

Background

Between 1972 and 2004, 168 terrorist attacks targeted sporting events both as mass meetings and high profile events. Foiled plots & attacks targeting football events in recent years in Europe included the following:

- **May 1998:** Several GIA/GSPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) operatives were arrested and later convicted for plotting a terrorist attack during the 1998 World Cup in France.
- **June 2000:** A terrorist attack was foiled against the Euro 2000 in Belgium and the Netherlands. The plot was coordinated by a suspect in the 1998 World Cup plot from his prison cell.
- **November 2015:** Three ISIS suicide bombers detonated their explosive device after being denied entry to the Stade de France during the France-Germany football match, killing one and injuring ten. More casualties were to be expected, had the timing of the attacks been different.

Recent developments

Specific threats against the Euro 2016

- In the aftermath of the **Brussels attacks of March 22, 2016**, a computer recovered near the terrorists' apartment contained evidence suggesting the Euro 2016 was the ultimate target of the terrorist network.
- **A key suspect in the Paris and Brussels attacks confirmed during interrogations that the Euro 2016 was to be targeted ultimately.** He claimed the arrest of Salah Abdeslam in March triggered the Brussels attacks.

The global context and timing

- **France is one of the main targets of jihadi organizations (ISIS & al-Qaeda affiliates).** In 2014, France was singled out by ISIS spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, and the threats have been growing since then. According to Patrick Calvar (head of the French DGSI) in May 2016: "France is the most threatened country... we know that Daesh is planning new attacks".
- **The latest terrorist attack foiled in France was in March 2016** with the arrest of several suspects, including Reda Kriket, a French jihadist belonging to the Belgium "Zerkani network". At least four terrorists involved in the Paris and Brussels attacks were part of this network, including Abdelhamid Abaaoud. The police recovered several weapons and TATP explosives as part of the plot.
- **ISIS spokesman recently called for strikes against Europe and the U.S. during the Ramadan. The month of Ramadan has previously been a period of major attacks.** Last year, three attacks were carried out during that month: the beheading of a man in the south east of France, a mass shooting in Sousse, Tunisia, that killed 38 including 30 UK nationals, and a suicide bombing in a Shia mosque in Kuwait City killing 27.

Modus Operandi and targets

- Recent terrorist attacks and foiled attacks in Europe indicate efforts by ISIS to **maximize impact and casualties.** Patrick Calvar (DGSI) recently stressed the potential use of explosive devices in mass-meeting areas.
- Operatives would likely **focus on fan zones and soft targets, not only in Paris, but also in other host cities associated with the event in France and Europe** that could be considered as attacks against the tournament, instead of targeting highly secured stadiums. In that regard, an order issued by the Paris police chief on June 3, 2016 stressed that "**The Paris fan zone, the largest in France, constitutes, with regard to the objectives of the terrorist organizations and its location in the French capital, a key target**".