

# Dozens killed in terrorist attacks in Tunisia, France and Kuwait

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Three terrorist attacks claimed at least 63 lives yesterday, according to initial reports, at a Tunisian beach resort, a Shia mosque in Kuwait and a chemical plant in France.

The Kuwait attack was carried out by an organization tied to the Islamic State (IS) and the three attacks on the same day raised concerns about a global offensive by IS affiliates. They came after the IS issued an international appeal to its supporters to carry out attacks.

“Muslims, embark and hasten towards jihad,” IS spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani said in an audio recording this week. “O mujahedeen everywhere, rush and go to make Ramadan a month of disasters for the infidels.”

There were no confirmed operational connections between the attacks, however. “It’s too soon to know whether these attacks were all coordinated, or whether they were all just completely separate,” said Pentagon spokesman Colonel Steve Warren.

In Tunisia, gunmen stormed the Hotel Riu Imperial Marhaba in the Port El Kantaoui district of Sousse, first firing assault rifles at tourists sunbathing on the beach and then attacking the hotel itself with hand grenades. The attackers killed 37 people and wounded 36. While Tunisian officials said they could not identify the nationalities of the victims, initial press reports said they included Britons, Germans, Belgians, Norwegians and Tunisian hotel staff.

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi promised “painful but necessary” security measures and said that the government would consider banning the Islamist group Hizb Ut-Tahrir.

Sources in the Tunisian government, which confirmed that it was concerned of the risk of terrorist attacks during the holy month of Ramadan, offered

conflicting accounts of the shooting. Security official Rafik Chelly claimed that there was a lone gunman, a student from the city of Kairouan who hid his weapons inside a folded-up parasol.

Other officials said that two or three gunmen were involved. One was killed, they reported, another arrested, and the last had either been arrested or escaped. *Tunisia-live.net* identified the gunman who was killed as Seifeddine Yacoubi, 23, an aviation student from Gaafour.

The Sousse attack, Tunisia’s deadliest ever, comes just months after the March 18 massacre at the national Bardo museum, claimed by the IS. These two attacks are expected to have a devastating impact on Tunisia’s tourism industry, which accounts for 15 percent of its economy and as many as 400,000 jobs.

In the attack in Saint-Quentin-Fallavier, near Lyon in France, commercial driver Yassin Salhi, 35, allegedly decapitated his boss at the ATC Transport Company and attacked a factory run by Air Products, a US company specializing in the production of industrial gases. He rammed a gate with his car to penetrate a secure area and tried to set off an explosion with gas containers at the plant, provoking a fire. He was stopped and wrestled to the ground by a firefighter.

Security forces found Salhi’s employer’s head gruesomely chained to the outer factory gate and surrounded by black jihadist flags. They reportedly found a knife nearby.

Salhi was arrested and his sister and wife were placed in preventive detention. Also arrested was a 33-year-old man whom security forces accused of having links with Islamist groups and monitoring gas plants in the region. Salhi himself was the subject of a special “S” intelligence file between 2006 and 2008, though police surveillance was ended in 2008. According to some

reports, however, he was again monitored starting in 2013 after he entered into contact with Islamist groups.

In Kuwait, the IS-affiliated Najd Province organization claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at a Shia mosque that killed 27 people and wounded at least 227. The target was the Imam Sadiq mosque in the al-Sawabir neighborhood of the capital, Kuwait City.

The IS, a Sunni Islamist militia that first emerged with US and NATO backing as a proxy force fighting to overthrow the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, is violently anti-Shia. The Najd Province group's statement referred to the target as a "temple of apostates."

The group also carried out two suicide bombings targeting Shia mosques in neighboring Saudi Arabia last month—one on May 23 in the village of Qudayh that killed 21, and another on May 29 that killed four in Dammam.

These three horrific assaults targeting innocent victims will only sow anger and fear among masses of people and strengthen reactionary, law-and-order forces in all three countries. The mass killing in Kuwait, in particular, will stoke up the atmosphere of war between Sunni and Shia across the Middle East, inflamed by the ongoing sectarian civil wars in Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

French President François Hollande called Essebsi yesterday and pledged to step up police collaboration between France, the former colonial power in Tunisia, and the Essebsi government, which consists largely of former members of the repressive Ben Ali regime that was toppled by a working-class uprising in 2011.

The Elysée Presidential Palace stated in a communiqué that Hollande "expressed France's support in the tragedy that Tunisia has suffered after the terrorist attack that killed at least 27 people in Sousse." The communiqué continued: "The two presidents declared their solidarity in the face of terrorism and their intention to pursue and intensify their cooperation in the struggle against this plague."



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