

Organized Crime

**30**AUG
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Denmark Alert: Authorities introduce two “search zones” in Copenhagen due to ongoing conflict between rival gangs, per August 28 reports; additional policing measures likely in near term

Current Situation

- On August 28, Copenhagen police established two search zones due to escalating violence linked to an ongoing conflict between Hells Angels and the banned Loyal to Familia criminal gangs over cannabis trade. One zone covers Freetown Christiania and part of the Amagerbro neighborhood, while the other zone covers part of the Norrebro and Nordvest neighborhoods.
- The measures were introduced after a 30-year-old individual associated with biker gang was shot and killed by two masked men on Pusher Street in Christiania during the evening hours (local time) on August 26. Four other individuals, including a tourist, were injured.
- The measures will be valid until at least 18:00 on September 12 and include random checks of individuals.
- Following the incident, Justice Minister Peter Hummelgaard announced he will introduce new “tools” to ease gang violence and “normalize” Christiania. He also stated that he is considering the closure of Pusher Street following consultative talks with Christiania residents and local law enforcement officials.
- Pusher Street in Christiania is famous for its open trade of cannabis, which is illegal in Denmark. The street is also recognized as a center of organized trade in hashish. Christiania is Copenhagen’s fourth largest tourist attraction, with half a million visitors reported every year.



Assessments & Forecast

1. The development highlights the threat of violence from escalating intergang conflicts in Christiania over drug trafficking. This is also evidenced by multiple gang-related incidents in Christiania in recent months, including a 28-year-old individual who was severely injured in a stabbing at Maelkevejen on July 20, as well as the reported violent attack and aggravated assault of a 20-year-old individual by six assailants on April 28. Moreover, the fact that four other individuals, including a tourist, were injured during the shooting highlights the elevated risk of spillover violence posed by gang-related activity to bystanders, residents, and tourists in Christiania. Moreover, given that the incident was linked to criminal gangs, retaliation from rival gangs remains highly likely in the near term.
2. **FORECAST:** Considering that a tourist was injured, coupled with the elevated risk of retaliatory gang violence, countries are likely to issue travel advisories against traveling to Christiania should gang violence escalate further. This is supported by previous travel advisories issued by Canada, the United States, and the UK following major security incidents in Christiania.
3. **FORECAST:** Despite authorities having established two search zones in Copenhagen, Hummelgaard's statement to introduce new "tools" to "normalize Christiania indicates that additional policing measures are likely to be introduced in the coming weeks. Measures are likely to include an extension of the current search zones or additional search zones in areas where different drug gangs are active, as well as harsher penalties for those found in possession of large amounts of narcotics.
4. Regardless of the authorities' increased policing measures, given the financial gain involved in cannabis trading on Pusher Street, with officials estimating a turnover of around one billion DKK annually, drug trading is unlikely to abate in Christiania in the near-to-medium term. As such, Pusher Street is likely to remain a major drug trading spot unless authorities decide to close it down. Should authorities permanently close the street, which is also being discussed as a measure to halt gang violence, the potential of gangs moving to other neighborhoods for drug trading remains.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Copenhagen are advised to maintain vigilance in Freetown Christiania, especially in the vicinity of Pusher Street, due to the elevated threat of gang-related violence in the coming weeks.
2. Remain cognizant of local media updates regarding areas with a significant gang presence and elevated risks of gang violence.
3. For any questions and risk assessments, please contact intel@max-security.com