

# Two dead, dozens injured in three separate attacks in France

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Three attacks by apparently mentally disturbed individuals killed two people and wounded dozens last week in France.

The first attack was a stabbing by a lone man in the suburb of Joué-lès-Tours near Tours, in central France on 20 December. The attack occurred inside the town's police station, injuring three officers before the attacker was shot dead.

The 20-year-old Burundi-born French national, Bertrand Nzohabonayo, a convert to Islam with a criminal record, ran into a police station, stabbed a female officer and then attacked two other officers with his knife. As he was attacking the officers, he shouted "Allahu Akbar" ("God is greatest" in Arabic). A fourth officer pulled out his gun and opened fire, killing the attacker.

The second attack was on 21 December in the French city of Dijon, 310 km southeast of Paris. A driver was arrested after running over 11 pedestrians in five areas of the city in the space of half-an-hour. Two were seriously injured.

The driver was reportedly a 40-year-old Frenchman of Arab origin with a long history of mental health troubles. He had a police record involving minor offenses over the course of 20 years and he had also spent time in a psychiatric hospital. A prosecutor in Dijon said the 40-year-old driver had been to psychiatric hospital 157 times and had no known links to jihadist groups.

In the third attack, a driver ploughed into a Christmas market in the western city of Nantes on 22 December. He injured 11 people before stabbing himself. Five people were hospitalized after the Nantes attack. One of the victims later died.

The driver, who stabbed himself in the chest 13 times after the attack, was identified as a 37-year-old white

Frenchman with a history of petty crime, alcoholism and psychological problems.

Nantes prosecutor Brigitte Lamy said that the driver had made no "religious" statements and had left a notebook in his car with "confused statements" indicating his "hatred of society" and fears of "being killed by secret services."

The three attacks shocked France, and the government used them to stoke fears of Islamist attacks in retaliation for French involvement in wars against Muslim countries in the Middle East and Africa.

The fact that the attackers in both Tours and Dijon both shouted "Allahu Akbar," a phrase used by Muslims while fighting, fed speculation that the attackers might be responding to calls for violence by the Al Qaeda-linked Islamic State (IS) group in Iraq and Syria. Investigations were launched into all three attacks, focusing on possible connections to "terrorist attacks," the potential role of radical Islam, and whether charges should be brought of "attempted murder and criminal conspiracy by a terrorist organization."

All reports indicate, however, that the attackers were not members of any organization, let alone of a foreign terrorist group, but rather deeply disoriented individuals.

President François Hollande urged the public not to panic, and Prime Minister Manuel Valls appealed for "coolheadedness."

Even as the government called for "calm, unity and vigilance", however, reinforced armed patrols took to the streets. More than 300 troops were sent out after the third attack.

The political climate in France is rancid with promotion of official religious and ethnic prejudice, be it against Muslims or the Roma, and confusion about

Middle East wars. At the same time, living standards for masses of people are under constant attack due to job cuts and austerity measures by the reactionary Socialist Party (PS) government. Under these conditions, vulnerable and mentally disturbed people are cracking and carrying out terrible assaults on innocent people.

Despite the lack of evidence that the perpetrators of the attacks had any sympathy for Islamism, let alone ties to ISIS, Valls declared, “We never have faced such a powerful terrorist menace.”

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve commented, “Fear is the objective of terrorists.”

In fact, if there is a danger of Islamist terrorism in France, it results largely from French imperialism’s own wars, such as in Syria and Libya—where France and the other NATO powers armed reactionary Islamist militias as proxy forces in their wars for regime change. The Valls government’s pose as opponents of Islamist terrorism reeks of hypocrisy.

“We have over 1,000 people involved in jihad in Syria or Iraq, more than 300 are over there, 56 or 57 died there, this shows how implicated we are,” Valls said, cynically adding, “This must serve as a warning to French society.”



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