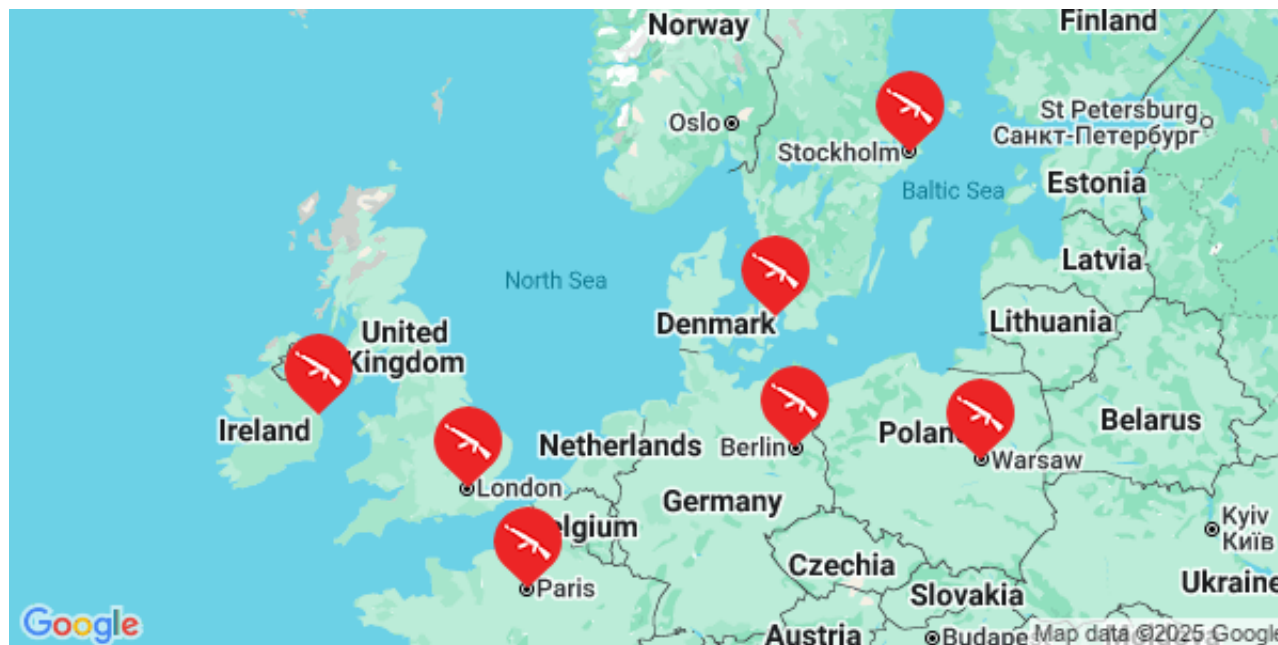


Militancy/Terrorism



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DEC
13:20 UTC

Europe Alert: Several countries bolster security near Jewish gatherings, Christmas Market following terror attack in Sydney on December 14; jihadist threat to remain elevated in coming weeks

Current Situation

- Following the [December 14 attack in Sydney, Australia, where 12 individuals were killed at a Hanukkah event](#), multiple European countries have announced bolstered security measures near Jewish institutions and events, as well as Christmas markets.
- In **Denmark**, in addition to heightened vigilance at Jewish locations, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste (PET), the Danish Police Intelligence Service, is now also focusing on Christmas markets nationwide.
- PET stated that while security has been intensified at Jewish locations, the overall terrorist threat level in Denmark has not been raised.

- In **France**, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez has called on prefects to strengthen security around Jewish places of worship and Hanukkah events, citing the ongoing terrorist threat and heightened international tensions that require “extreme vigilance.”
 - He ordered an increased police presence and heightened vigilance during Hanukkah celebrations from December 14 to 22, with particular attention to services and gatherings that attract large crowds.
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- In **Germany**, Berlin police stated they are intensifying already planned security measures at the Brandenburg Gate, where a large menorah is taking place, and will maintain a strong police presence throughout the event.
 - Police also confirmed that security at synagogues and other Jewish institutions in Berlin, which is standard practice, will be further reinforced during the Hanukkah period.
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- In **Ireland**, Gardai will increase police patrols at Jewish centers and events, including increased patrols and the appointment of liaison inspectors to maintain regular contact with the Jewish community.
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- In **Poland**, armed security at the main synagogue in Warsaw has been doubled. Police announced heightened preventive measures around places of worship, diplomatic missions, and other institutions related to Israel and Palestine.
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- In **Sweden**, measures include heightened visible and undercover police presence, expanded camera surveillance, and ongoing monitoring of the situation around Jewish sites in Stockholm, with similar precautions expected in other parts of the country.
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- In the **UK**, the Metropolitan Police and Police Scotland have deployed additional patrols around synagogues, Jewish venues, and public Hanukkah events, including menorah lightings. Additional patrols are also being conducted in districts with significant Jewish

communities.

Source: [Reuters](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. Although the heightened security posture reflects concerns over the Sydney attack inspiring copycat or opportunistic violence, particularly against Jewish entities, the incident is not expected to significantly alter the terrorism threat landscape in Europe, which already remains elevated, especially during the holiday period. Nonetheless, the Sydney attack increases the threat of emulative attacks, meaning attacks carried out by individuals who are inspired by recent incidents elsewhere and seek to imitate them, in the coming weeks. Indeed, available data indicate that nearly 17 percent of all jihadist incidents in Europe in 2022 were classified as emulative, compared to 56 percent in 2021 and 48 percent in 2020.
2. Notably, the threat of terrorist attacks in Europe, particularly in Western and Northern countries, remains elevated during the winter holiday period, including Christmas, Hanukkah, and the New Year. Over the past decade, this timeframe has consistently presented a cyclical increase in terrorism-related risk, especially from jihadist actors, with both successful attacks and foiled plots recorded during this period. Notable recent incidents include [the December 12 arrest of five individuals in connection with a suspected vehicular ramming plot targeting a Christmas market in Dingolfing-Landau](#), Bavaria, Germany; the December 2024 arrest of four individuals in Alicante, Spain, for plotting an attack on a place of worship during the Christmas holiday season; and December 2018 shooting and stabbing attack at Christmas market in Strasbourg, France. This elevated threat stems from the convergence of multiple seasonal vulnerability factors, including large concentrations of civilians in open-access public spaces, predictable event schedules that simplify target selection, heightened religious and symbolic significance, and online extremist propaganda and incitement during this period.
3. Furthermore, these reinforced security measures, alongside the already bolstered security presence around Christmas markets in recent weeks, underscore the particularly elevated threat facing Jewish institutions, events, and individuals, particularly in Western and Northern Europe. This heightened risk is driven by persistently high levels of anti-Semitic rhetoric and heightened sensitivities surrounding the conflict in Gaza, which transnational jihadist networks and sympathizers continue to exploit for propaganda, incitement, and mobilization. In recent years, Jewish holidays and other symbolic dates have frequently been targeted, most recently during the [stabbing attack outside a synagogue in Crumpsall, Manchester, on Yom Kippur, on October 2](#), as well as [the September 2024 shooting at the Israeli Consulate in Munich](#) on the anniversary of the 1972 Munich Olympics attack.
4. **FORECAST:** In the coming days, the threat of attacks targeting Jewish establishments and gatherings, as well as Christmas markets, is expected to remain elevated. As pre-holiday activity peaks, other high-footfall locations, including public squares, tourist attractions, transport hubs, shopping districts, and churches, are also likely to remain vulnerable. Based on precedent, the risk is assessed to be higher in countries with already elevated terrorism threat levels and those with large and visible Jewish populations, notably Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden, and the UK. Within these countries, the threat of attacks remains elevated in medium-sized urban centers, due to relatively less stringent security measures combined with concentrated local crowds.
5. **FORECAST:** Given precedent, the primary terrorism threat in Europe continues to stem from self-radicalized jihadist lone actors resorting to rudimentary attack methods, mainly stabbings and vehicular rammings, that are easy to access, require low training and preparation, and are hard to detect. Indeed, as per MAX's tracking, all 12 successful jihadist attacks recorded in Europe so far in 2025 were carried out by lone actors, and of these incidents, nine involved stabbings and three involved vehicular rammings.
6. That said, given the instances of coordination at the level of idea-sharing and target selection by

transnational jihadist networks, mainly Islamic State (IS), alongside an expanding nexus between terrorism and organized crime, particularly in the Nordics, the latent risk of plots featuring multiple actors and more sophisticated weaponry, including firearms and explosives, also remains. Nonetheless, such plots remain more susceptible to detection and disruption due to robust counterterrorism capabilities and surveillance frameworks across Europe, as reflected by the continued rarity of successful large-scale, coordinated attacks in recent years. Russia remains a notable outlier in this regard, owing to the presence of entrenched domestic jihadist networks that provide logistical support and training, as demonstrated by the March 22 shooting at Crocus City Hall in Moscow, where IS-linked perpetrators killed approximately 115 people.

- 7. FORECAST:** Amid heightened terrorism concerns, authorities across Europe are expected to maintain a visibly elevated security posture around religious sites, seasonal events, and other high-footfall locations in the coming weeks, including expanded armed patrols. To mitigate the risk of vehicular ramming attacks, police are likely to deploy bollards and other physical barriers, particularly around Christmas markets and large public gatherings. Authorities will also likely adopt a lower threshold for imposing temporary lockdowns or access restrictions in response to security alerts. As a result, enhanced security measures, including vehicle checks and traffic controls, are likely to cause localized but significant disruptions to vehicular movement, especially in central areas of major cities.
- 8. FORECAST:** While jihadist actors remain the primary terrorism threat across Europe, far-right extremist violence constitutes a persistent latent risk during the holiday period, particularly in Western and Northern Europe. Given their focus on mass casualties and symbolic impact, far-right actors may seek to exploit crowded seasonal venues and high-visibility events. This threat spans a broad ideological spectrum, ranging from neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements to more diffuse subcultures like accelerationist, anti-government, and “incel” networks. Based on precedent, the far-right extremist threat also largely stems from lone actors, who often resort to firearms or other readily available weapons. Such attacks are highly unpredictable, which significantly complicates early detection and prevention by authorities. In parallel, isolated acts of mass violence linked to mental instability or mixed extremist grievances also remain a concern. This is illustrated by the December 2024 vehicular ramming attack at the Christmas market in Magdeburg, Germany, which killed six people and injured hundreds, and was carried out by a Saudi-born doctor who is reportedly an ex-Muslim holding anti-Islam views.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Europe on December 15 and in the coming weeks are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of Jewish events, institutions, and large public gatherings due to elevated jihadist threats during Hanukkah.
2. Maintain heightened vigilance in the areas of Christmas markets, as well as Christian gatherings and places of worship as well.
3. Travel to Europe may continue as per government guidelines while remaining cognizant of authorities' updates regarding national and local terrorism threat levels.
4. If alerted to suspicious activity, inform authorities immediately.
5. If a potential stabbing, shooting, or similar violent incident manifests, it is advised to leave the area immediately, if possible, or take shelter at a secure location.
6. Consider keeping a low profile and limiting the wearing or presenting of overt signs or symbols associated with Judaism and/or Israel. Those that wear the traditional Jewish head covering (kippah), are advised to consider wearing an additional head covering, such as a baseball cap.
7. For any questions and risk assessments, please contact intel@max-security.com.