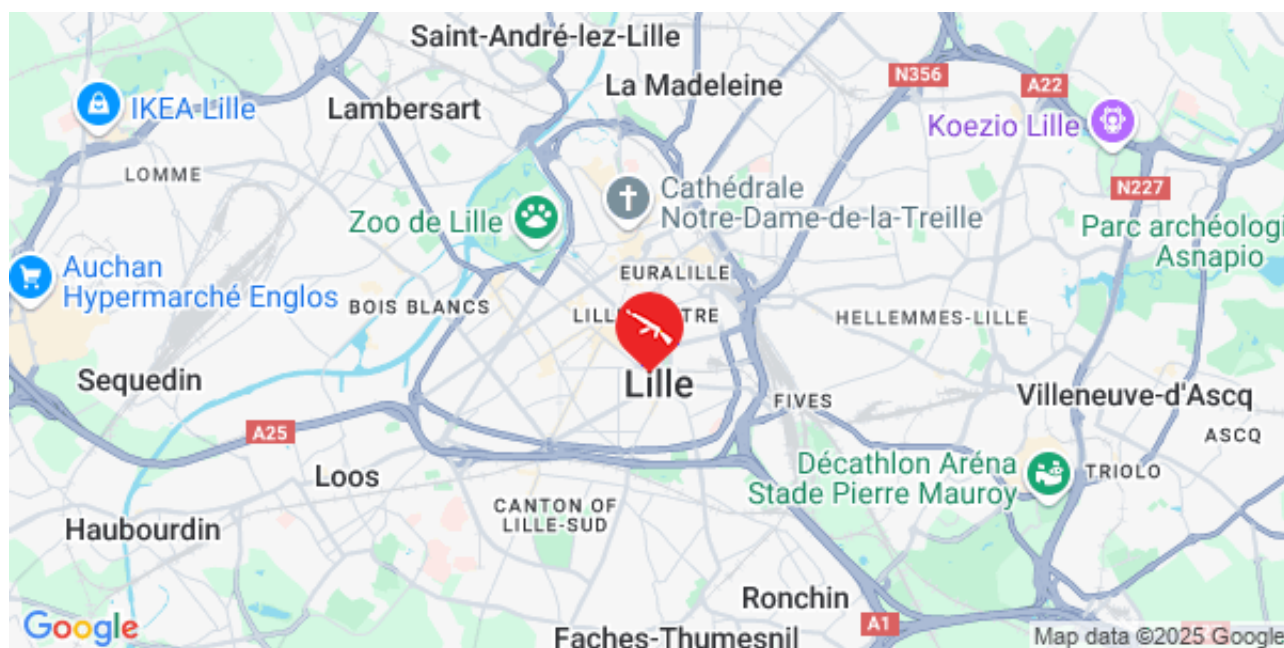


Militancy/Terrorism



08

APR
9:52 UTC

France Alert: IS-linked suicide bomb plot foiled on April 6; posed imminent threat, similar plots using explosives likely in near term

Current Situation

- On April 6, police arrested three individuals residing in Lille and Dunkerque, on suspicion of plotting a jihadist suicide bombing in France. The suspects had reportedly begun constructing an explosive belt and had sourced materials to manufacture triacetone triperoxide (TATP), a highly unstable explosive commonly used in jihadist attacks. All necessary chemical components were discovered during the investigation.
- According to reports, the suspects intended to carry out a suicide attack in a public location. Targets included a youth center in northern France, a restaurant, a nightclub, and a site linked to the Jewish community.
- They had expressed admiration for the November 2015 Islamic State (IS)-claimed attacks in Paris and had posted messages online praising past IS attackers, including Khamzat Azimov, who killed one person and injured several others in a 2018 stabbing in Paris's Opera district.
- One of the suspects, identified as Morad M., was reportedly known to intelligence services prior to the arrests due to his online activity. He had allegedly pledged allegiance to IS, shared IS propaganda videos, issued calls for jihad on social media platforms, and attempted to recruit other young individuals.

Assessments & Forecast

1. That the suspects had already identified potential targets and had begun constructing an explosive belt using TAPT, with all necessary chemical components acquired, indicates they were in the advanced stages of planning. The possession of both materials and technical knowledge indicates the suspects posed a highly credible, likely imminent, threat and had the capability to carry out a successful attack. Moreover, the arrest of all three individuals suggests coordination and a collective operational intent, further heightening the severity of the threat.
2. The reference to the November 2015 attacks, as well as the glorification of IS attackers such as Khamzat Azimov, reiterates the threat of attacks inspired by IS attacks, as well as IS efforts to radicalize individuals online Europe-wide. IS' continued radicalization efforts are also evidenced by the arrest of an individual in Cordoba, Spain, for consuming and disseminating IS propaganda online on March 20.
3. Further, the choice of an explosive belt reflects the continued risk of attack plots involving explosives. This has been seen in several recent plots, including the March 21 arrest of an individual accused of planning an explosive attack using an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in Meaux, Seine-et-Marne department, and [the arrest of three suspects plotting an improvised explosive device \(IED\) attack targeting the Poitiers City Hall, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, in December 2024](#).
4. Furthermore, the group's reference to targeting Jewish sites highlights the elevated threat of jihadist attacks targeting Jewish and Israeli entities in Europe. This is supported by [the February 21 stabbing outside the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin](#) and the [March 3 attempted attack on a synagogue in Moscow using explosives](#).
5. The choice of a youth center alongside other crowded public venues such as restaurants and nightclubs, points to the continued threat of attacks targeting soft targets. This aligns with broader jihadist targeting patterns that prioritize high-impact attacks on symbolic or vulnerable public spaces.
6. **FORECAST:** The threat of attacks is expected to increase in the immediate term, given the upcoming Passover and Easter holidays in April, which have featured in past attacks and plots globally. As such, authorities are expected to implement heightened security measures around places of worship, particularly churches and synagogues, transportation hubs, government institutions, and areas with high civilian footfall.
7. **FORECAST:** While the threat of attacks involving explosives remains, these are still more likely to be foiled by authorities. Indeed, such attacks require skills and materials that can be hard to acquire. Even if these prerequisites were met, as in the above plot, authorities are still likely to thwart them due to extensive counter-terrorism efforts and intelligence sharing. As such, the primary threat of successful attacks continues to stem from lone actors using rudimentary tactics, including bladed weapons and vehicle rammings.

Recommendations

1. Travel to France may continue as per government guidelines while remaining cognizant of authorities' updates regarding national and local terrorism threat levels.
2. If alerted to suspicious activity, inform authorities immediately.
3. If a potential shooting, stabbing, or similar incident manifests, it is advised to leave the area immediately, if possible, or take shelter at a secure location.
4. 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.
5. For further questions and risk assessments, please contact intel@max-security.com. insert text

here