), in an apparent effort to eliminate local sources of information for the government and deter civilians from cooperating with Iraqi security forces.

Prominent European FTFs were reportedly killed in Baghuz. For example, in March, the IS newsletter *al-Naba'* announced the death of two French brothers in an airstrike. They are believed to have been responsible for the IS audio claim for the November 2015 attacks in Paris. IS described them as leading figures of its propaganda apparatus. In a video speech in April, the late IS leader Abubakr al-Baghdadi praised the steadfastness of IS fighters in Baghuz, who he said included fighters from Australia, Belgium and Chechnya, and singled out the aforementioned French brothers.

IS leader Abubakr al-Baghdadi was killed on 27 October 2019 in a raid on a compound in the Idlib village of Barisha near the Turkish border, north-west Syria. The group's official spokesman also died the same day in a drone strike on his convoy near the northern Syrian town of Jarablus. On 31 October, IS's official *al-Furqan Media* published a speech by an individual introducing himself as the new official spokesman. The speaker confirmed the death of

both al-Baghdadi and his spokesman, announced that IS had selected a new 'caliph' and urged all Muslims to pledge allegiance to him. Several EU Member States assessed that the change in leadership was unlikely to alter the threat posed by IS to Europe and other Western countries in the short term, as the group was highly likely to be robust and adaptable enough to successfully navigate the immediate consequences of the loss.

FTFs and SDF detention centres and camps

EU Member States reported high numbers of their nationals still present in Iraq and Syria. France, for example put the number of remaining jihadists of French nationality or who travelled to join IS from French territory at several hundred. The Netherlands stated that, in addition to the less than 200 travellers that were believed to be still in the conflict zone, at least 205 minors with a connection to the Netherlands – parents with Dutch nationality or parents that had lived in the Netherlands for a prolonged period of time – were living in Syria and Turkey at the time of writing. Over 75 % of these children were born there, with over 50 % being below the age of four. Of these children, 90 lived in Syrian-Kurdish refugee camps, 55 were with jihadist groups in the Idlib region, while 25 were in different locations in Syria and 35 in Turkey.

Belgium stated that several dozen Belgian FTFs were reportedly detained in the refugee camps run by the SDF. A small number of Belgians remained in the Idlib region, being affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) or other groups. While 151 individuals were presumed dead at the time of writing – amounting to a 57 % mortality rate, almost exclusively men – false reports of deaths have been noted to be a common tactic used to deceive security services. In addition, some Belgian individuals were imprisoned in Iraq, where they face the death penalty.

The numbers of IS-affiliated persons in detention in north-eastern Syria increased dramatically in the context of the offensive on Baghuz. The SDF stated that it detained 12 000 IS fighters and 70 000 of their family members⁴⁰. Of the 12 000 fighters, 800 were European, according to SDF information, albeit not necessarily EU citizens. Media reported that, by mid-September 2019, al-Hawl detention camp contained an estimated 70 000 people (50 000 children), 15 % of whom were foreigners living in a separate section of the camp⁴¹. Conservative estimates of European adults and children detained in Iraq and Syria in mid-2019

³⁹ BBC News, *IS militants 'caught trying to escape' last Syria enclave*, 6 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-47468228>

⁴⁰ Al-Jazeera, *Hundreds of ISIL prisoners escape Syrian camp, Kurds say*, 13 October 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/hundreds-isil-prisoners-escape-syrian-camp-kurds-191013141044768.html>

⁴¹ Damon, A., Khadder, K. and Laine, B., 'A forgotten camp in Syria could be the birthplace of ISIS' revenge generation', *CNN World*, 12 September 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/12/middleeast/syria-al-hol-camp-isis-intl/index.html>

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Several EU Member States assessed that the change in leadership was unlikely to alter the threat posed by IS to Europe and other Western countries in the short term

EU Member States reported high numbers of their nationals still present in Iraq and Syria

Several EU Member States confirmed that the number of nationals of their country, in particular women and children, in camps and prisons in north-east Syria increased in March 2019

indicated a minimum of 430 European FTFs with at least 700 European children⁴², but real numbers are likely to be higher.

Several EU Member States, including Finland and the Netherlands, confirmed that the number of nationals of their country, in particular women and children, in al-Hawl and other camps and prisons in north-east Syria increased in March 2019. These also included FTFs. Portugal, for example, confirmed that an Angola-born 32-year-old Portuguese FTF was captured by SDF forces in March 2019 in Baghuz. He had travelled to Syria in April 2012, where he assumed key roles within IS's structures. During the fighting in Baghuz, he was seriously injured, probably paralysed from the waist down. He appears to be the single survivor of a group of six Portuguese FTFs previously based in London (UK). Similarly, a Luxembourg-born Portuguese FTF, aged 31, who had travelled to Syria in August 2014 to join IS, was captured in March 2019 in Baghuz. At the time of writing, he was held in a Syrian prison. He was a member of IS's communication department and appeared in a propaganda video released

in late January 2016, which showed him executing a number of prisoners by shooting them in the head. In the video, he threatened Spain and Portugal and claimed that the former caliphate of al-Andalus⁴³ would be retaken by IS.

According to media reporting, IS members – including many women – inside al-Hawl and other camps were able to assert themselves and impose IS regulations on the rest of the inmates, for example by meting out punishments, some of which were fatal⁴⁴. They were said to have organised their own moral police⁴⁵.

The dire living circumstances inside the al-Hawl camp were exploited by terrorist propagandists. The Netherlands pointed out that this was a frequent topic of discussion on Dutch jihadist online platforms. IS supporters online were using reports from the camp to rally support for IS. Short videos allegedly filmed inside the camp using mobile telephones were shared, showing black IS flags being raised in the camp and children declaring their allegiance to IS. In a September 2019 audio message, IS leader Abubakr al-Baghdadi called on followers to liberate detained IS supporters.

During the Turkish intervention in northern Syria in October 2019, the SDF withdrew some of its troops guarding the detention camps. Consequently, a considerable number of foreign women and children held in a secure annexe due to their suspected ties with IS managed to escape from Ayn Isa (Ain Issa) displacement camp, which was said to hold about 13 000 people at the time. According to Kurdish officials, the inmates started rioting when Turkish and allied forces started shelling areas close to the camp⁴⁶. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights put the number of escapees at 100⁴⁷, whereas Kurdish sources numbered them at least 750⁴⁸ and 859⁴⁹.

The Netherlands stated that the deteriorating humanitarian situation increased the risk that more women would attempt to escape or to leave the camps in other ways, for example using smugglers or bribes.

⁴² Coolsaet, R., and Renard, T., 'New figures on European nationals detained in Syria and Iraq, *Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations*, 15 October 2019, <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/new-figures-on-european-nationals-detained-in-syria-and-iraq/>

⁴³ The Umayyad dynasty at Córdoba had declared a caliphate (929-1031) in al-Andalus, i.e. the Muslim-governed southern parts of the Iberian peninsula, in defiance of the Abbasid Sunni caliphate in Baghdad and the Fatimid Shi'i caliphate in Cairo. IS generally puts itself in the tradition of the Abbasid caliphate, for example by adopting black as its defining colour.

⁴⁴ Gardner, F., 'Islamic State group: Europe has ticking time bomb in prison camps', *BBC News*, 26 October 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50179735>

⁴⁵ Damon, A., Khadder, K. and Laine, B., 'A forgotten camp in Syria could be the birthplace of ISIS' revenge generation', *CNN World*, 12 September 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/12/middleeast/syria-al-hol-camp-isis-intl/index.html>

⁴⁶ Reuters, *Syrian Observatory: 100 people escape camp holding Islamic State relatives*, 13 October 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-turkey-camp-report/syrian-observatory-100-people-escape-camp-holding-islamic-state-relatives-idUSKBN1WS06L>

⁴⁷ Reuters, *Syrian Observatory: 100 people escape camp holding Islamic State relatives*, 13 October 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-turkey-camp-report/syrian-observatory-100-people-escape-camp-holding-islamic-state-relatives-idUSKBN1WS06L>

⁴⁸ McKernan, B., 'At least 750 Isis affiliates escape Syria camp after Turkish shelling', *The Guardian*, 13 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/13/kurds-say-785-isis-affiliates-have-escaped-camp-after-turkish-shelling>

⁴⁹ Al-Jazeera, *Hundreds of ISIL prisoners escape Syrian camp, Kurds say*, 13 October 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/hundreds-isis-prisoners-escape-syrian-camp-kurds-191013141044768.html>

IS affiliates outside Iraq and Syria

In 2019 the most active IS branches outside of Iraq and Syria were those in West Africa, Libya, Egypt ('Sinai'), Afghanistan ('Khorasan') and the Philippines.

IS declared new provinces and rearranged existing ones. In March, the organisation announced the establishment of the Libya province, which subsumed the three previously separate provinces of Barqa, Fezzan and Tripoli. In his April 2019 video message, Abubakr al-Baghdadi is shown receiving a folder titled 'Turkey province', among others. Also in April, IS declared the establishment of the Central Africa province, and that same month claimed a first-time attack in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, two months later, a first-time presence in Mozambique. The terrorist group has since claimed responsibility for numerous attacks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In May, IS announced that it had created provinces in India and Pakistan. The statement pointed to the restructuring of its Khorasan province, which had previously covered operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Jammu and Kashmir, and parts of Iran. IS is also attempting to assert its presence in South-East Asia. In January 2019, the group claimed a bombing at a church in Jolo, Philippines, which killed over 20 people. IS supporters also focused on translating official IS propaganda into East Asian languages (namely Tagalog and Indonesian).

The IS West Africa province, previously known as Boko Haram (Hausa for 'Western education is unlawful [in Islam]'), remained active in the region of Lake Chad in northeast Nigeria and neighbouring countries⁵⁰. In late December 2019, *A'maq News* released a video allegedly showing the beheading of 11 Christians by members of the IS West Africa province in Nigeria, whom the group said were captured in preceding weeks in north-eastern Borno State and were killed as revenge for the killing of the IS leader and spokesman. Also in December, the IS West Africa Province claimed to have killed four aid workers abducted in north-eastern Nigeria⁵¹.

In March 2019, IS published a picture of IS fighters ('caliphate soldiers') in Burkina Faso under the label of IS West Africa province, for the first time. In addition, in his April 2019 video message, Abubakr al-Baghdadi finally acknowledged the pledge of allegiance by fighters in Mali and Burkina Faso and mentioned the name of the leader of the group, which in media reports was previously referred to as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). The ISGS leader had pledged allegiance to IS in May 2015⁵². In 2019 ISGS remained active in the border region between

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, continuing its activities that combined aspects of terrorism and organised crime. The relationship of ISGS and the faction of IS West Africa province in the Lake Chad area, however, remained unclear.

IS was able to leverage its regional outposts in a number of major media campaigns that distracted from its struggles in Iraq and Syria but more importantly portrayed it as still expanding to new territories.

The most noteworthy campaign was a series of fifteen videos released by IS provincial media outlets between June and September 2019 titled 'And the best outcome is for the righteous'. The series showcased fighters from Bangladesh, 'Central Africa' (Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique), the Caucasus, 'East Asia', Iraq, 'Khorasan' (depicting militants in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran), Libya, 'Sinai' (Egypt), Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, 'West Africa', Yemen, and, for the first time, Azerbaijan. The militants renewed their allegiance to Abubakr al-Baghdadi, vowed to fight on and called on Muslims who had not pledged their allegiance to the IS leader, to do so.

Similarly, a wave of endorsements from various IS provinces (documented in photo reports) as well as from pro-IS media outlets followed the declaration of the new 'caliph' in October 2019. Provinces included the largest affiliates ('Khorasan', 'Sinai' and 'West Africa'), in addition to smaller ones such as 'al-Bayda' (Yemen), 'Bengal', 'Central Africa', 'East Asia', 'North Baghdad' (Iraq), Pakistan, Somalia, Tunisia, Yemen, as well as five formerly separate provinces which in 2018 were merged to form the IS Syria province: Hawran, Homs, Aleppo, al-Raqqa and 'al-Khayr' (Dayr al-Zawr). The overarching message was that nothing had changed for IS except for its leader.

Whereas most propaganda aimed to incite potential perpetrators to commit attacks in their countries of residence, IS also continued to call on potential recruits to travel (*hijra*) to join IS or its affiliates, although less perceptibly. While the theme of *hijra* no longer takes pride of place in IS propaganda, at least two official IS videos (issued by its Somalia and Yemen provinces) called in 2019 on foreign recruits to join them.

⁵⁰ Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2019, p. 50.

⁵¹ BBC News, *Islamic State in Nigeria "beheads Christian hostages"*, 27 December 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50924266>

⁵² Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2019, p. 49-50.

Idlib

In 2019, apart from the SDF-controlled areas, Idlib governorate, together with some adjacent territories in the Aleppo and Hama governorates, was the last territory in Syria not under the control of the Syrian regime. Over recent years, the area received large numbers of refugees from other parts of Syria, but also members of armed opposition groups that were evacuated from enclaves across Syria under withdrawal agreements with the Syrian regime⁵³. The population in Idlib is said to have tripled during this period to roughly three million⁵⁴.

During much of 2019, the situation in Idlib remained relatively stable as a result of the September 2018 agreement between Turkey, which supports the Syrian Arab opposition, and Russia and Iran, which support the Syrian regime. The agreement stipulated the creation of a demilitarised zone along the frontline between the Idlib enclave and territory controlled by the Syrian regime. Observation posts were established by Turkey within the Idlib enclave and by Russia outside it. A military offensive on the enclave by the Syrian regime with Russian support in late 2019 led to a renewed movement of nearly one million refugees, mainly women and children, towards the Turkish border, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, thereby compounding the already existing humanitarian crisis in the enclave.

Much of the Idlib enclave was dominated in 2019 by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS, 'Levant Liberation Committee'), which in November 2017 endorsed the nominally independent Salvation Government (Hukumat al-Inqadh) as a civilian administration in territories under HTS control. HTS was created in January 2017 as an umbrella organisation, which aimed to unite al-Qaeda-linked groups and local jihadist factions of the Syrian armed opposition. Its main component has been Jabhat Fath al-Sham ('Levant Conquest Front'), which was the name adopted by former al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria Jabhat al-Nusra ('Support Front') after it formally cut its ties with the al-Qaeda leadership in mid-2016. In January 2019, HTS militarily defeated key factions of the National Liberation Front, a coalition of armed factions in Idlib backed by Turkey, in particular the Ahrar al-Sham Islamic Movement and the Nur al-Din al-Zinki Movement, and forced it to agree to formally submit the entire Idlib enclave to the Salvation Government. HTS celebrated the Turkish intervention in northern Syria in October and warned of 'false reporting' claiming that Turkey targeted civilians. HTS has had a trusted ally in the form of the Idlib branch of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), an Uyghur jihadist group originating from Xinjiang province

in eastern China.

Other jihadist groups in Idlib, including Tanzim Hurras al-Din (THD, 'Guardians of the Religion Organisation'), continued acting under the umbrella of the Wa-harid al-Mu'minin ['And incite the believers'] Operations Room, which had been formed in October 2018. THD was established in February 2018 by jihadist fighters opposing HTS's approach and the formal disassociation from al-Qaeda. From its beginnings, HTS had faced opposition from hardline jihadist currents, in particular those who remained loyal to the al-Qaeda leadership and did not accept the break with the mother organisation, when Jabhat al-Nusra transformed into Jabhat Fath al-Sham. THD is widely believed to be a new al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria. In August 2019, al-Qaeda central command expressed its condolences for the death of an assumed prominent THD member. The relationship between THD and HTS has been ambivalent. In February, the two groups agreed to cease trading mutual insults on social media and instead to cooperate against their common enemy. In a separate document, the two groups acknowledged each other as jihadist organisations sharing the common goal of 'implementing the shari'a via preaching and *jihad*'. These agreements notwithstanding, violence periodically broke out between THD and HTS in 2019.

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda continues to view its fight in long-term, multi-generational terms, the aim being to exhaust the West, topple 'apostate' regimes in Muslim-majority countries and restore the caliphate.

Al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups continue harbouring the ambition and intent to carry out terrorist attacks in the West or against Western interests in other countries. On the eighteenth anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri argued that 'the US does not understand anything except the language of force' and called for more attacks on US interests worldwide. It is highly likely that al-Qaeda continues to mainly seek to conduct attacks against strategically important targets. Such attacks are likely to target symbols of the alleged global aggression against Islam in an attempt to win support from Muslim communities worldwide. The 2015 murder of the editorial team of the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, for example, was claimed by al-Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen, alleging that the attack was revenge for the newspaper insulting the Prophet of Islam.

⁵³ Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2019, p. 45.

⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, *The Jihadist Factor in Syria's Idlib: A Conversation with Abu Muhammad al-Jolani*, 20 February 2020, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/jihadist-factor-syrias-idlib-conversation-abu-muhammad-al-jolani>

However, in recent years, al-Qaeda-affiliated groups have mainly attacked regional or local targets in countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Under its current leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who succeeded Osama bin Laden in 2011, al-Qaeda has mainly concentrated on establishing itself in local conflicts, by providing security and services to local Sunni Muslim populations in an effort to win local support and acceptance. Consequently, the organisation has repeatedly rejected the extreme violence used by IS, accusing it of killing innocent Muslims. By contrast, al-Qaeda affiliates have publicly apologised in cases in which Muslim bystanders were killed as a result of al-Qaeda attacks. In general, on the local level, al-Qaeda aims to be seen as targeting military rather than civilian targets. In his September 2019 speech, al-Zawahiri stressed that targets needed to be 'permissible under Islamic law' and that 'no harm shall accrue to Muslims' (with the implicit exception of those directly targeted, as these are not considered to be Muslims under jihadist ideology). He specifically encouraged the targeting of Israeli, British, French, Russian, NATO and European military forces and bases.

Al-Qaeda has created a strong network of global affiliates that are empowered to push forward the organisation's centrally defined agenda. Each al-Qaeda affiliate, therefore, is a significant threat to Western interests in its own region of operations. In Syria, al-Qaeda's presence is seemingly constituted by THD, but al-Qaeda veterans are also believed to be present in HTS, other groups and acting independently.

Arguably al-Qaeda's strongest affiliate continued to be al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen. The group holds effective control over parts of southern Yemen, which it seized during the political turmoil in the country since 2011 and consolidated in the ongoing violent conflict between the Huthi movement and the internationally recognised Yemeni government, which is supported by a Saudi-Arabia-led international military coalition. In 2019 AQAP continued to clash with IS affiliates in Yemen, in particular in al-Bayda' governorate, amid mutual accusations of cooperating with either the Huthi rebels or forces linked to the internationally recognised government.

In 2019 al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) apparently continued maintaining a small presence in northern Algeria, where its leadership is likely to be located, although it did not perpetrate terrorist attacks there. In the Sahel region, AQIM continued operating as part of the al-Qaeda-aligned alliance of groups Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM, 'Group for the support of Islam and Muslims'), which is mainly active in Mali, but also partially responsible for the escalation of violence in Burkina Faso in recent years. In Mali, JNIM again targeted international military forces, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), French

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troops, the G5 Sahel forces and the EU. On 20 January 2019, for example, JNIM claimed an attack on a MINUSMA base in northern Mali, killing 10 Chadian soldiers. The attack coincided with the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister to Mali. On 26 February 2019, JNIM took credit for a raid on the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Bamako (Mali). EUTM confirmed that its Koulikoro training centre came under attack by unknown individuals in the night of 23 February 2019.

Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin (HSM, 'Mujahid Youth Movement', also known as al-Shabaab) continued to control rural parts of southern and central Somalia. In 2019 HSM continued conducting large-scale attacks and targeted the international presence in Somalia. On 1 January, for example, the UN compound inside Mogadishu airport was hit by mortar shells which injured three people. One projectile hit the international camp, which houses the embassies of Italy and the UK, among others, without causing any damage. The attack was claimed by HSM. HSM also conducted attacks in neighbouring Kenya. On 15 January 2019, a terrorist attack combining explosive devices and firearms targeting the Riverside business and hotel complex in Nairobi killed 21 people. After detonating explosive devices, the ensuing assault with firearms lasted 19 hours, until all five attackers were declared killed. HSM claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that it killed US and other Western citizens and was a response to the USA's acceptance of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. On 30 September, HSM claimed a number of attacks targeting US and EU forces and US-trained Somali military personnel. One of the attacks targeted the Baledogle Airfield, which serves as a command and control centre for US drone operations in Somalia. Another attack was said to have targeted an EU convoy in Mogadishu.

Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is a network of jihadist factions spread across South Asia. AQIS reportedly collaborates with the Taliban in Afghanistan and has managed to establish itself in Bangladesh, Kashmir and

Myanmar. With regard to the Kashmir conflict, al-Qaeda tried to present itself as an alternative force providing support to the insurgency in the Indian-controlled parts of the territory, labelling the Pakistani government as corrupt and a close ally of the USA.

In addition to these main affiliates, there are also networks and groups of al-Qaeda members and supporters operating in other countries.

Leaders of al-Qaeda affiliates have appeared to gain prominence in recent years and to have helped make the global organisations more cohesive. Nevertheless, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri likely remains the setter of al-Qaeda's overall strategy. In May 2018, for example, he criticised the relocation of the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. In January 2019, as mentioned above, both HSM and JNIM conducted attacks in Nairobi (Kenya) and Mali, respectively, as part of a 'Jerusalem will never be Judaised' campaign. The attacks indicated that they were inspired by al-Zawahiri's guidance to target Israeli and Jewish targets. While the attacks were consistent with the regional aims of each group, the reference to the issue of Jerusalem is possibly indicative of wider al-Qaeda coordination and intent to increase their operations against such targets. The campaign demonstrated al-Qaeda's ability to harness the capabilities of their global network to advance a strategic narrative.

Western Balkans

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia reported no jihadist terrorist attacks in 2019. In Kosovo⁵⁵, no jihadist terrorist attacks were noted in 2019.

The Western Balkan region remained home to radicalised communities. Hungary assessed that religious radicalisation was most prevalent in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also present in Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia. In addition to returning FTFs, the terrorism threat also emanates from local radicalised groups and individuals, including in prison. These milieus include formal organisations and informal groups, but also individuals that self-radicalise online, for example through contacts with jihadist ideologues. According to Hungary, both al-Qaeda and IS have specifically targeted Muslim populations in Western Balkan countries based on their view that, in this part of Europe, the prevailing identity and social crisis, the openness for radical ideas and economic difficulties make people susceptible to be radicalised and

recruited.

Serbia reported that its radical circles were dominated by members of the Bosniak, Roma and Albanian minorities, with small numbers of Serbian converts. Radicalisation was reported often to take place within the family environment, with all family members, including women, actively engaging in recruitment. In Serbia, recruitment targeted increasingly the Roma population. With regard to gender and age, a focus on younger women was observed. Serbia also noted an increase in the number of individuals self-radicalising on the internet; and that an increasing number of individuals who wanted to go to Iraq or Syria but for various reasons did not, were being detected. Serbia assessed that one of the biggest security problems of the near future would be the return, prosecution and deradicalisation of former FTFs.

None of the Western Balkan countries reported travel movements for terrorist purposes toward conflict areas in 2019. Serbia noted a marked decline in the intensity and activity of recruiters on its territory for travelling to join terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria in 2019. North Macedonia reported some failed attempts by individuals to travel to the Middle East via Turkey.

With regard to returnees, Montenegro did not register any departures from foreign battlefields to return to Montenegro in 2019.

Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that it received 26 of its citizens from Syria in 2019, bringing the total number of adult returnees from Syria to approx. 60. Of the 26 arrivals in 2019, eight were men, six women and 12 children aged between 1 and 8. The eight men were prosecuted under existing search warrants, with one being sentenced to four years' imprisonment in a non-final decision. This individual had travelled to Syria to join IS in April 2014. At the end of 2019, Bosnia and Herzegovina estimated that approx. 80 of its adult citizens remained in refugee camps or other locations in Iraq and Syria.

Also Kosovo received former IS members from camps in Syria in 2019. In April 2019, a group of 110 Kosovo citizens were returned, including 32 women and 74 children, nine of whom were orphans of IS members. The four men in the group, one of whom was a minor, were immediately detained on charges of terrorism. Several women were put under house arrest following interrogation. On trial, one of the men reportedly confessed to being a former IS member. He had travelled to join IS in Syria in August 2015 and was arrested by SDF forces in 2017.

⁵⁵ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

ETHNO-NATIONALIST
AND SEPARATIST
TERRORISM

KEY FINDINGS

- › As in previous years, the majority of terrorist attacks in the EU were related to ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism. All but one were reported by the UK in relation to DR groups in Northern Ireland, whose activities increased.
- › ETA continued to be inactive in 2019. Despite the group's disarmament claims, two weapons and explosives caches were discovered.
- › Also in Corsica, no separatist terrorist attacks were committed in 2019. The emergence of offshoot groups advocating violence, however, raised concerns.
- › PKK continued using EU territory for propaganda, recruitment, fundraising and logistical support activities.
- › Suspected members of the LTTE were arrested in Germany on charges of serious criminal offences in Sri Lanka.

The majority of terrorist attacks in the European Union (EU) were related, as in previous years, to ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism. The number of such attacks declined for the second consecutive year, from 83 in 2018 to 57 in 2019. Notably, all but one were reported by the UK. Six EU Member States reported a total of 48 arrests, most of which took place in Spain (25) and France (13).

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Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism defined

Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorist groups are motivated by nationalism, ethnicity and/or religion. Separatist groups seek to carve out a state for themselves from a larger country or annexe territory from one country to that of another. Left- or right-wing ideological elements are not uncommon in these types of groups. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Basque ETA and the Kurdish PKK organisations fall into this category.

Dissident Republican (DR) groups

The UK reported 55 security-related incidents by Dissident Republican (DR) groups in Northern Ireland (UK) in 2019, four of which targeted national security targets, such as public authorities, police and the military, compared to just one in 2018. In addition, one attack outside Northern Ireland in 2019 also targeted a national security target. Of note was the murder on 18 April 2019 of a journalist, who was standing near a police vehicle observing rioting in Derry/Londonderry, when she was hit by a bullet⁵⁶. The incident produced a strong community backlash against DR violence.

The threat to Northern Ireland from DR groups remained severe with a persistent threat of attack mainly targeting police, prison staff and the military. The UK reported an increase in their attack planning, targeting and weapons engineering activity across Northern Ireland.

Methods and capabilities vary across DR groups with many attacks involving the use of firearms or small improvised

⁵⁶ BBC News, Lyra McKee: Man charged with journalist's murder, 12 February 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-51478855>

explosive devices (IEDs), such as pipe bombs, but larger and/or potentially more destructive devices, such as vehicle-borne IEDs and explosively formed projectiles (EFPs), have also been deployed. For example, in September, a suspected command wire-initiated explosive device (CWIED) containing high explosives was located in a car parked in the Creggan area of Derry/Londonderry. Of interest is the re-employment of a known Irish Republican Army (IRA) modus operandi, in which a hoax device is used to lure security services to the location where a secondary IED is placed, with the intention to kill or injure responding officers.

DRs and other paramilitary groups (republican and loyalist) continued to be involved in criminal activity using extreme violence and intimidation to exert control over communities. Their activities ranged from minor to serious criminality, including drug dealing, extortion, fuel laundering and murder.

DRs remain committed to a violent agenda and therefore the likelihood of attacks remains high.

Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) and Resistência Galega

In Spain, the activity by separatist terrorist groups remained low in 2019. Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA, 'Basque Fatherland and Liberty') continued to be inactive. However, despite the group's disarmament claims, police in Spain discovered two weapons and explosives caches. A number of open criminal cases are still being investigated and a number of ETA members remain at large.

After the 2018 ETA declaration of its dissolution, members of the Izquierda Abertzale ('Nationalist Left') carried on some of the group's activities. Their objective was to remain relevant by promoting ETA's narratives concerning its violent past and supporting its imprisoned and fugitive members. Izquierda Abertzale, however, experienced divisions in both France and Spain. In 2019 a number of more radical factions emerged and challenged the political authority of the movement. They advocated for a total amnesty of imprisoned ETA members in both countries. Although they are still developing, some of these groups might attempt to fill the vacuum left by ETA's withdrawal from the separatist scene.

Violent separatist activism in Spain continued to decrease with only one violent incident classified as terrorism occurring in the second half of 2019. Protests were mainly organised by the *ernai* youth organisation and, to a lesser extent, by other groups of the Izquierda Abertzale. In France, radical Basque nationalists engaged with members of the left-wing extremist movement during the G7 Summit

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in Biarritz, where they carried out non-violent protest actions.

Resistência Galega ('Galician Resistance') remained the only active terrorist group in Spain but has not carried out any attack since 2014. In June 2019, police arrested two leading members of its military and logistical structure along with two other members of the group. Portuguese authorities reported that the suspects had a presence in their country prior to their arrest.

Corsican separatism

The separatist terrorist threat in Corsica decreased significantly since the declaration of demilitarisation by the Front de Libération Nationale Corse (FLNC, 'Corsican National Liberation Front') in June 2014. The group announced that it would pursue its objectives via non-violent political means.

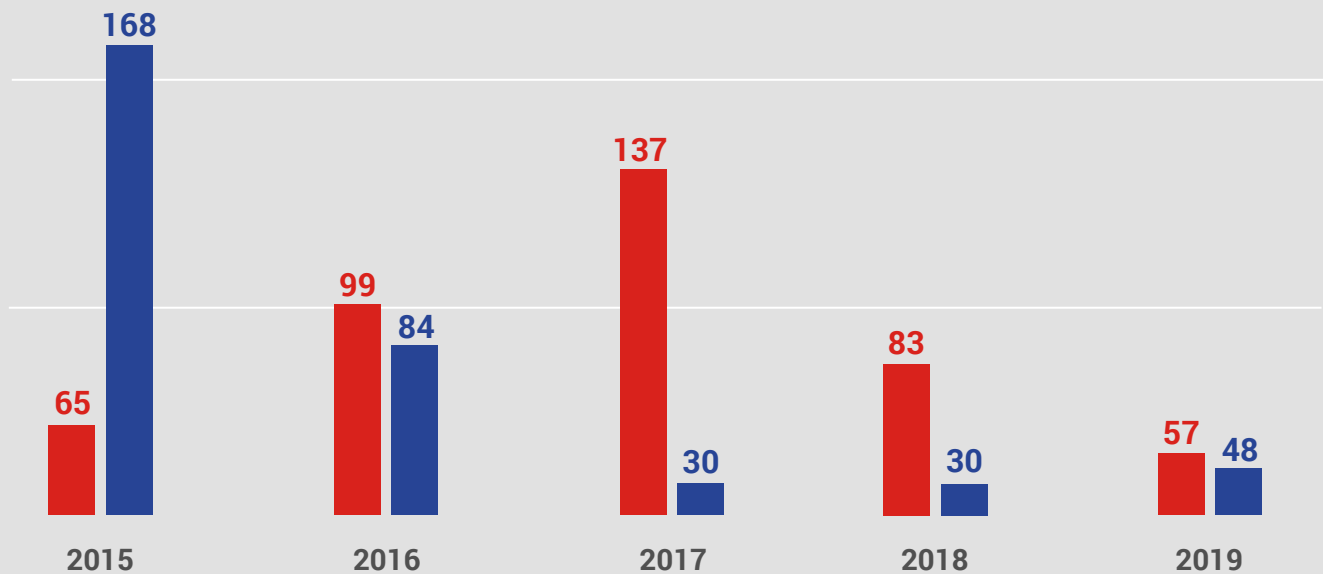
The emergence of offshoot groups advocating violent action, however, raised concerns regarding a potential reappearance of the threat. In September 2019, five masked individuals – one armed with a hunting weapon – proclaimed the creation of FLNC per l'indipendenza ('FLNC for independence') during a press conference. In December, the nationalist movement FLNC dit du 22 octobre ('FLNC so-called of 22 October') claimed responsibility for the partial destruction of a villa owned by a businessperson in Bonifacio (Corse-du-Sud). This was the first violent act claimed by this group since it announced its engagement in a demilitarisation process in May 2016.

In 2019 the Corsican nationalist movement continued to support its imprisoned members; to denounce the listing of terrorism offenders by the French government

attacks

arrests

Number of completed, failed or foiled attacks and number of arrests for ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism 2015-2019.



and to demand the recognition of Corsican as an official language. Despite a lack of popular support, the movement hardened its stance ahead of a visit of the French president in April. In this context, several arson attacks were carried out against unoccupied residential houses, resulting in damage.

Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK)

To date, the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK, 'Kurdistan Workers' Party') has not carried out any terrorist attack on EU soil but remains active in propaganda, recruitment and providing logistical support to its members. The group also organised rallies and demonstrations in Europe concerning Kurdish-related issues, most of which are peaceful.

Members and sympathisers of the PKK continued to be involved in legal and illegal activities to raise funds in order to support the group and its affiliates. The main source of revenue appeared to be the annual fundraising campaign (*kampanya*) and cultural events. Legitimate businesses were also used. For example, law enforcement in Germany shut down two companies suspected of being part of PKK organisational and financial structures across Europe. Sweden and Turkey reported that the group is also involved in serious and organised criminal activities.

The situation in Kurdish-populated areas in Turkey, Iraq and Syria had a strong impact on communities in the

EU. In particular, the Turkish military intervention in northern Syria, which started in October 2019, caused an increase in protests by Kurds across Europe. It also exacerbated the tensions between Turkish and Kurdish communities in a number of European countries. These occasionally escalated into clashes between Kurds and Turkish nationalists during protests and counter-protests. Such incidents were reported by Belgium, Germany and Switzerland, for example. Germany also reported that in this context a number of facilities related to Turkey – such as associations, mosques and shops – were vandalised.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has been militarily inactive since it was defeated in Sri Lanka in 2009.

There are, however, members that have committed serious criminal offences in Sri Lanka and have dispersed to a number of countries, including in Europe. In January 2019, for example, police in Germany arrested a Sri Lankan national for membership of LTTE and involvement in the assassination of the Sri Lankan foreign minister in 2005. A search warrant was executed against another Sri Lankan national in Germany in March, on suspicion of belonging to a LTTE special unit that was responsible for the killing of dissidents. Police established his involvement in the murder of nine individuals.



LEFT-WING --- AND ANARCHIST --- TERRORISM

KEY FINDINGS

- › EU Member States reported 26 left-wing and anarchist terrorist attacks for 2019, reaching the level of 2016 and 2017 after a decrease in 2018. All attacks took place in Greece, Italy or Spain.
- › The number of arrests on suspicion of left-wing or anarchist terrorist offences more than tripled, compared to previous years. The majority of arrests were linked to violent demonstrations and confrontations with security forces in Italy.
- › In addition, violent left-wing and anarchist extremists continued to pose a threat to public order in a number of EU Member States. Support for Kurdish populations in Syria remained a central topic, and left-wing extremists and anarchists are believed to have travelled to join Kurdish militias in north-east Syria.
- › DHKP-C continued using the EU as a logistical base to support the group's operations in Turkey.

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Left-wing and anarchist terrorism defined

Left-wing terrorist groups are pursuing via violent means to trigger the revolution against the political, social and economic system of a state, in order to introduce socialism and eventually establish a communist and a classless society. Their ideology is often Marxist-Leninist. Examples of left-wing terrorist groups are the Italian Brigate Rosse ('Red Brigades') and the Greek Revolutionary Organisation 17 November.

Anarchist terrorism, is an umbrella term, is used to describe violent acts committed by groups (or to a lesser extent by individuals) affiliated with different anarchist ideologies. They promote a revolutionary, anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian agenda. Examples of anarchist terrorist groups are the Italian Federazione Anarchica Informale ('Informal Anarchist Federation') or the Greek Synomosia Pynon tis Fotias ('Conspiracy of Cells of Fire').

EU Member States reported 26 attacks perpetrated by left-wing and anarchist terrorist groups or individuals in 2019. All but one were completed. The total number of attacks increased in 2019 compared to 2018 (19 completed, failed and foiled attacks) and increased slightly compared to 2017 (24 completed, failed and foiled attacks).

The number of arrests increased significantly compared to previous years (34 in 2018, 36 in 2017) reaching 111, with the majority (71) related to terrorism offences occurred during violent demonstrations, clashes with the police and other similar circumstances in Italy.

As was the case in previous years, all attacks and almost all arrests were reported by Greece (4), Italy (98) and Spain (8). The three EU Member States continued to be those reporting most of the left-wing and anarchist terrorist activity in the EU. In addition, one suspected DHKP-C member was arrested in Austria.

In most cases, left-wing and anarchist terrorist and extremist organisations claimed responsibility for the attacks that they perpetrated by publishing proclamations in their native language on like-minded public online platforms (websites or weblogs) in their respective countries. In addition, a version in English was on occasion published on websites or weblogs to reach an international audience.

Terrorist attacks and suspects arrested

In Greece, two completed terrorist attacks took place. Both were claimed by anarchist terrorist groups. A third attack remained unclaimed but showed similarities with anarchist *modi operandi*.

On 22 March 2019, two individuals riding a motorcycle threw a grenade at the building that houses the consular office of the Russian Embassy in Athens. Minor damages and no casualties were reported. The attack was claimed by the terrorist group FAI/IRF Mikhail Zhlobitsky cell⁵⁷ in a statement published on a website. The incident showed that, like in previous years, anarchist militants continued to have access to military-grade weapons.

Offices of the political party Laikos Syndesmos - Chrysi Avgi ('Popular Association – Golden Dawn') were targeted twice in 2019, only the one of which was claimed. On 23 May 2019, a time-delayed improvised explosive device (IED) exploded outside the party offices in Acharnes (Athens, Greece), causing fire, which resulted in extensive damage. The anarchist terrorist organisation Brigade of Durutti claimed responsibility for the attack by posting a proclamation on a website. The second attack occurred on 1 November 2019, when two vehicles approached the building that houses the Athens offices of the party. Around ten individuals got off the vehicles, deployed a portable ladder, and one of them climbed to the second floor of the building, broke the window and placed an IED or improvised incendiary device (IID) inside. The fire caused by the explosion resulted in minor damages. Two Greek nationals were arrested on 16 December 2019 on suspicion of having committed the attacks.

Two more Greek citizens were arrested on 8 November 2019 on charges of establishing and joining a terrorist organisation, namely the Organosi Epanastatiki Aftoamyna ('Organisation Revolutionary Self-Defence'), and other terrorism-related offences. During their arrest, weapons, including five assault rifles, detonators, explosives and grenades were seized. The weapons matched those used in robberies and terrorist attacks against the Panellinio Socialistiko Komma (PASOK, 'Panhellenic Socialist Movement') political party's headquarters and the Mexican

Embassy between 2014 and 2017. The group also claimed a grenade attack against the French Embassy in 2016.

In Italy, groups and individuals belonging to the insurrectional anarchist milieu represented the most significant threat in the left-wing and anarchist terrorist scene. The anarchist terrorist organisation Federazione Anarchica Informale/ Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale (FAI/FRI, 'Informal Anarchist Federation/International Revolutionary Front') continued to present itself as a widespread and horizontal network, consisting of individuals and groups/cells that apparently act in autonomy, operating in Italy and abroad. In the past, the group had a preference for 'direct action' by sending letter bombs. The Italian militants detained are still considered as a point of reference by foreign members, who join the International Revolutionary Front (IRF) based mainly in Chile, Spain and Greece.

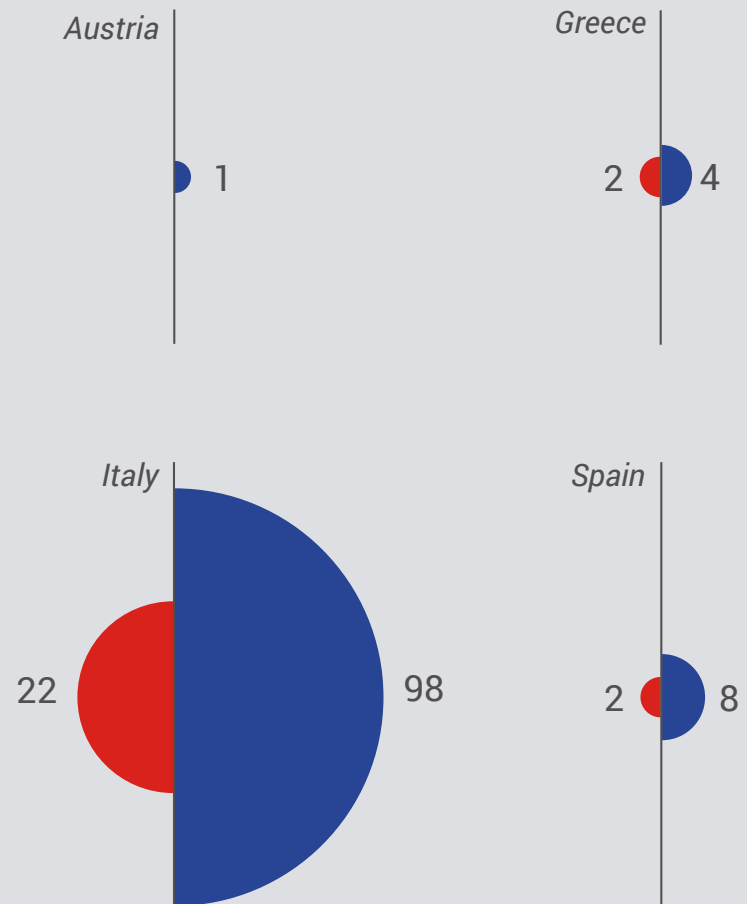
A total of 22 terrorist attacks (21 completed and 1 foiled) in Italy were attributed to left-wing and anarchist groups in 2019. Although the number of attacks has more than doubled compared to 2018 (10 completed, failed or foiled attacks), the groups or individuals who perpetrated them demonstrated low-level operational capabilities.

In Italy, the preferred *modus operandi* was arson (16 out of 22). The most frequently selected targets were vehicles belonging to private and public companies or government agencies. Telecommunication and television repeaters were also targeted, as well as cable pits for train signalling and a courthouse. An IED explosion caused minor damages to a building housing a temporary employment agency in Rovereto. Offices of a right-wing political party in Rome were targeted by unknown perpetrators who threw an IID against them. One vehicle was vandalised and, in one incident, an envelope containing a threatening letter and a bullet was addressed to a prosecutor. The narratives behind the attacks, frequently expressed on the *roundrobin.info* website, included expressions of solidarity with imprisoned anarchists internationally, support to refugees, rejection of large-scale infrastructure projects and opposition to war in general.

⁵⁷ FAI/IRF stands for Federazione Anarchica Informale/ International Revolutionary Front.

Number of completed, failed or foiled attacks and number of suspects arrested for left-wing and anarchist terrorism in EU Member States in 2019.

attacks  arrests 



In addition to the 22 attacks classified as left-wing and anarchist terrorism in Italy, four attacks (two foiled and two failed) were reported. These remained unclaimed. The four attacks occurred in April and May 2019 and consisted of parcel bombs sent to offices of Turin municipality.

The arrests carried out by Italian authorities showed a remarkable increase in 2019, reaching the number of 98 individuals (compared to 8 arrests reported for 2018). The vast majority of the arrests (71) were related to terrorism offences perpetrated during violent demonstrations, clashes with the police and other similar circumstances. For example, 17 individuals were arrested in July for violence against police officers and detonation of IEDs at the 2017 G7 summit in Taormina (Sicily). In September, 14 individuals were arrested on suspicion of violent acts during protests in Turin (Piedmont) in February; and another 14 people were seized in December for riots during an event in Val di Susa (Piedmont) in late July.

In Spain, two attacks attributed to left-wing and anarchist terrorists occurred in 2019. In both cases, IEDs were placed at automated teller machines (ATMs). The incidents were claimed to be in solidarity with anarchist prisoners. The number and scale of the attacks diminished in recent years. Eight individuals belonging to the left-

wing and anarchist milieu were arrested in Spain for terrorism-related offences, most of whom were subject to international arrest warrants.

DHKP-C

The Turkish Marxist-Leninist terrorist organisation Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (DHKP-C, 'Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front') remained active in 2019 in Turkey and EU Member States. Turkey reported that an IED attack in Istanbul was prevented. DHKP-C members were arrested and heavy weaponry and explosives seized.

Although the threat of a terrorist attack by DHKP-C in the EU is at a low level, its members continued to use EU Member States as a logistical base to support the group's operations in Turkey. Austria, for example, stated that a fixed structure is in place in Europe – through which money, weapons and military equipment are procured for terrorist activities in Turkey. Legally established associations are used as cover for some of these illegal structures. Austria arrested a Turkish member of DHKP-C, based on a European Arrest Warrant issued by Greece.

Left-wing and anarchist extremist activity

In 2019 violent left-wing and anarchist extremist groups and individuals continued to pose a threat to the public order of a number of EU Member States, albeit with varying intensity. As in previous years, the anarchists' activities were more extreme than those of the left-wing.

Anarchist *modi operandi* in 2019 mirrored those of previous years. Anarchist extremists formed unstructured non-hierarchical groups that operated mainly in and around specific urban areas. They launched violent campaigns and engaged in clashes with the police during demonstrations organised by them or after infiltrating 'mainstream' non-violent demonstrations.

Anti-fascism, anti-racism and perceived state repression remained the primary topics of importance. Left-wing and anarchist extremists engaged in violent confrontations with far-right sympathisers and, to a lesser extent, targeted representatives and premises of right-wing political parties. Anti-globalisation and anti-capitalism were also on their agenda, with banks, national and multinational companies and private property targeted during violent protests.

In 2019 the conflict between Turkey and Syrian Kurds continued to be central to left-wing and anarchist extremist groups' campaigns in multiple EU Member States. A number of left-wing extremists and anarchists are believed to have travelled from the EU to the Kurdish-populated areas of north-east Syria (Rojava) to join Kurdish militias. The threat that these individuals pose upon their return, due to the experience gained from their potential participation in combat, is a matter of concern.

Anarchist individuals and groups in Europe also carried out indoctrination and propaganda activities in occupied buildings (squats) aiming at recruiting new members, while on some occasions groups engaged in 'propaganda by the deed', to motivate others to join the cause.

In France, left-wing extremists engaged in violent acts against public institutions, mainly the security forces. Their principal aim was to destabilise the rule of law and subvert the sovereignty of the state. In their rhetoric, they openly advocated 'direct action', which might lead in the future to more violent forms of action and even to terrorism. It

is estimated that links have been established between French activists and European anarchist terrorist milieus, in particular in Italy (Federazione Anarchica Informale, FAI, 'Informal Anarchist Federation') and Greece (Synomosia Pynon tis Fotias, CCF, 'Conspiracy of Cells of Fire'), whose *modi operandi* they partly copy.

In Belgium, groups and individuals of the anarchist and left-wing extremist movement posed a persistent threat to public order, especially during *gilets jaunes* ('yellow vest') violent demonstrations.

In Germany, early on New Year's Day 2019, approximately 50 persons, wearing masks, set fire to several motor vehicles near the Federal Court of Justice in Leipzig and threw stones at the neighbouring building, where a student association was celebrating. Several attackers forced their way into the premises of the association and climbed over the wall of the Federal Court of Justice using a ladder. They set fire to the main entrance and back door of the building. In addition, the offenders left several caltrops at the crime scene, which damaged the tyres of the attending fire-fighting vehicles. The attack was part of a series of left-wing extremist motivated 'New Year's attacks' on governmental institutions in Leipzig (Saxony), which started in 2016.

Violent left-wing extremist groups in Denmark, Norway and Sweden closely cooperate with like-minded groups in the rest of Europe. In Sweden, a number of individuals belonging to the violent left-wing extremist scene are in contact with – or are part of – football hooligan gangs.

Left-wing and anarchist online activities

For left-wing and anarchist terrorists and violent extremists, the internet remained the preferred tool for awareness-raising, propaganda and recruitment activities. Websites containing left-wing and anarchist rhetoric served as platforms to spread ideology, through the posting of communiqués and the exchange of ideas.

Left-wing terrorist and extremist groups were observed to display a high level of security awareness. They use 'clean' mobile phones and encrypted applications for communication. Czechia reported that left-wing

extremists and anarchists use their own infrastructure, such as *Riseup.net*, *Espiv*, *Noblogs*, as well as commercial platforms such as *Signal* and *Telegram*.

Conversely, some groups are said to deliberately adopt rudimentary methods. They avoid all computer or telephone communication, as well as the use of cars or GPS for their movements.



RIGHT-WING
TERRORISM

KEY FINDINGS

- › EU Member States reported six completed, failed or foiled right-wing terrorist attacks for 2019. In addition, Germany reported two right-wing violent extremist attacks.
- › The attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand), Poway (USA), El Paso (USA), Bærum (Norway) and Halle (Germany) are part of a wave of violent incidents worldwide, the perpetrators of which were part of similar transnational online communities and took inspiration from one another.
- › Groups of right-wing extremists intending violent actions were arrested in EU Member States in 2019. Many communicated via closed online groups.
- › Violent right-wing extremists maintain international links, for example through participation in concerts and rallies marking historical events in a variety of EU Member States. Online communication was also observed to strengthen international links between right-wing extremists, using English as *lingua franca*.
- › Several EU Member States reported the emergence of paramilitary groups pretexting the impotence of the state to protect the population against the perceived threat from Islam and migration.
- › Right-wing extremist ideology is not uniform but feeds from different sub-currents, united in their rejection of diversity and minority rights. Main elements of violent right-wing ideology are the belief in the superiority of the 'white race' and the idea that violent acts by individuals forming part of a 'leaderless resistance' serve to instigate a 'race war'. This confrontation is deemed unavoidable to stop the alleged conspiracy by the 'system' to replace white populations through mass immigration.
- › Right-wing extremists use websites, online discussion forums and pseudo-news sites to disseminate their ideology. Despite efforts to detect and delete white supremacist content, major social media platforms remain important vectors for the spread of right-wing extremism. In addition, fringe platforms, which are either dedicated right-wing extremist sites or have been colonised, constitute online safe havens for right-wing extremist movements.
- › Also non-violent right-wing extremist movements, such as the Identitarian Movement, encourage hatred and have the potential to inspire lone actor attacks, thereby posing a significant threat of radicalisation.

Terrorist and violent extremist attacks

In 2019 right-wing extremists in Europe were responsible for a number of violent attacks. Several of the perpetrators referred to the attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand) on 15 March 2019, thereby highlighting the acute mobilising effect of right-wing attacks internationally.

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Right-wing terrorism defined

Right-wing terrorism refers to the use of terrorist violence by right-wing extremists. Variants of right-wing extremism are neo-Nazism, neo-fascism and ultra-nationalist formations. Right-wing terrorism seeks to change the entire political, social and economic system on a right-wing extremist model. A core concept in right-wing extremism is supremacism or the idea that a certain group of people sharing a common element (nation, race, culture, etc.) is superior to all other people. Seeing themselves in a supreme position, the particular group considers it to be their natural right to dominate the rest of the population. In addition, right-wing extremist ideologies feed on a variety of hateful sub-cultures, commonly fighting back against diversity in society and equal rights of minorities. Racist behaviour, authoritarianism, xenophobia, misogyny and hostility to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities and immigration are commonly found attitudes in right-wing extremists.

The Christchurch attacker, in turn, praised the attacks in Norway in 2011.

For 2019, EU Member States reported a total of six completed, failed or foiled right-wing terrorist attacks: one in Lithuania, one in Poland and four in the UK. The only completed terrorist attack occurred in the UK on 16 March 2019, the day following the attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand). The 50-year-old perpetrator reportedly looked for a random target in Surrey and stabbed and injured a 19-year-old Bulgarian male sitting in a car. Whilst not convicted of any offences specified in the UK terrorism act, the judge ruled in September 2019 that the attacker's behaviour constituted a terrorist act. A video excerpt of the Christchurch massacre was found on the perpetrator's mobile telephone⁵⁸.

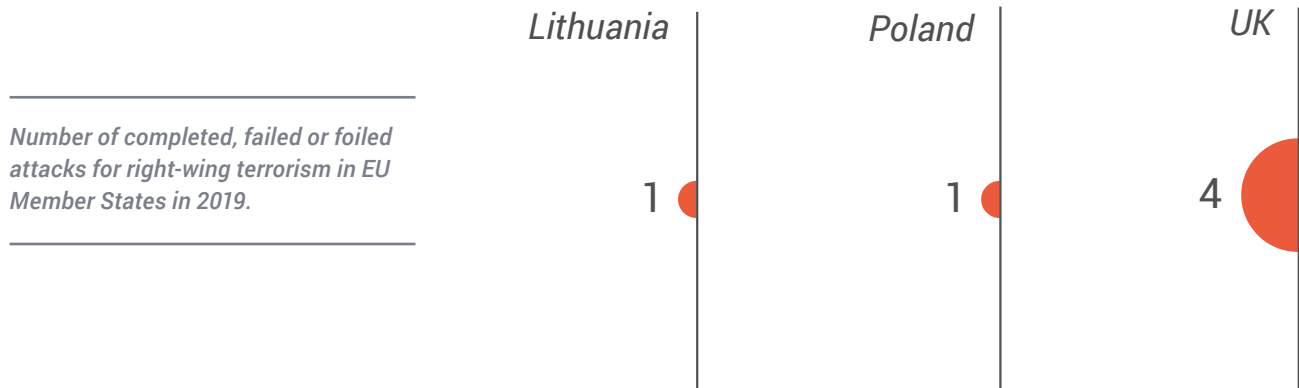
Lithuania reported one failed attack in 2019. On 6 October, a time-delayed improvised explosive device (IED) was discovered at the entrance of the Western Union headquarters in Vilnius. The wall was sprayed with graffiti and a swastika sign. A 24-year-old Lithuanian male, suspected to be a member of the Feuerkrieg Division ('Fire War Division'), was arrested on suspicion of placing the IED. Feuerkrieg Division was established in online chatrooms in October 2018, with the participation of several persons from various countries. While predominantly active online, in particular on *Gab*, Feuerkrieg Division cell members have posted pictures of meetings in person in several countries.

In Poland, a plot was foiled on 10 November 2019. Two Polish males, aged 38 and 48, were arrested in Warsaw on suspicion of planning an attack against Muslims using an IED. Firearms, ammunition and materials for the production of explosives were found during house searches. The suspects were reportedly inspired by the perpetrators of the 2011 Norway and 2019 Christchurch attacks⁵⁹.

Other violent attacks by right-wing extremists were not classified as terrorism under national legislation. Germany,

⁵⁸ BBC News, Vincent Fuller: *White supremacist car part stabbing 'terrorist act'*, 10 September 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-surrey-49652977>

⁵⁹ Reuters, *Poland seizes two for plotting Breivik-style attacks on Muslims*, 13 November 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-arrests/poland-seizes-two-for-plotting-breivik-style-attacks-on-muslims-idUSKBN1XN23L>



for example, stipulated that no terrorist attack motivated by right-wing extremism was committed in Germany in 2019. However, two major attacks by right-wing extremists were reported.

On 2 June 2019, a 45-year-old German national shot and killed the *Regierungspräsident*⁶⁰ of Kassel at his home in Wolfhagen-Istha (Hessen). The suspect was arrested two weeks later, and investigations identified two other persons believed to have participated in procuring weapons, including the one used in the offence. He was indicted for murder and his two alleged associates for aiding and abetting murder. The alleged perpetrator had a history of right-wing extremist offences dating back to when he was 15.

On 9 October 2019, a 27-year-old German male attempted to attack the synagogue in Halle an der Saale (Saxony-Anhalt), where worshippers were celebrating the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. After failing to break open the locked entrance doors by firing shots and using an IED, he randomly shot and killed a female passer-by. Subsequently, he drove to a Turkish restaurant, where he killed one male. During the course of his escape, he repeatedly shot at additional persons, injuring two of them seriously. The suspect was arrested approximately an hour and a half after the initial synagogue attack, having crashed his getaway vehicle. He was indicted for two counts of murder and multiple counts of attempted murder.

The suspect recorded the attack with a video camera attached to his helmet and live-streamed his actions

on the online gaming platform *Twitch*⁶¹. He addressed his perceived viewers, speaking in English and using terminology taken from online gaming. Prior to the attack, he had posted a 'manifesto' online, in which he displayed his homemade firearms and IEDs. Some non-essential parts of the firearms were produced with a 3D printer. It is believed that the attacker was socially isolated and predominantly motivated by a mixture of anti-Semitism and anti-feminism⁶².

In addition, France reported two attacks on mosques in the second half of 2019, which were not classified as terrorism. On 27 June 2019, a male with severe mental health issues shot at people leaving an Islamic centre in Brest, before committing suicide. On 28 October 2019, an octogenarian male attacked a mosque in Bayonne with a handgun. In the latter case, the profile of the perpetrator matched that of the neo-populist fringe of the right-wing extremist scene, characterised by, inter alia, an adherence to conspiracy theories, hatred for Islam and the perception of public institutions' impotence.

⁶⁰ In Hessen and three other German federal states, the *Regierungspräsident* is the head of a mid-level regional government, appointed by the state's prime minister.

⁶¹ Koehler, D., 'The Halle, Germany, Synagogue Attack and the Evolution of the Far-Right Terror Threat', *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 12, Issue 11, December 2019, pp. 14-20.

⁶² Koehler, D., 'The Halle, Germany, Synagogue Attack and the Evolution of the Far-Right Terror Threat', *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 12, Issue 11, December 2019, pp. 14-20.

Right-wing extremist groups, structures and activities

Violent right-wing groups

Several EU Member States reported violent right-wing activities. In Ireland, incidents associated with anti-immigrant ideology, including arson attacks on immigrant housing facilities and a vehicle, were observed in 2019. There is a growing anti-immigrant movement consistent with right-wing ideology. In Denmark, like in neighbouring countries, anti-Jewish acts took place in 2019. For instance, in November, Danish right-wing extremists committed acts of gross vandalism and desecration of Jewish symbols and graves. Also in Luxembourg, there are more anti-Jewish incidents than in the past. Right-wing populism and hate speech cases are in a growing state. Belgium reported that small right-wing extremist groups organise (counter-)demonstrations clearly targeting Muslim populations, migrants or extreme left-wing groups. The aim of such demonstrations is to raise tensions and to initiate violence. They also seek to disrupt public order by joining in demonstrations to confront the police or to provoke violence or damage.

In 2019 a number of right-wing extremist groups planning violent acts were detected. They were all formed in closed online spaces. In January, for example, Germany searched premises of members of the group National Socialist Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Germany across eight federal states. At least 28 suspects were detained. Their objectives were reported as including furthering 'racial segregation' and the 'protection of their own kind'. The members exchanged their views in *WhatsApp* groups, glorifying National Socialism and violence. They also strove to arm group members. During the searches, more than 100 weapons (blank firing weapons/air pressure weapons, swords, machetes, knives, batons) and branded paraphernalia were seized.

Similarly, in November, Italy detained twelve individuals – two of whom were later arrested – on suspicion of illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives. The suspects had come to notice during an investigation, in which xenophobic and anti-Jewish messages and content were exchanged via *WhatsApp*. One of the suspects had expressed the need to build 'a qualified structure ready for any eventuality [...] a Republican National Guard' capable of 'summary justice without calling the police'.

Also in November, 20 right-wing extremists were detained across Italy that adhered to pro-Nazi, xenophobic and anti-Jewish beliefs and aimed to create the 'Italian National Socialist Workers' Party'. One Italian citizen, aged 57, was arrested for illegal possession of weapons, after having been found in the possession of a shotgun, a bolt action rifle, two revolvers, large amounts of ammunition and a taser. Another person was arrested for illegal weapons possession and trafficking linked to terrorism.

Organisations

The right-wing scene is described as extremely heterogeneous both from a structural and ideological perspective. Established organisations are mainly known to exist within the neo-Nazi spectrum. One of the most prominent groups is Blood & Honour (B&H), which originated in the UK in 1987. Its objective is to train 'political soldiers', in order to wage a 'race war' and save the 'white race'. The organisation has chapters in different European countries, including Belgium and Portugal. It was banned in Germany in 2000⁶³. Belgium reported that in 2019 B&H, which had suffered from internal dissent and division in the past, engaged mainly in networking activities, such as music concerts, rather than activism and the spread of ideology.

⁶³ German Federal Ministry of the Interior, *Wer oder was ist "Combat 18 Deutschland"?*, 23 January 2020, <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/faqs/DE/themen/sicherheit/vereinsverbot-combat-18/2.html>

Portugal reported that their national chapter of the neo-Nazi Hammerskin Nation continued its activities. Despite a diminished capacity to mobilise followers and members, the group organised another edition of the 'European Officers Meeting' (EOM) in Sintra in January. In addition, in March, the group held a meeting in Lisbon bringing together different generations of skinheads including militant veterans of the defunct Movimento de Ação Nacional (MAN, 'National Action Movement') and former members of musical rock bands Ódio ('Hate') and Guarda de Ferro ('Iron Guard'), which had ceased their activities several years earlier.

In Finland and Sweden, the Nordiska motståndsrörelsen (NMR, 'Nordic Resistance Movement') was the dominant neo-Nazi organisation in 2019. In Finland, the NMR faced difficulties due to a pending proscription process and its members established a new right-wing extremist group. NMR is primarily involved in propaganda but also has paramilitary features, and endeavours to organise, equip and train their members for a supposed future armed struggle. In Sweden, the NMR has participated in elections, but thus far has not won any mandate. In 2019 the NMR organised large rallies in several locations across Sweden, which on occasion led to violent confrontations with the police and ideological opponents.

In 2019 prominent dissidents of NMR established Nordisk Styrka (NS, 'Nordic Strength') in Sweden. They were allegedly dissatisfied, inter alia, with NMR's parliamentary focus.

Right-Wing Resistance (RWR) is a small right-wing extremist organisation with international links. It is reported to exist in Belgium and Sweden.

In France, the right-wing extremist movement remained disorganised. Structured right-wing extremist movements, such as the neo-fascist Troisième Voie ('Third Path') and the monarchist Action Française ('French Action'), have lost influence following self-dissolutions in 2014, in an attempt to avoid formal bans following the death of a left-wing activist during an attack.

In Greece, following the arrests in 2018 of individuals involved in the organisations Combat 18 Hellas and Anentachtoi Maiandrioi Ethnikistes (AME, 'Non-Aligned Meander Nationalists'), right-wing extremist activity was observed to be very low in 2019. It manifested itself mainly through graffiti. Members participated in nationalist organisations' gatherings regarding issues such as the refugee crisis. In addition, in 2019 violent incidents against persons causing injuries and property damage occurred. The main targets were the police; politicians and political party offices; immigrants or refugees; and the anarchist and anti-authoritarian milieu.

International links

Online spaces have been observed to strengthen international links among right-wing extremists.

Ireland reported a strong international network involving right-wing extremists from Ireland, other European countries and the USA. Denmark assessed that Danish right-wing extremists were increasingly building relations with like-minded individuals abroad, including on virtual platforms. These relations enable right-wing extremists to learn new modi operandi and adapt to new national legislation, for example.

Hungarian right-wing extremist organisations often consist of a hard core of five to ten people and highly fluctuating membership. They maintain connections primarily in neighbouring countries, but also with like-minded groups in other EU Member States, including Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK. In Hungary, right-wing extremist organisations focus on organising rallies and 'marches' to mark anniversaries of historical events. During such events, behaviour, symbols and chanting disparaging political, religious or ethnic minorities has been observed. For example, it has been reported that neo-Nazis from different parts of Europe gather each February in Budapest to mark what they call the 'Day of Honour'.

Music and concerts play a key role in providing coherence to and propagating neo-Nazi groups across Europe. The Oi! and 'Rock against Communism' (RAC) music genres are reported to be one of the main unifying elements. With their aggressiveness, they constitute one of the vectors of expression of neo-Nazi or skinhead groups and pose as an 'underground' culture. Right-wing extremist groups try to circumvent bans in one country by organising or attending meetings or concerts in other countries. In Belgium, for example, these concerts can bring together several dozens or even several hundred participants and also attract neo-Nazi audiences from abroad, including Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK.

Portugal indicated that each year since 2015 the Portuguese B&H chapter has organised concerts in early November, which have usually been attended by prominent members of different B&H chapters in Europe. The last one took place in 2019 in Lavra-Matosinhos (near Porto) but did not attract a large gathering.

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Right-wing extremists were increasingly building relations with like-minded individuals abroad, including on virtual platforms

Right-wing extremists seek to extend their influence to other circles or sectors of activity

Right-wing extremist outreach

Right-wing extremists seek to extend their influence to other circles or sectors of activity. One example is hooligans. Sweden observed interaction between the violent right-wing extremist movement and Swedish sports hooligans. However, cooperation appears to be ad hoc and based on personal relationships. In Italy, violent supporters of Italian football teams were noted to be increasingly politicised. In July 2019, a police operation brought to light connections between far-right groups and violent supporters of football club Juventus Turin, in particular among the *Drughi Giovinezza* and *Tradizione* fan clubs. According to Hungary, football hooligans join right-wing organisations not for ideological reasons, but for possibilities of violent manifestations.

Sweden also noted that right-wing extremists and motorcycle gangs involved in organised crime are in contact. Again, these contacts are based on personal relationships and do not take place on the organisational level. However, right-wing extremist groups might borrow from motorcycle clubs their highly hierarchical structures, inspired by the Hell's Angels.

Paramilitary training and activities

Sweden noted an increased interest in paramilitary training among individuals in right-wing circles in recent years. With some regularity, they reportedly organise different types of gatherings in the form of survival training, camps and field marches.

Hungary observed that military-type training was considered a requirement within a sizeable proportion of the extreme right-wing groups, as well as learning and developing skills related to handling and using firearms. Usually, they train their members for shooting through paintball games and hold martial arts lessons. These

training lessons are performed on private properties (farms) and abandoned military installations. Their activity is advertised mainly on the internet.

Czechia reported that, within the neo-Nazi movement, training activities were noticed with particular outreach to hooligans. This consisted of physical and fighting training as preparation for mixed martial arts (MMA) tournaments. One paramilitary organisation consisting of neo-Nazi activists in Czechia is known for its tactical training, high level of organisation and possession of arms.

Belgium observed visits by Belgian right-wing extremists to Eastern European countries for the purpose of training or self-defence and marksmanship.

Several EU Member States reported that right-wing extremists participated in the Ukraine conflict. In general, far-right movements are divided: some, particularly in the neo-Nazi movement, support Ukraine and the pro-Ukrainian militias, while other right-wing extremists appear to support positions taken by Russia. Czechia, for example, highlighted that most right-wing extremists call for support of the separatists in eastern Ukraine. By contrast, some Czech neo-Nazis reportedly are inspired by the Azov Battalion, a pro-Ukrainian militia accused of neo-Nazi and white supremacist sympathies. In general, while right-wing extremist recruitment remains very weak in Czechia, nationalist groups focusing on the idea of a unity of Slavic nations and pro-Russian groups are relatively successful. In Sweden, one individual suspected of a weapons offence was described as a contact person between Russian paramilitary officers and Swedish violent right-wing extremists.

In France, mainly in reaction to the cycle of attacks plotted or inspired by the so-called Islamic State (IS) that started in December 2014, several organisations emerged from the networks advocating the struggle 'against the Islamist threat', constituting patriotic self-defence groups that take inspiration from the organisational models of paramilitary and/or survivalist militias. Also in Belgium, recurrently, right-wing extremist groups have organised self-defence patrols in public places allegedly to secure the inhabitants against 'aggressions committed by migrants', pretexting state negligence in managing insecurity.

In Slovenia, in the light of increased illegal border crossings, the polarisation of society with regard to support or rejection of migration has led to a more frequent emergence of 'neighbourhood watches', pretexting that current state measures do not provide a sufficient level of security for the citizens against migrants. These movements and groups are recruiting members via social networks, with the risk of creating echo chambers that can lead to radicalisation and justification of violence. The groups have a unified command, pursue similar goals, provide training in army techniques, have unified insignias and conduct outreach activities to the public and specific target groups.

Violent right-wing ideology

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The right-wing extremist spectrum is a mixture of prejudices, contemptuous and totalitarian ideologies that, each in their own way, pose a threat to security

Violent right-wing extremist sentiments are fed from different sub-currents, which are often based on very different (perceived) grievances. Consequently, the right-wing extremist spectrum is not uniform in its appearance; it is a mixture of prejudices, contemptuous and totalitarian ideologies that, each in their own way, pose a threat to security. These include National Socialist-oriented groups and neo-Nazi groups; revisionist individuals and groups; racist and anti-Jewish groups; and skinhead and right-wing extremist hooligan groups. In addition, right-wing extremism draws on a variety of other hateful sub-cultures, all of which reject diversity and consider religious, ethnic or sexual minorities as enemies.

‘Leaderless resistance’

Right-wing terrorist and extremist violence often appear to be designed to instigate a ‘race war’⁶⁴ that many right-wing extremists believe is unavoidable. They seek a violent reaction from the victims against which violence is perpetrated and their wider community. Such triggering acts are portrayed as part of a ‘leaderless resistance’, a concept that aims to encourage lone actors to perpetrate violence.

One of the main reference works for the concept of ‘leaderless resistance’ is *SIEGE*, a collection of newsletters produced by US American neo-Nazi James Mason in the 1980s. *SIEGE* advocates a guerrilla-type war by small autonomous cells against what is called ‘the system’⁶⁵. Current groups advocating *SIEGE* beliefs include Atomwaffen Division (‘Nuclear Weapons Division’), Sonnenkrieg Division (‘Sun War Division’) and Feuerkrieg Division (‘Fire War Division’).

Right-wing extremist propaganda does not always explicitly incite violence. For example, following the Christchurch attacks, in a column on the group’s website *Nordfront*, the leader of NMR expressed his ‘understanding’ of an attack like the ones in Christchurch, but that such an attack could never take place in Sweden in the name of NMR.

The ‘Great Replacement’

In recent years, many strands of right-wing extremism have been incorporated into the broader framework of the so-called ‘Great Replacement’ conspiracy theory, which originates from the 2011 book *Le Grand Remplacement* by French author Renaud Camus. Violent actors motivated by different right-wing extremist motivations have justified their attacks with a reference to this theory. The ‘Great Replacement’ promotes the idea that a global elite, often perceived to be led or dominated by Jews, tries to replace ‘white’ populations with ‘non-white’ people through massive immigration. In the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, an exponential increase of references to the ‘Great Replacement’ on social media propelled the term into mainstream attention⁶⁶.

⁶⁴ Right-wing extremists often refer to ‘race’ as a defining and separating factor of human communities. The concept of ‘race’ as a biological category, however, was invented to justify discriminatory and colonial policies in the 19th century. In 2019 the Jena Declaration pointed out that the concept of race is the result of racism. See Jena Declaration, 19 September 2019, https://www.uni-jena.de/en/190910_JenaerErklaerung_EN.html

⁶⁵ Ware, J., ‘Siege: The Atomwaffen Division and Rising Far-Right Terrorism in the United States’, *ICCT Policy Brief*, 2019, <https://icct.nl/publication/siege-the-atomwaffen-division-and-rising-far-right-terrorism-in-the-united-states/>

⁶⁶ Davey, J. and Ebner, J., ‘“The Great Replacement”: the violent consequences of mainstreamed extremism’, *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, p. 19, <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/the-great-replacement-the-violent-consequences-of-mainstreamed-extremism>



White supremacism

White supremacist ideology postulates the superiority of the 'white race'. It has frequently been employed to justify the positions expressed by the authors of terrorist 'manifestos'. Many deliberately used openly racist, anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim wording. Some advocated self-isolation, anticipating the outbreak of a 'race war' between native populations and immigrants. Whereas not all those who hold white supremacist ideas are violent, white supremacist ideology is more likely than other forms of right-wing extremism to inspire acts of serious violence or terrorism, as it is more likely to explicitly promote hatred and violence against minorities. For example, in the UK, two members of white supremacist group Sonnenkrieg Division were found guilty of terrorism offences in June 2019, after they were arrested in late 2018 on accusations of calling for the murder of the Duke of Sussex whom they accused of being a 'race traitor'⁶⁷. Italy noted that white supremacy became increasingly mainstream in 2019, as a result of the exploitation of public fear regarding irregular migration movements.

⁶⁷ BBC News, *Teenage neo-Nazis jailed over terror offences*, 18 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-48672929>

Anti-feminism

Sexual frustration and misogynist views have been expressed explicitly by the perpetrators of the attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand) and Halle (Germany) in 2019 and in 2020 in Hanau (Germany).

Anti-feminism has been fitted into the 'Great Replacement' conspiracy theory: feminism is alleged to have been invented to distract women from their 'natural' role as mothers and, consequently, blamed for decreasing birth rates in Western countries, which in turn allows immigrants – whose women supposedly have not been influenced by feminist rhetoric – to become the majority more rapidly.

Such ideas provide a rationalisation for sexual frustration. They serve as a bridge for right-wing extremists to be inspired by the involuntary celibate (incel) movement. This misogynist community of mainly young men meet in online spaces similar to those frequented by white supremacists and blame their inability to find sexual partners on women being influenced by feminism. A 22-year-old man who in May 2014 killed six people in a mass shooting targeting a sorority of his college in Isla Vista (California, USA) before committing suicide has become an emblematic figure for the incel movement⁶⁸. In April 2018, a 25-year-old man, inspired by incel ideology, killed ten people, mainly women, in Toronto (Canada) by ploughing a van into pedestrians⁶⁹. In November 2018, two women were shot dead at a yoga studio in Tallahassee (Florida, USA). The 40-year-old perpetrator, who compared himself to the Californian attacker, pre-planned the attack and had a history of hatred towards women⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ BBC News, Elliot Rodger: *How misogynist killer became "incel hero"*, 26 April 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43892189>

⁶⁹ Wendling, M., 'Toronto van attack: What is an "incel"?', *BBC News*, 24 April 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-43881931>

⁷⁰ Zaveri, M., Jacobs, J. and Mervosh, S., 'Gunman in Yoga Studio Shooting Recorded Misogynistic Videos and Faced Battery Charges', *The New York Times*, 3 November 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/03/us/yoga-studio-shooting-florida.html>

Right-wing extremist propaganda

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The right-wing extremist online discourse uses the internet troll-culture – with its use of sarcasm and innuendo – both to manipulate political opponents and to avoid personal responsibility for hate speech and incitement to violence

Changes in pace and scope of using right-wing extremist symbols have accelerated over recent years, as a result of the emergence of networked online communication

Right-wing-dominated sites provide encouragement, the opportunity to converse with like-minded individuals, to radicalise and provide guidance for terrorist attacks

Right-wing extremists use a mix of online and offline propaganda methods. Offline propaganda manifests in public events and demonstrations, racist graffiti, desecration of religious sites, verbal attacks and other hateful incitement. The right-wing extremist online discourse uses the internet troll-culture – with its use of sarcasm and innuendo – both to manipulate political opponents and to avoid personal responsibility for hate speech and incitement to violence. Hate speech, conspiracy theories and dehumanisation are used to assign traits to groups and individuals, making them 'legitimate' targets of violence. As part of a culture of glorification of terrorists and assailants, pictures and special traits of

perpetrators are integrated into the code used among right-wing extremists⁷¹.

Symbols and codes are also used offline. Right-wing extremists use (commercial) brands and symbols to signal to each other adherence to the movement. For example, some groups claim to have Nordic pagan mythology and use it as an identity marker (group names, coats of arms, tattoos, jackets, etc.). Changes in pace and scope of using right-wing extremist symbols have accelerated over recent years, as a result of the emergence of networked online communication.

Virtual groups might also engage in collecting Nazi paraphernalia in real life. On 26 November 2019, the premises of three suspects were searched in Sassari (Italy). The measure targeted the founder of a neo-Nazi and anti-Jewish movement Ordine Ario Romano ('Roman Arian Order'), active on the Russian-based social media platform *Vkontakte*, as well as two associates. Numerous documents and material, including originals from the Nazi era and a propaganda sticker referring to Generation Identity, were seized.

In addition to offline activities, such as gatherings, marches and concerts, right-wing terrorists and extremists primarily use electronic media to recruit and to build and maintain their community. This makes the online space one of the main drivers of the right-wing threat. Right-wing-dominated sites provide encouragement, the opportunity to converse with like-minded individuals, to radicalise and provide guidance for terrorist attacks.

Right-wing extremist media that promote violence is repeatedly shared online, as is instructional material. Right-wing websites and forums provide safe havens for sharing extremist ideologies which can be used as justification for an individual or a group seeking to conduct a terrorist attack. In the absence of physical constraints such as international borders, individuals are able to access and

⁷¹ Kaati, L., Asplund Cohen, K., Akrami, N., Shrestha, A., Fernquist, J., Pelzer, B., Welander, F. and Isbister, T., 'Digitalt slagfält', Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), 24 October 2019, <https://www.foi.se/report-summary?reportNo=FOI-R--4813--SE>

share violent, extremist media, establish new contacts and radicalise or be further radicalised. The UK assessed that disruptive action against prominent right-wing extremist groups in the UK has likely increased the use of the online space, due to the perception that it is easier to remain anonymous online and that scrutiny or intervention from law enforcement agencies is less likely.

Despite a recent pushback from major social media platforms, right-wing extremists continued to enjoy much greater freedom to act online in 2019 than, for example, jihadists.

At the same time, in spreading their ideologies, right-wing extremist activists are aware of and inspired by the tactics developed by jihadist factions, particularly in terms of online propaganda.

The sharing of propaganda, including 'manifestos' or letters in connection with the execution of right-wing terrorist and extremist attacks, is an effective way for right-wing extremists to get their message to a large audience with only a modest effort. In general, right-wing extremists have a longstanding online presence and occupy 'old' and 'new' online spaces, forming an online eco-system that caters for different functions and reaches a variety of audiences.

Right-wing extremists were early adopters of online environments and 'traditional' online spaces, and websites, such as *Stormfront* and the *Daily Stormer*, and online discussion forums continue to play an important role⁷².

English has become the *lingua franca* of a transnational right-wing extremist community. The Halle attacker, for example, used English to address an imaginary audience during the live-streaming of the attack. Websites of Swedish neo-Nazi organisations, in particular the *Nordfront* website of the Nordiska motståndsrörelsen (NMR, 'Nordic Resistance Movement') and the website of Nordisk Stycka (NS, 'Nordic Strength'), also contain English sections.

Other websites target specific language groups. Hungary reported that right-wing webpages in Hungarian language, after being banned, quickly reopened on foreign, mainly Russian servers. France observed that websites, like that of the French-language white supremacist movement *Suaveles*, greatly facilitate the dissemination of terrorist 'manifestos'. Like other right-wing extremist sites, *Suaveles* pretends to be a news aggregator, but by selecting one-sided news, mixing reliable with unreliable sources and providing partisan comment, it attempts to steer its users towards extremist views.

In addition, *Suaveles*, created in 2016, provides a safe haven for white supremacists, whose messages have been exposed to deletion on major platforms like *Facebook* and *YouTube* following the Christchurch attacks. From the website, the movement reaches out to social media, for example by creating secondary accounts on *Facebook* or channels on *Telegram* with the aim of engaging audiences beyond the nationalist fringe⁷³.

With regard to right-wing extremist messaging, nevertheless, major social media platforms, including *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *YouTube*, remain important. Following the Christchurch attacks, *Facebook* announced a crackdown on 'white supremacy'⁷⁴. *Twitter* said that it 'purged' its platform in December 2017. According to a 2019 study, *YouTube*'s recommendation system continued to prioritise extreme right-wing material after users interacted with similar content⁷⁵. Such automatised mechanisms carry the risk of exposing individuals potentially susceptible to right-wing narratives to more extreme messages. Italy observed the use of Russian-based *Vkontakte* spreading especially among radical young people, as it allows spreading xenophobic and extremist ideas in anonymity, as observed in the abovementioned case of Ordine Ario Romano ('Roman Arian Order').

In addition to the major platforms, several fringe platforms are used by right-wing extremists. These are either dedicated right-wing extremist platforms (*Gab*, *Voat*, *8Chan*) or have been colonised by right-wing extremists (*Reddit*, *4Chan*). *Gab* has been identified by many as a safe haven for extreme right-wing movements, including Feuerkrieg Division, which seem to drive extremist content

⁷² Conway, M., Scrivens, R. and Macnair, L., 'Right-Wing Extremists' Persistent Online Presence: History and Contemporary Trends', *ICCT Policy Brief*, 25 November 2019, <https://icct.nl/publication/right-wing-extremists-persistent-online-presence-history-and-contemporary-trends>

⁷³ Sénécat, A., 'La galaxie Suaveles, vitrine d'un racisme décomplexé', *Le Monde*, 11 September 2019, https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2019/09/11/la-galaxie-suaveles-vitrine-d-un-racisme-decomplexe_5509154_4355770.html

⁷⁴ Conway, M., Scrivens, R. and Macnair, L., 'Right-Wing Extremists' Persistent Online Presence: History and Contemporary Trends', *ICCT Policy Brief*, 25 November 2019, <https://icct.nl/publication/right-wing-extremists-persistent-online-presence-history-and-contemporary-trends>

⁷⁵ Reed, A., Whittaker, J., Votta, F. and Looney, S., 'Radical Filter Bubbles: Social Media Personalisation Algorithms and Extremist Content', *The Global Research Network on Terrorism and Technology, Terrorism*, 26 July 2019, <https://rusi.org/publication/other-publications/radical-filter-bubbles-social-media-personalisation-algorithms-and>

on the platform⁷⁶.

8Chan, in particular, was used in 2019 by several attackers to post their 'manifestos', in which they explained their actions and called on like-minded people to perpetrate attacks. This applied to the 15 March attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand), the 27 April attack in Poway (California, USA) and the 3 August attack in El Paso (Texas, USA). In the aftermath of the El Paso attack, *8Chan* went offline, after Cloudflare terminated its protective services for the site. After some time offline, *8Chan* tried to re-establish itself under the name of *8Kun*, but was removed by the domain registrar within days⁷⁷. The 10 August Bærum (Norway) attacker posted an attack declaration on *Endchan*, another derivative *Chan* board. While derivatives of *Chan* reportedly remained online in late 2019, albeit without being indexed by search engines, substantial numbers of users reportedly migrated to other peer-to-peer encrypted platforms, such as *Telegram* or *Discord*⁷⁸.

Closed communication spaces, such as those offered by *WhatsApp*, played a major role in the formation of right-wing terrorist cells dismantled in 2019. In addition, Switzerland reported that it foiled one attack in May 2019, when a minor was arrested on suspicion of planning to kill Muslims and carry out attacks on mosques in Switzerland. The suspect had communicated with foreign right-wing extremists on *Instagram* (and probably on other social networks).

Access to closed groups is by personal invitation, recommendation of other members or proof of loyalty. In addition to attack planning, closed spaces are used for coordination and the preparation of campaigns. According to media reporting, members of the right-wing extremist networks design and workshop memes to spread as propaganda, with the aim to infiltrate popular culture with a neo-Nazi agenda⁷⁹. One Belgian far-right organisation is suspected of having raised a 'troll army' to support its propaganda by making coordinated hateful and threatening comments following an online publication or targeting a *Facebook* page. These trolls also practice 'doxxing', i.e. the accumulation of open-source or hacked information about their opponents for the purpose of intimidation. In addition, they support their own publications by generating large

flows of hits through fake profiles, bots, or by using the services offered by click farms.

With regard to the fight against terrorist content online, the 15 March 2019 Christchurch attacks marked a defining point: the first attack was livestreamed and its recording, alongside the attacker's 'manifesto', spread rapidly online. The exceptional virality, velocity and volume of the materials' online diffusion points to a savvy use of internet technologies and communication, not only by the attacker, but by multiple communities of internet users, beyond right-wing extremist sympathisers. The interplay of online communities who share the same internet slang and memes contributed to the widespread dissemination of the content and its digital endurance. Internet users have adopted different techniques to circumvent disruption efforts by online service providers. In particular, edited versions of the Christchurch video appeared to fly under the radar of detection measures enforced by online service providers.

⁷⁶ Reed, A., Whittaker, J., Votta, F. and Looney, S., 'Radical Filter Bubbles: Social Media Personalisation Algorithms and Extremist Content', *The Global Research Network on Terrorism and Technology, Terrorism*, 26 July 2019, <https://rusi.org/publication/other-publications/radical-filter-bubbles-social-media-personalisation-algorithms-and>

⁷⁷ Macklin, G., 'The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror', *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 12, Issue 11, December 2019, pp. 1-9, <https://ctc.usma.edu/el-paso-terrorist-attack-chain-reaction-global-right-wing-terror/>

⁷⁸ Macklin, G., 'The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror', *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 12, Issue 11, December 2019, pp. 1-9, <https://ctc.usma.edu/el-paso-terrorist-attack-chain-reaction-global-right-wing-terror/>

⁷⁹ Makuch, B. and Lamoureux, M., 'Neo-Nazis Are Organizing Secretive Paramilitary Training Across America', *VICE News*, 20 November 2018, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/a3mexp/neo-nazis-are-organizing-secretive-paramilitary-training-across-america

Narratives of hate and incitement to violence

Different far right ideological strands encourage hatred and have the potential to inspire lone actor attacks. While mainly expressed peacefully, these ideologies continue to pose a significant risk of radicalisation. Core ideological elements were referenced by the perpetrators of attacks including those on 22 July 2011 in Utøya and Oslo (Norway), on 15 March 2019 in Christchurch (New Zealand) and on 9 October 2019 in Halle (Germany).

Beyond white supremacism and neo-Nazism, the perceived mass immigration and alleged population change unite radical and extremist right-wing movements. Cultural nationalists claim that Western culture must be protected against Muslim immigration and 'Islamisation'. White or ethnic nationalists, such as the Identitarian Movement or Generation Identity, advocate segregation along ethnic lines and claim that 'white' Westerners have the right to defend 'their' nations from foreign peoples and cultures⁸⁰.

These currents are sometimes referred to as the 'New Right' movement, the members of which present themselves as intellectuals. Key themes of these right-wing activists are anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism, rejection of Islam and the perceived impotence of the political establishment. Social issues are being used as propaganda tools, for example drawing the contrast between the housing of migrants and the plight of the homeless. By agitating against immigration in polarising and inflammatory ways, the radical right-wing spectrum attempts to gain supporters from the political centre and to motivate them for public protest rallies. Concurrently, violent right-wing extremist groups capitalise on the polarisation and xenophobia driven by the 'New Right', so much so that the opportunities to recruit new supporters generate competition and tensions within and between right-wing extremist circles.

The 'New Right' includes the Identitarian Movement operating throughout Europe. In Austria, for example, the Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs (IBÖ, 'Identitarian Movement of Austria') has



Three main strands of right-wing ideology

Cultural nationalism: the belief that 'Western culture' is under threat from mass migration into Europe and from the lack of integration by certain ethnic and cultural groups. Cultural nationalism tends to focus on the rejection of cultural practices such as the wearing of the full-face veil (burqa or niqab) or the perceived attempts to impose Islamic law in Western countries.

White or ethnic nationalism: the belief that mass migration from the 'non-white' world and an alleged demographic change pose an existential threat to the 'white race' and 'Western culture'. White nationalism advocates the creation of a 'white' homeland, either through the partition of already existing countries or by the (if necessary forced) repatriation of ethnic minorities. Much of this rhetoric is present in the identitarian movement.

White supremacism: the belief that the 'white race' has certain inalienable physical and mental characteristics that makes it superior to other races.

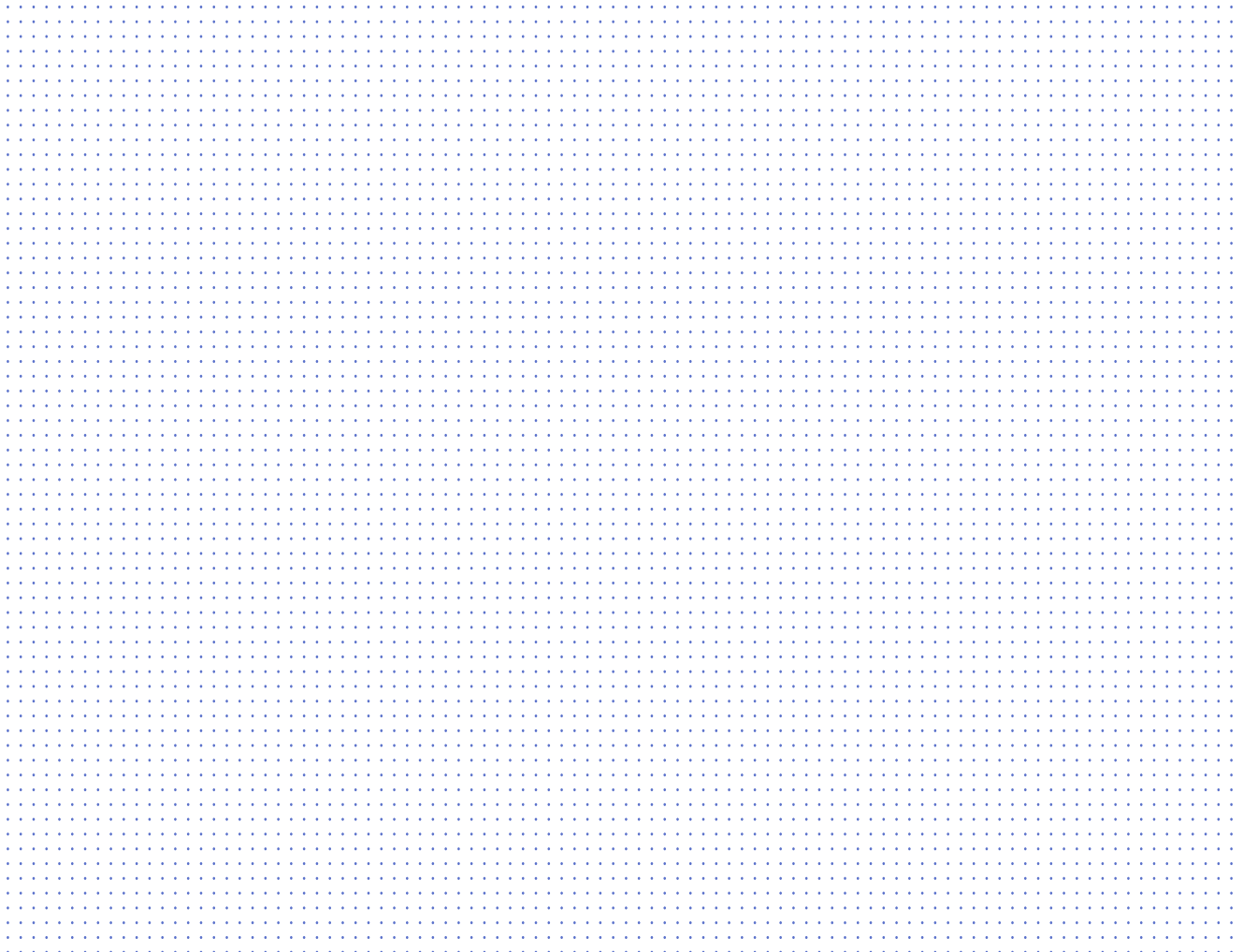
⁸⁰ Bjørge, T. and Aasland Ravndal, J., 'Extreme-right violence and terrorism: concepts, patterns, and responses', *ICCT Policy Brief*, 23 September 2019, <https://icct.nl/publication/extreme-right-violence-and-terrorism-concepts-patterns-and-responses>

established itself as the most active right-wing extremist group. Together with its sister organisations in Europe, IBÖ primarily promotes resistance to a perceived 'Islamisation' of the Western world. In Portugal, one of the most active identitarian groups is Escudo Identitário ('Identitarian Shield'). Portugal assessed that activities of neo-Nazi groups are closely connected to groups and organisations of the European Identitarian Movement.

Following a series of jihadist attacks in recent years, France, for example, witnessed the emergence of a neo-patriotic fringe, which displays a publicly proclaimed hatred of Islam and depicts the French political class as being responsible for the suffering of a French society supposedly in decline. Using a vocabulary of resistance and considering itself a remedy to the impotence of the

state, the movement opposes – in a binary and dualist vision of France – 'native' French people to a population of North African descent and propagates the risk of a Muslim invasion and the 'Grand Replacement' conspiracy theory.

In Germany, the Reichsbürger/Selbstverwalter ('Reich Citizens/Self-Governing Citizens') movement purports that the Federal Republic of Germany has no legal existence and, therefore, its members legally remain citizens of the German Reich. Reportedly, individuals linked to the movement are being influenced by right-wing extremist ideology.



Situation outside the EU

Right-wing extremists maintain international links and mutual exchange and are influenced by key treatises and emblematic personalities worldwide. In recent years, a wave of right-wing attacks – the perpetrators of which have taken inspiration from each other – has shown the impact of networked communication via online platforms. This has created a global community adhering to and reinforcing conspiracy theories and disseminating calls to violence. An important reference point for this community is the attacks in Oslo and Utøya in Norway in 2011⁸¹.

Attacks feature heavily as sources of propaganda internationally. Several of the attacks in 2019 in Europe and beyond can be viewed as part of this series and underline the acuteness of the threat. Similar to jihadist attacks in 2015 and 2016, previous attacks and increasing numbers of incidents constitute a rapidly growing corpus of precedents that risks motivating potential attackers and lowering the threshold to act out violence. The glorification and gamification of violent incidents in the digital milieu likely incite further violence⁸². Whereas IS-inspired perpetrators were recognised as ‘caliphate soldiers’, right-wing lone actor terrorists hope for immortalisation by the global right-wing extremist community.

On 15 March 2019, a 28-year-old Australian national attacked two mosques in Christchurch (New Zealand) during Friday prayers, using several firearms including assault rifles. The attacks killed 51 people and injured dozens. The perpetrator broadcast one of the attacks through a 17-minute live-stream on *Facebook* from an action camera that he was wearing. In the video, the attacker commented on the course of the attack, as if speaking to an audience, and displayed his weapons, which were inscribed with names of historical figures and battles in the fight by European powers against the Ottoman Empire. The video was accompanied by a Serbian war song from the Yugoslav war.

Shortly before the attack, the individual posted a ‘manifesto’ entitled ‘The Great Replacement’ and a link

to the video live-stream on the *8Chan* online message board. In the ‘manifesto’, he claimed that the attacks were revenge for terrorist attacks in Europe and the supposed genocide of ‘white Europeans’. He pointed out that he used the internet to receive, research and develop his beliefs and that he played online games to train himself to be a killer. He named the perpetrator of the 2011 Norway attacks as his main inspiration.

Between 2015 and 2018, the Christchurch perpetrator visited Europe, including a large number of EU Member States, on four separate journeys. During these visits, his main destinations were on the Iberian Peninsula and the Balkan region – areas that historically were the scene of military confrontation between Muslim and Christian powers. Portugal confirmed his passage through various Portuguese cities, including Tomar, the Portuguese headquarters of the Knights Templar, an organisation created in France in the 12th century CE to fight the Muslim armies in the Middle East. He was apparently travelling alone and did not contact local members or activists belonging to right-wing groups or organisations in Portugal.

According to media reports, in 2017 and 2018, the Christchurch attacker donated money to several branches of the Identitarian Movement in Europe. In September 2017, he allegedly provided multiple donations to the French *Génération Identitaire* and the Austrian IBÖ⁸³. He reportedly also exchanged several emails with the IBÖ leader.

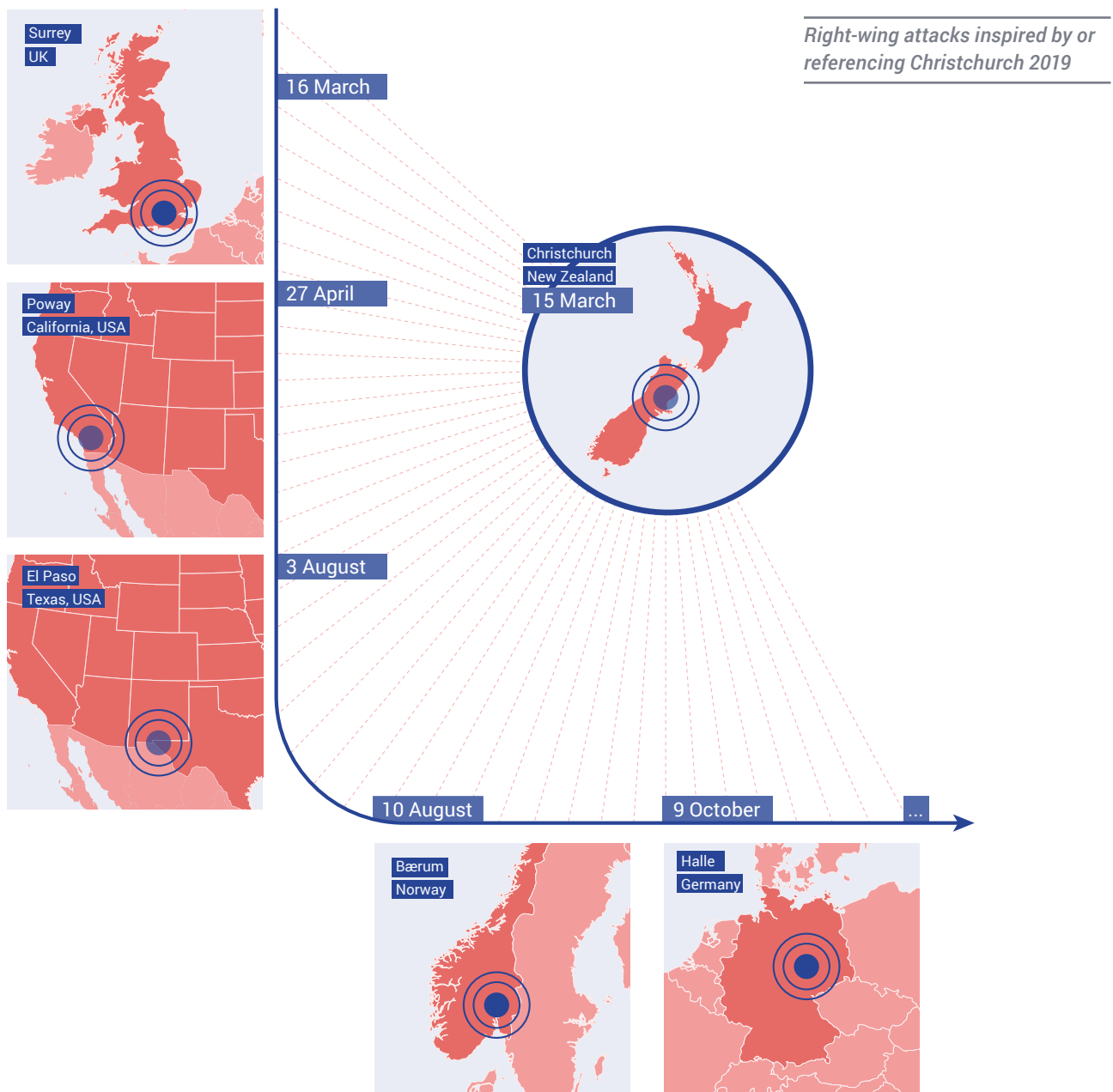
On 27 April 2019, a 19-year-old male attacked a synagogue in Poway (California, USA) during Passover, killing one woman and injuring three additional people. The attacker fled but later gave himself up to police. Prior to the attack, the perpetrator posted racist, including anti-Jewish, rhetoric on *8Chan*. The document praised the Christchurch attacks and the attack on a synagogue in Pittsburgh on 27 October 2018 which had killed 11 people. The author also claimed responsibility for an arson attack on a mosque in nearby Escondido on 24 March 2019. Graffiti found at the site of the arson referenced the Christchurch attack⁸⁴.

⁸¹ Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)*, 2012, p. 9.

⁸² Macklin, G., ‘The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror’, *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 12, Issue 11, December 2019, pp. 1-9, <https://ctc.usma.edu/el-paso-terrorist-attack-chain-reaction-global-right-wing-terror/>

⁸³ Zeit Online, *Attentäter spendete auch Geld an französische Identitäre*, 3 April 2019, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2019-04/christchurch-attentaeter-deutschland-rechtsextremismus-generation-identitaire>; Schmid, F., ‘Terrorist von Christchurch überwies vier Spenden an identitäre Organisationen in Europa’, *Der Standard*, 3 April 2019, <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000100745249/terrorist-von-christchurch-setzte-vier-spenden-an-identitaere-organisationen-in>; Le Parisien, *Attentat de Christchurch: Génération identitaire affirme avoir reçu deux dons du tueur*, 4 April 2019, <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/attentat-de-christchurch-generation-identitaire-affirme-avoir-recu-deux-dons-du-tueur-04-04-2019-8046612.php>

⁸⁴ Davis, C., Laughland, O. and Blackall, M., ‘US synagogue shooting victim who ‘took bullet for all of us’ hailed a hero’, *The Guardian*, 28 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/apr/27/san-diego-police-shooting-synagogue-poway-reports>; McGowan, M., ‘San Diego shooting suspect posted ‘open letter’ online’, *The Guardian*, 28 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/apr/28/john-earnest-san-diego-shooting-suspect-posted-open-letter-online>



In addition, the document contained a link to a live video stream and to a *Facebook* page, which seemed to indicate the perpetrator's intention to broadcast the shooting using a similar method to the Christchurch attack.

On 3 August 2019, a 21-year-old right-wing extremist reportedly attacked a supermarket in El Paso (Texas, USA) using an assault rifle, killing 22 people. Prior to the attack, the perpetrator reportedly posted online that he was prepared to die fighting police or the 'invaders' (in reference to people of Hispanic origin). After the shooting, he surrendered to police. During interviews, he stated that he deliberately targeted 'Mexicans'. Prior to the attack, the perpetrator allegedly posted a 'manifesto' on *8Chan*, asking others to disseminate it. The author stated in his post that

he targeted the Hispanic community after reading the 'manifesto' of the Christchurch attacker⁸⁵.

On 10 August 2019, a 21-year-old male lone actor tried to attack the al-Noor Islamic Centre in Bærum near Oslo (Norway) using hunting firearms, after killing his Chinese-born step sister at the family home. After entering the Islamic Centre by force, the perpetrator was stopped by people inside before being arrested by police. One person suffered minor injuries during the fight with the perpetrator, but no one was shot. Before the attack, the perpetrator posted an attack declaration on the *Endchan* online forum, where he also declared that he was inspired by the Christchurch attacker.

⁸⁵ Macklin, G., 'The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror', *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 12, Issue 11, December 2019, pp. 1-9, <https://ctc.usma.edu/el-paso-terrorist-attack-chain-reaction-global-right-wing-terror/>

SINGLE-ISSUE
TERRORISM



EU Member States reported three foiled single-issue terrorist attacks in 2019 (two in Czechia, one in the UK).

i

Single-issue terrorism defined

Single-issue extremist and terrorist groups use criminal means to change a specific policy or practice, as opposed to replacing the entire political, social and economic system in a society. The groups within this category are concerned, for example, with animal rights, environmental protection or anti-abortion campaigns. Examples of groups in this category are the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF).

KEY FINDINGS

- › EU Member States thwarted three plots classified single-issue terrorism in 2019.
- › Single-issue activists continued to pose a limited threat to public order. Most actions were non-violent.

Single-issue activists continued to pose a limited threat to public order, and most of their actions were non-violent. Their activities included largely peaceful protests, blockades, demonstrations, rallies and camps, in which they advocated for actions against climate change and the protection of animal rights. EU Member States reported a limited number of vandalism cases targeting businesses related to the meat and fur industries.

ANNEXES

annex 1

Amendments to national legislation on terrorism in 2019

Cyprus

The House of Representatives voted on the 2019 Law on the Fight against Terrorism and Protection of Victims (Law 75(I)/2019). This law transposes Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, into Cypriot national law.

Estonia

Amendments made to the Estonian Penal Code in 2018 entered into force in 2019. The wording of paragraph 2372 was amended to include the receiving of terrorism training. Paragraph 2375 on travel for terrorist purposes was added to the Penal Code. This provision criminalises the entry into the Republic of Estonia or travel to another country for the purposes of committing a terrorist offence, or for the purposes of organising or receiving training provided for in paragraph 2372. Such travel is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. For this criminal offence, the court may impose extended confiscation of assets or property acquired by the criminal offence.

Another provision, paragraph 2376, was also included, which criminalises the organisation, funding or knowing support in another manner of a criminal offence provided for in paragraph 2375. It prohibits the making available or accumulation of funds while knowing that these may be used in full or in part to commit a criminal offence provided for in paragraph 2375. These offences are punishable by up to three years' imprisonment. The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment. For these criminal offences, the court may impose extended confiscation of assets or property acquired through the criminal offence.

Greece

In 2019 Articles 187A, 187B and 187Γ of the Greek Penal Code, covering terrorism offences, were amended by virtue of Article 1 of the Greek Law 4619/2019 and Article 3 of the Greek Law 4637/2019, in accordance with the Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the EU. The enumeration of the criminal

acts, that qualified as terrorist acts, in the previous provisions, was replaced by a consolidated description of crimes causing abstract danger and undermining the public security. Also, the amendment criminalises explicitly certain behaviours related to terrorism, such as instigation, training, intimidation of officials and other.

Sweden

In January 2020, the Swedish Parliament introduced a law on criminal liability of a person who enters into certain forms of collaboration with a terrorist organisation, if the purpose is to promote, strengthen or support the terrorist organisation (prop. 2019/20:36, bet. 2019/20:JuU13, rskr. 2019/20:145). The forms of collaboration according in the law are:

- › the handling of weapons, ammunition, flammable or explosive goods or means of transportation in support of a terrorist organisation,
- › the lending of premises or land to a terrorist organisation, or
- › the rendering of other similar support to a terrorist organisation.

The punishment for these crimes is imprisonment for a maximum of two years or, in case the crime is aggravated, imprisonment of a minimum of six months and a maximum of six years. Also the Parliament decided that the attempt to commit collaboration with a terrorist organisation is criminalised. It was further decided that the act of publicly soliciting and recruiting to collaborate with a terrorist organisation is criminalised, as well as travelling abroad for the purpose of collaboration with a terrorist organisation and the financing of collaboration with a terrorist organisation. In addition, the Parliament decided to increase the punishment for unlawful recruitment and to modernise that provision. The law entered into force on 1 March 2020.

In November 2019, a proposal was presented to the Swedish Minister of Justice and Migration on a new single act, the Terrorist Offences Act, that regulates criminal responsibility for terrorist offences, collaboration with a terrorist organisation (above), financing of terrorism, public provocation to commit a terrorist act, recruitment for terrorism, training for terrorism and travel for the purpose

of terrorism.

The proposal includes inter alia the following novelties:

- › The terrorist offence should include acts aimed at a section of the population, such as an ethnic minority, people of foreign origin or LGBTQ persons.
- › All Swedish crimes should be considered terrorist crimes if they are committed with the intent of terrorism and can seriously harm a country (today only some crimes are listed).
- › The criminal responsibility for terrorism training and public provocation for terrorist acts are made more comprehensive.
- › Penalties should be more severe for almost all crimes that are part of the legislation and a general penalization for crimes committed to promote terrorism is introduced.

It is proposed that the legislative amendments enter into force on 1 July 2021.

annex 2

Completed, failed and foiled attacks in 2019 per EU Member State and per affiliation

This annex contains statistical information on terrorist attacks in 2019 in the EU as reported to Europol by EU Member States.

Member State	Jihadist terrorism	Right-wing terrorism	Left-wing and anarchist terrorism	Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism	Single-issue terrorism	Not specified terrorism-related attacks	Total
Belgium	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bulgaria	1						1
Czechia	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Denmark	2						2
France	7	-	-	-	-	-	7
Germany	3						3
Greece	-	-	2	-	-	2	4
Italy	2		22			4	28
Lithuania	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Netherlands	2						2
Poland	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Spain			2	1			3
UK	3	4	-	56	1	-	64
Total	21	6	26	57	3	6	119

- › Of 21 jihadist attacks, 14 were foiled: one in Belgium, one in Bulgaria, two in Denmark, four in France (out of seven), three in Germany, one in the Netherlands (out of two) and two in the UK (out of three).
- › Four out of six right-wing terrorist attacks were foiled: one in Poland and three in the UK (out of four).
- › Of 26 left-wing and anarchist terrorist attacks, 25 were completed and one failed.
- › 56 attacks reported by the UK were security-related incidents in Northern Ireland, including four attacks on national security targets and one attack on a national security target outside Northern Ireland.
- › Two single-issue attacks were foiled in the Czechia and one in the UK.

annex 3

Arrests in 2019 per EU Member State and per affiliation

This annex contains statistical information on terrorist arrests in 2019 in the EU as reported to Europol by EU Member States.

Member State	Jihadist terrorism	Right-wing terrorism	Left-wing and anarchist terrorism	Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism	Single-issue terrorism	Not specified terrorism-related arrests	Total
Austria	43	-	1	1	-	-	45
Belgium	11			2		86	99
Bulgaria	11	-	-	-	-	-	11
Czechia					2	2	4
Denmark	21	-	-	-	-	-	21
France	202	7		13		2	224
Germany	32	-	-	3	-	-	35
Greece	3		4				7
Hungary	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ireland	5						5
Italy	18	7	98	3	-	6	132
Latvia		1					1
Lithuania	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Netherlands	27	2		1		7	37
Poland	2	2	-	-	-	-	4
Portugal	1						1
Romania	3	-	-	-	-	1	4
Spain	56	1	8	25		1	91
UK	-	-	-	-	-	281	281
Total	436	21	111	48	2	386	1 004

- › The data on 386 terrorist arrests was not broken down by type of terrorism, therefore represented in the category 'Not specified'.
- › The figure of 281 terrorism-related arrests reported by the UK does not include 147 additional arrests made in Northern Ireland.

annex 4

Convictions and penalties

This annex contains statistical information on the concluded court proceedings for terrorist offences in 2019, as reported to Eurojust. It highlights some key figures and, where relevant, compares those with the figures for previous years.

table / Number of convictions and acquittals for terrorist offences per EU Member State in 2017, 2018¹ and 2019², as reported to Eurojust.

Member State	2017	2018	2019
Austria	18	36	40
Belgium	85	80	91
Bulgaria	-	1	-
Czechia	8	7	
Denmark	4	6	4
Estonia	2		
Finland	2	1	-
France	122	141	105
Germany	34	57	53
Greece	19	33	45
Hungary	-	3	6
Italy	23	15	17
Lithuania	2	10	-
Netherlands	46	37	56
Poland	4	-	-
Portugal	1		1
Slovenia	-	1	-
Spain	71	120	97
Sweden	3	1	5
UK	125	115	
Total	569	664	520

¹ The data for the previous years corresponds to the data reported in the respective TE-SAT reports.

² Eurojust received contributions containing information on terrorism-related court decisions in 2019 from the following EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. In case a verdict pronounced in 2019 was appealed and the appeal was concluded before the end of the year, Eurojust reported only on the latest/final verdict.

- › Eurojust was informed of concluded court proceedings for terrorist offences in 2019 that took place in 12 EU Member States and resulted in 520 convictions and acquittals.
- › In 2019 the greatest number of convictions and acquittals was reported to Eurojust by France (105), Spain (97) and Belgium (91).

table / Number of convictions and acquittals in 2019 per EU Member State and per type of terrorism, as reported to Eurojust.

Member State	Jihadist	Separatist	Left wing	Right wing	Not specified	Total
Austria	35	5	-	-	-	40
Belgium	89	2				91
Denmark	4	-	-	-	-	4
France	87	18				105
Germany	42	8	2	1	-	53
Greece			45			45
Hungary	-	2	-	-	4	6
Italy	15	2				17
Netherlands	49	-	-	4	3	56
Portugal	1					1
Spain	35	61	1	-	-	97
Sweden	5					5
Total	362	98	48	5	7	520

- › Similar to the past few years, the majority (362) of convictions and acquittals in the EU Member States concerned jihadist terrorism. Courts in Belgium and France pronounced the greatest number of convictions and acquittals concerning jihadist terrorism in 2019 (89 and 87 respectively), followed by the Netherlands (49) and Germany (42). Convictions and acquittals for terrorist offences in 2019 in Denmark, Portugal and Sweden concerned jihadist terrorism only.
- › Convictions and acquittals for separatist terrorism offences were the second biggest group rendered in 2019 (98). The majority of those convictions and acquittals were pronounced in Spain (61). Also courts in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary and Italy heard cases of alleged offences linked to separatist terrorist organisations.
- › In 2019 left-wing terrorism cases were brought before courts in Germany, Greece and Spain. The greatest number of convictions and acquittals for left-wing terrorism offences were handed down in Greece (45).
- › In the Netherlands, several convictions were pronounced in relation to right-wing terrorism and in Germany, one.
- › In 2019 the highest average prison sentence (19 years) was handed down with convictions for left-wing terrorism offences, confirming an upward trend from the past few years (10 years in 2017 and 16 years in 2018). The average prison term for jihadist terrorism offences in 2019 remained the same as in 2017 and 2018 (five years). Convictions for separatist terrorism offences were rendered with an average prison term of four years, equal to 2017 and less than in 2018 (eight years), while those for right-wing terrorism offences with a prison term of three years (compared to four years in 2017 and six years in 2018).

table / Number of convictions and acquittals per EU Member State in 2019, as reported to Eurojust.

Member State	Convictions	Acquittals	Total	Acquittals In %
Austria	29	11	40	28
Belgium	85	6	91	7
Denmark	4	-	4	0
France	105		105	0
Germany	50	3	53	6
Greece	31	14	45	31
Hungary	6	-	6	0
Italy	12	5	17	29
Netherlands	43	13	56	23
Portugal	1		1	0
Spain	79	18	97	19
Sweden	4	1	5	20
Total	449	71	520	14%

- All concluded terrorism cases reported by Denmark, France, Hungary and Portugal resulted in convictions. Also Belgium and Germany had mostly successful prosecutions that ended in convictions in the vast majority of cases⁸⁶.
- The prosecutions for right-wing terrorist offences in 2019 were the most successful and resulted in convictions only, similar to 2017 and 2018. The conviction rate in the concluded court proceedings for

jihadist terrorism offences remained very high (87 %, slightly lower than 89 % in 2017 and 2018) and that for separatist offences increased from 71 % in 2018 to 90 % in 2019. In 71 % of the cases, prosecutions for left-wing terrorism offences resulted in convictions, which is similar to 2017 (72 %) and 2018 (70 %).

⁸⁶ Eurojust considers it one verdict if an individual is convicted of more than one terrorist offence within the same proceeding, or convicted of a terrorist offence and acquitted of another offence. If an individual is acquitted of a terrorist offence and convicted of another offence, the verdict is included in the overview as acquittal of terrorism.



annex 5

Europol counter terrorism activities

First-line investigative support: the European Counter Terrorism Centre

The European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) was established in early 2016 introducing policy and organisational coherence to Europol's support to the EU Member States' fight against terrorism. To ensure an effective response to the constantly changing developments in terrorism, the ECTC builds on the already existing tools and counter terrorism networks of Europol, including also a number of new features. These tools aim to enhance the counter terrorism capabilities and facilitate information exchange among counter terrorism authorities, bringing cross-border cooperation in this field to a new level.

The principal task of the ECTC is to provide tailor-made operational support upon EU Member States' request for ongoing counter terrorism investigations, based on four pillars:

- › Facilitation of information exchange;
- › Effective operational support, coordination and expertise for EU Member States' investigations;
- › Proactive mitigation of the use of social media for radicalisation purposes and support to operational analysis in online investigations;
- › Central strategic support capability.

ECTC as an information hub for counter terrorism, with unique information and intelligence sharing capabilities for law enforcement authorities in EU Member States and beyond

The main task of the ECTC is to facilitate counter terrorism cooperation and information exchange among law enforcement authorities from all EU Member States as well as third parties.

This information exchange is facilitated via Europol's **Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA)**. This system ensures the secure transmission of information, including counter terrorism data, between EU Member States, Europol and third parties having concluded an operational agreement with Europol. Within SIENA, Europol has created a dedicated area, which can be accessed and used by counter terrorism authorities to directly exchange information amongst them or with Europol/ECTC.

In 2019, 7 % of the total number of exchanged messages in SIENA concerned terrorism, making this, as in previous years, one of the most frequently used crime areas in the system.

The Europol Information System (EIS) is a database via which EU Member States directly share and retrieve information connected with serious and organised crime and terrorism, concerning entities including suspects,

means of communication, financial accounts and firearms. The EIS offers rapid first-line investigative support, as this reference system allows users from EU Member States to quickly identify whether or not information relevant to their investigations is available in other EU Member States or non-EU countries or organisations. In case of a positive hit, more information may then be requested through the contributor's Europol National Unit.

The EIS has developed into a repository for sharing information on counter terrorism. In 2019, over 50 % of all EIS objects were related to terrorism (close to 750 000).

Since its establishment, the ECTC has created new avenues to receive information for the benefit of EU Member States through internet referral activities and innovative projects such as the **Shaping Internet Research Investigations Unified System (SIRIUS)**, a closed and secured environment used to share knowledge on internet investigation techniques. SIRIUS facilitates the analysis of the online behaviour of terrorists and accommodates EU Member States' access to key digital information. By the end of 2019, the SIRIUS platform, built on Europol's Platform for Experts (EPE), a non-operational collaborative platform for practitioners, hosted over 3 900 users from 42 countries, including all EU Member States.

Effective operational support, coordination and expertise for EU Member States' investigations, by developing and deploying a comprehensive portfolio of support services

The ECTC has developed and offers custom-made support to EU Member States' investigations with a diverse set of services and products that range from cross-checking of data to full-scale operational support.

a) On-the-spot support – deployment of operational teams

In the aftermath of a terrorist incident, a dedicated multidisciplinary team of counter terrorism experts, fully equipped for remote support, can be deployed near the crime scene upon request of the affected EU Member State to support its investigations. The team is able to conduct criminal analysis and on-the-spot technical analysis, which might include digital forensics, financial intelligence, CBRN and explosives expertise, open-source intelligence, expertise on propaganda, among other support services.

ECTC experts can also be deployed during action days or in the course of major international events.

b) Operational Analytical Support

The ECTC provides in-depth operational analytical support to the EU Member States and non-EU partners based on the contributed counter terrorism information. This is done by dedicated teams of counter terrorism specialists and analysts.

All information received by the ECTC is stored, processed and analysed in the Analysis Working File on counter terrorism (AWF CT). The AWF CT provides the framework for operational analytical support to the EU Member States and non-EU partners and consists of Analysis Projects (AP), each dedicated to a specific terrorism phenomenon.

The ECTC offers a variety of analytical products designed to serve EU Member States' operational needs. The most common products are cross-match and operational analysis reports and the facial recognition capability. In particular, a cross-match report is a rapid check of the information provided against the various counter terrorism and organised crime databases at Europol. The cross-checking of information provides a quick overview of whether there are connections or international links between investigations at an EU scale and beyond.

Operational analysis reports are in-depth analyses based on various sources of information, including case data, Europol counter terrorism and organised crime databases and open source information. Specific data integration techniques can be used, such as link analysis, social network analysis, geospatial analysis and timeline analysis. It provides investigators with hypotheses and presumptions concerning specific elements of the investigation or the case.

Europol's **facial recognition capability (FACE)** builds on artificial intelligence technology, allowing investigators to discover potential matches for faces of suspects with pictures stored in Europol's databases.

c) Detection of terrorism financing

The ECTC uses a number of tools to help detect the financing of terrorism, including the **Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP)**. The TFTP helps to prevent and counter terrorism financing since 2010, based on the Agreement between the European Union and the United States of America on the Processing and Transfer of Financial Messaging Data from the EU to the US.

The TFTP has proven to be a valuable tool in terrorism-

related investigations: it enhances the ability to map out terrorist networks, often filling in missing links in an investigative chain; tracks terrorist money flows, allowing authorities to identify and locate operatives and their financiers; and assists in the broader efforts to uncover terrorist cells.

d) Support EU Member States' online investigations

The ECTC supports EU Member States' online investigations and analysis of internet-based communications of suspects. This service helps to identify the online footprint of suspects and analyse their internet-based communication records. The analysis can trigger new leads based on the intelligence retrieved via open sources or new links discovered through social network analysis.

Furthermore, via SIRIUS, ECTC caters for investigators' needs by helping them to cope with the complexity and the volume of the information in a rapidly changing online environment.

e) Provide CBRN-E expertise

Europol is a key partner in the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) and explosives field, working together with national competent authorities from EU Member States and non-EU countries and liaising, assisting and jointly promoting activities and training with the European Commission and other relevant international organisations in these areas of expertise. The new Action Plan issued in October 2017 by the European Commission to enhance preparedness against CBRN security risks, further strengthens Europol's role as a key player in CBRN security.

The ECTC CBRN-E team, upon request or by its own initiative, can quickly identify technical similarities of devices and the signature of the bomb maker (post-blast investigation) and reveal incidents, cases, new tactics and techniques through the European Bomb Data System (EBDS) and the European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network (EEODN), both hosted on Europol's EPE.

The bomb-making process, potential recipes for the illicit use of explosives precursors, as well as potential new threats using CBRN materials are monitored daily and cross-checked by ECTC experts. Information is shared with experts and relevant units within the EU Member States and non-EU countries.

Europol assessments, strategic reports and expertise are also timely in detecting security gaps and feeding the

EU Policy Cycle through effective cooperation with the European Commission.

f) The Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team

The Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team (CT JLT) was established by the EU Member States to improve the speed and quality of counter terrorism cooperation and is accommodated by the ECTC. It functions as a platform for the swift exchange of operational information and actionable intelligence among dedicated counter terrorism experts and analysts from the EU Member States, associated non-EU countries and the ECTC.

The CT JLT provides a trusted environment, in which information can be shared swiftly, securely, efficiently and effectively. The CT JLT furthermore analyses the wider European and international dimensions of the terrorist threat, in particular by identifying new lines of investigation, including, but not limited to, flows of terrorist financing and illegal firearms.

g) Deployment of guest officers at migration hotspots

Europol provides support to Italy, Greece and Cyprus by deploying short-term seconded national experts ('guest officers') at hotspots on the eastern Aegean islands, in southern Italy and in Cyprus.

The deployment of guest officers in hotspots contributes to supporting the detection of returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) or infiltration on the EU territory of foreign members of terrorist organisations and other criminals. Although there is no concrete evidence that terrorist travellers systematically use flows of refugees to enter Europe unnoticed, some terrorists entered the EU posing as refugees, as was seen in the Paris attacks of 13 November 2015.

Guest officers are deployed on rotation in order to strengthen security checks of migrants entering the EU. Checks are performed against all of Europol's databases and the concerned EU Member State are informed about the outcome.

h) Access to European Cybercrime Centre expertise

Launched in January 2013, the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) delivers state of the art technical, analytical and digital forensic expertise. Via the ECTC, counter terrorism units in EU Member States and non-EU countries can access the EC3's expertise and receive support to their investigations in cases, where cybercrime and terrorism converge.

Proactive mitigation of the use of social media for radicalisation purposes, through terrorist and violent extremist propaganda and support to operational analysis

The **EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU)** coordinates EU efforts to tackle access to online terrorist propaganda and delivers operational online support to counter terrorism cases.

The EU IRU strategy in the field of prevention continues to focus on the close engagement with EU Member States and online service providers (OSPs) to exchange best practices and expertise, and enhance automation and standardisation of the referral process. The EU IRU's efforts in these areas have been invested within the framework of the EU Internet Forum (EUIF).

The EU IRU also provides agile operational support. It continuously tracks innovation employed by terrorist groups to exploit the online environment and develops tools and techniques to counter current and developing methods of terrorist abuse of the internet.

In addition, the EU IRU monitors relevant social media accounts and channels using specialised linguistic and subject matter expertise to detect threats and claims of responsibility for attacks targeting EU and non-EU countries and retrieve new propaganda content for referral to OSPs with a request for voluntary deletion and strategic analysis purposes.

Since its establishment in July 2015 and until end of 2019, the EU IRU detected 116 847 pieces of content, 111 355 of which were assessed to constitute terrorist propaganda and referred to the respective hosting platforms. The detected content was found on 361 online platforms. The EU IRU performs its searches and analysis on material written in 15 languages .

A central strategic support capability, to identify European-wide counter terrorism implications and promote outreach with relevant (international) partners

Strategic analysis aims to give an insight into and a better understanding of terrorism and terrorist and criminal trends. This enables decisions at a strategic level with the aim to influence criminal developments. Strategic analysis

may also indicate in which areas concrete thematic analysis is recommended in order to further specify how to address the problems concerned from an operational perspective. ECTC strategic analysis products provide a strategic picture of terrorism-related issues affecting the EU, to members of the European law enforcement community, decision-makers at a European level and the public.

To better understand the rapidly and constantly changing global security environment and in order to provide the best policy recommendations, the ECTC has established a network of partners in which new developments are discussed and best practices are exchanged. Within this network there are partners with whom the ECTC has a long history of excellent cooperation (such as the Schengen-associated countries, the United States of America, or international organisations such as Interpol), but also others with whom the ECTC has established a framework for operational cooperation (such as Western Balkans countries), but which require continued investment towards strengthening Europol's role as the preferred platform for international law-enforcement cooperation. Last but not least the ECTC reaches out to countries and organisations which have been identified as priority partners for developing cooperative relations with, such as the Middles East and North Africa (MENA) countries .

The ECTC also recognises that academic research on issues relevant for counter terrorism can provide important benefits for law enforcement strategy and practice. To close the gap between researchers in academia and industry and European law enforcement, the ECTC maintains the **ECTC Advisory Network on terrorism and propaganda**, whose annual conference serves as a platform to enable direct contact and exchange between the two realms.

annex 6

Methodology

The EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) was established in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the USA, as a reporting mechanism from the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) of the Council of the European Union (EU) to the European Parliament. In 2006 Europol took over this task from the TWP. The methodology for producing this annual report was developed by Europol and endorsed by the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council on 1 and 2 June 2006.

The content of the TE-SAT is based on information supplied by EU Member States, some non-EU countries and the partner organisation Eurojust, as well as information gained from open sources.

In accordance with ENFOPOL 65 (8196/2/06), the TE-SAT is produced annually to provide an overview, from a law enforcement perspective, of the terrorism situation in the EU. It seeks to record basic facts and assemble figures regarding terrorist attacks and arrests in the EU. The report also aims to present trends and developments identified from the information available to Europol.

The TE-SAT is a situation report which describes and analyses the outward manifestations of terrorism, i.e. terrorist attacks and activities. It does not seek to analyse the root causes of terrorism, neither does it attempt to assess the impact or effectiveness of counter terrorism policies and law enforcement measures taken, although it can serve to illustrate some of these.

This edition of the TE-SAT has been produced by Europol in consultation with the TE-SAT Advisory Board, composed of representatives of the past, present and future Presidencies of the Council of the EU, i.e. Finland, Croatia and Germany (the 'troika'), along with permanent members: representatives from France and Spain, the EU Commission (DG HOME), the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN), the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), the office of the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator (EU CTC) and Europol staff.

For the preparation of this report, Europol collected qualitative and quantitative data on terrorist offences in the EU in 2019 and data on arrests of people suspected of involvement in those offences. The data was confirmed by EU Member States. Similar data was collected, when available, of offences outside the EU in which EU interests were affected. Included as arrests are those judicial arrests warranted by a prosecutor or investigating judge, whereby a person is detained for questioning on suspicion of committing a criminal offence for which detention is

permitted by national law. The fact that the person may subsequently be provisionally released or placed under house arrest does not impact the calculation of the number of arrests.

The EU Council Decision of 20 September 2005 (2005/671/JHA), on the exchange of information and cooperation concerning terrorist offences, obliges EU Member States to collect all relevant information concerning and resulting from criminal investigations conducted by their law enforcement authorities with respect to terrorist offences and sets out the conditions under which this information should be sent to Europol. Europol processed the data and the results were cross-checked with the EU Member States. In cases of divergences or gaps, the results were corrected, complemented and then validated by the EU Member States.

Eurojust

Throughout the year, the national authorities of some EU Member States send information to Eurojust using a specially designed template or forward copies of relevant judgements or other information on ongoing investigations or prosecutions in implementation of Council Decision 2005/671/JHA. In 2019 Eurojust set up the European Judicial Counter Terrorism Register (CTR) on the basis of Council Decision 2005/671/JHA to encourage a more structured and systematic sharing of information on ongoing and concluded judicial counter terrorism proceedings.

The information on judgments issued in 2019 and shared with Eurojust in the framework of the CTR has been used to draft Eurojust's contribution to the TE-SAT 2020. The draft was sent to the contributing National Desks at Eurojust for verification and approval. Via the respective National Desks, EU Member States that did not share with Eurojust information on concluded court proceedings in terrorism cases in 2019 were requested to confirm the lack of relevant court decisions. The competent national authorities of EU Member States were also requested to communicate to Eurojust possible amendments in their terrorism-related legislation, which took place in 2019.

The final version of Eurojust's contribution is based on replies provided by 23 EU Member States.

Terrorism and extremism

The EU Directive 2017/541 on combating terrorism⁸⁷, which all EU Member States were obliged to transpose in their national legislation by 8 September 2018, specifies that terrorist offences are certain intentional acts which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation when committed with the aim of

- › seriously intimidating a population, or
- › unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or
- › seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation.

The TE-SAT reflects EU Member States' definitions of terrorist offences according to national legislation. In the statistics, violent incidents that are classified by national authorities as terrorism are counted as terrorist attacks. Included as arrests are those judicial arrests warranted by a prosecutor or investigating judge, whereby a person is detained for questioning on suspicion of committing a criminal offence for which detention is permitted by national law. Whereas conviction rates in the EU are generally high, the numbers of those arrested within the preceding year and those eventually convicted of terrorist offences may differ.

The TE-SAT does not require EU Member States to systematically report incidents of violent extremism that are not categorised as terrorism under national law. However, the TE-SAT mentions specific violent extremist acts and activities as reported by EU Member States, when these aim to intimidate a population or compel a government or have the potential to seriously destabilise or destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country. However, these incidents are not considered in the statistical data on terrorism in this report, which exclusively reflects incidents reported as terrorism by EU Member States.

Not all forms of extremism sanction the use of violence. The TE-SAT refers to non-violent forms of extremism, as reported by EU Member States, in case these have the

potential of inciting acts of terrorism or violent extremism.

Whereas there is no universally agreed definition of extremism, extremists generally aim to replace the liberal democratic order and alter the fundamental constitutional principles linked to it. Therefore, in light of the abovementioned EU Directive on combating terrorism, terrorism can be considered to be a set of violent tactics employed by extremists.

Types of terrorism

The TE-SAT categorises terrorist organisations by their source of motivation. However, many groups have a mixture of motivating ideologies, although usually one ideology or motivation dominates. Categorising individuals and terrorist groups based on the ideology or goals they espouse should not be confused with motivating factors and pathways to radicalisation. The underlying causes that lead people to radicalisation and terrorism must be sought in the surroundings (structural factors) and personal interpretations (psychological factors) of the individual.

The choice of categories used in the TE-SAT reflects the current situation in the EU as reported by EU Member States. The categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Jihadist terrorism

Jihadism is defined as a violent sub-current of salafism, a revivalist Sunni Muslim movement that rejects democracy and elected parliaments on religious grounds, arguing that human legislation is at variance with God's status as the sole lawgiver. Contrary to other salafist currents, which are mostly quietist, jihadists legitimate the use of violence with a reference to the classical Islamic doctrines on *jihad* (religiously sanctioned warfare). Jihadists aim to create an Islamic state governed exclusively by Islamic law (*shari'a*), as interpreted by them. They use the historical comparison with the Christian crusades of the Middle Ages to describe current situations: Sunni Islam is believed to be under attack from a global non-Muslim alliance, comprising Christians, Jews and other religions such as Buddhists and Hindus but also secularists. Governments

⁸⁷ Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017L0541>

of the Muslim world allied with these 'enemies of Islam', for example through membership of the United Nations (UN), are declared non-Muslims – an act known as *takfir* – and, therefore, legitimate targets. Some jihadists include in their spectrum of perceived enemies Shi'is, Sufis and other Muslim minorities. Major representatives of jihadist groups are the al-Qaeda network and the so-called Islamic State.

Right-wing terrorism

Right-wing terrorism seeks to change the entire political, social and economic system on an extremist right-wing model. A core concept in right-wing extremism is supremacism or the idea that a certain group of people sharing a common element (nation, race, culture, etc.) is superior to all other people. Seeing themselves in a supreme position, the particular group considers it to be their natural right to dominate the rest of the population. In recent years, the Great Replacement conspiracy theory has become a core concept of right-wing extremism and terrorism. This is the idea that a global elite, often perceived to be led by Jews, tries to replace white populations by massive immigration of non-white people. In addition, right-wing extremism is fed by a variety of hateful sub-cultures, commonly fighting back against diversity. These include anti-feminism, the involuntary celibate (incel) movement, anti-immigrant movements but also forms of Satanism. Racist behaviour, authoritarianism, xenophobia, misogyny and hostility to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities and immigration are commonly found attitudes in right-wing extremists. Right-wing terrorism refers to the use of terrorist violence by right-wing groups. Variants of right-wing extremist groups are neo-Nazi, neo-fascist and ultra-nationalist formations.

Left-wing and anarchist terrorism

Left-wing terrorist groups seek to replace the entire political, social and economic system of a state by introducing a communist or socialist structure and a classless society. Their ideology is often Marxist-Leninist. A sub-category of left-wing extremism is anarchist terrorism which promotes a revolutionary, anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian agenda. Examples of left-wing terrorist groups are the Italian Brigade Rosse ('Red Brigades') and the Greek Revolutionary Organisation 17 No-vember.

Anarchist terrorism, is an umbrella term, is used to describe violent acts committed by groups (or to a lesser extent by

individuals) affiliated with different anarchist ideologies. They promote a revolutionary, anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian agenda. Examples of anarchist terrorist groups are the Italian Federazione Anarchica Informale ('Informal Anarchist Federation') or the Greek Synomosia Pynon tis Fotias ('Conspiracy of Cells of Fire').

Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism

Ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorist groups are motivated by nationalism, ethnicity and/or religion. Separatist groups seek to carve out a state for themselves from a larger country or annex territory from one country to that of another. Left- or right-wing ideological elements are not uncommon in these types of groups. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Basque ETA and the Kurdish PKK organisations fall into this category.

Single-issue

Single-issue extremist and terrorist groups use criminal means to change a specific policy or practice, as opposed to replacing the entire political, social and economic system in a society. The groups within this category are concerned, for example, with animal rights, environmental protection or anti-abortion campaigns. Examples of groups in this category are the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF).

annex 7

Acronyms

ABC	Anarchist Black Cross
ALF	Animal Liberation Front
AME	Anentachtoi Maiandrioi Ethinkistes 'Non-Aligned Meander Nationalists'
AP	Analysis Project
AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AQIS	al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
ATB	Anti-Terror Brigade 'Anti-Terror Brigade'
ATM	automated teller machine
AWF	analysis work file
B&H	Blood & Honour
CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
CCF	Conspiracy of Cells of Fires
CT JLT	Counter-Terrorism Joint Liaison Team
CTR	European Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register
CWIED	command wire-initiated explosive device
DHKP-C	Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi 'Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front'
CWIED	command wire-initiated explosive device
DR	Dissident Republican
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAW	European arrest warrant
EBDS	European Bomb Data System
EC3	European Cybercrime Centre
ECTC	European Counter Terrorism Centre
EEODN	European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network
EFP	explosively formed projectile
EIS	Europol Information System
ELF	Earth Liberation Front
EOM	Hammerskin Nation 'European Officers Meeting'

EPE	Europol Platform of Experts
ETA	Euskadi ta Askatasuna 'Basque Fatherland and Liberty'
EU	European Union
EU CTC	EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator
EU INT-CEN	EU Intelligence Analysis Centre
EU IRU	EU Internet Referral Unit
EU-IF	EU Internet Forum
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FACE	facial recognition capability
FAI/FRI	Federazione Anarchica Informale/Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale 'Informal Anarchist Federation/International Revolutionary Front'
FLNC	Front de Libération Nationale Corse 'Corsican National Liberation Front'
FTF	foreign terrorist fighter
HAMAS	Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya 'Islamic Resistance Movement'
HME	homemade explosive
HSM	Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin 'Mujahid Youth Movement', also known as al-Shabaab
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham 'Levant Liberation Committee'
IBÖ	Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs 'Identitarian Movement of Austria'
IED	improvised explosive device
IID	improvised incendiary device
Incel	involuntary celibate
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRF	International Revolutionary Front
IS	so-called Islamic State, also referred to as <i>Daesh</i> , ISIS or ISIL (after the Arabic name <i>al-dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-Iraq wal-Sham</i> , 'Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant')

ISGA	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin 'Group in support of Islam and Muslims'
LGBTQ	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MAN	Movimento de Ação Nacional 'National Action Movement'
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
	The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MMA	mixed martial arts
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NMR	Nordiska Motståndsrörelsen 'Nordic Resistance Movement'
NS	Nordisk Styrka 'Nordic Strength'
OSS	Oldschool Society
OSP	online service provider
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê 'Kurdistan Workers' Party'
RAC	'Rock against Communism'
RWR	Right-Wing Resistance
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SGC	supporter-generated content
SIENA	Secure Information Exchange Network Application
SIRIUS	Shaping Internet Research Investigations Unified System
TATP	triacetone triperoxide
TE-SAT	EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report
TFTP	Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme
THD	Tanzim Hurras al-Din 'Guardians of the Religion Organisation'

TIP	Turkistan Islamic Party
TWP	Terrorism Working Party
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UVIED	under-vehicle improvised explosive device
YPG	Yekineyên Parastina Gel 'People's Protection Units'



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