



## Developing

**12**

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### **Italy Alert: Migrant stabs five, including child, on bus in Rimini on September 11; heightened anti-migrant sentiments increase risk of retaliatory attack**

#### **Please be advised**

- Reports indicate that an individual stabbed five people on a bus in Rimini, in the northern region of Emilia-Romagna, during the evening hours (local time) on September 11. The attacker, a 26-year-old man believed to be from Somalia, pulled out a knife after controllers asked for his bus ticket and then proceeded to stab the two female controllers before fleeing the scene. He then stabbed three more people, including a mother and child. The child was stabbed in the neck and is now in critical condition.
- Police later arrested the attacker but no motive has been confirmed. Police have not announced any links to extremist militant groups as of writing. The attacker arrived in Europe several years ago and recently applied for refugee status. He had been residing in a Red Cross facility, where staff said he exhibited violent and aggressive behavior. Police have not ruled out drug use.
- Matteo Salvini, leader of the far-right populist Lega Nord party, publicly condemned the attack, calling the perpetrator “a thug” that does not deserve sympathy. Salvini has long opposed illegal immigration into Italy and the EU’s management of asylum seekers.
- In February 2018, 28-year-old Luca Traini, a member and former candidate of Lega Nord, shot and injured six African migrants in a drive-by shooting in Macerata, Marche, claiming that the attack was in retaliation for the murder of 18-year-old Pamela Mastropietro by a Nigerian refugee. Traini reportedly had an Italian flag draped on his shoulders and performed a fascist salute. Salvini has frequently mentioned Mastropietro’s murder when discussing “tough-on-crime” and immigration policies.



## Assessments & Forecast

1. While police have not established a motive for the attack, considering that the attacker was prone to violent and aggressive outbursts in the past, his mental instability may have contributed to the attack. In addition, given that the attacker was Somali and armed with a knife, an extremist motive cannot be ruled out, echoing other recent attacks in Europe. Moreover, the fact that he was armed suggests that he may have planned to carry out an attack.
2. The incident will lead to heightened anti-migrant sentiments nationwide, with demonstrations against the government's migrant policy, particularly in Emilia-Romagna, likely in the near term. Heightened levels of unrest can be anticipated at such protests, given that counter-protests are likely, increasing the risk of clashes between activists and police. With Salvini already condemning the attack on social media, he is liable to use the attack to advance his anti-migrant policies. Similar views are likely to be shared by other far-right politicians.
3. In addition to protests, considering the similarities in the situation to the 2018 incident, heightened anti-migrant sentiments may result in attacks targeting migrant centers, as well as communities with large immigrant populations. **FORECAST:** Based on the 2018 Macerate shooting, the attack in Rimini is liable to increase the risk of lone-wolf right-wing attacks targeting migrants as well as left-wing politicians. Such attacks are likely to take place in the form of shootings and vehicular attacks.

## Recommendations

1. Travel to Italy may continue while maintaining heightened vigilance nationwide for potential militant-related activity.
2. Alert authorities immediately upon witnessing suspicious items or behavior.
3. Public, private, and third sector organizations are advised to increase their awareness of threats

on social media through the use of threat monitoring services. Increased awareness of an organization's political footprint and perceptions from fringe online groups can help uncover potential violent actors and plots before they occur.