

# ISIS-linked operative murders police commander and his wife near Paris

Alex Lantier  
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In a gruesome and horrific crime, a man apparently linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) murdered a police commandant and then his wife, an administrative worker in a police office, in the city of Magnanville, 60 km northwest of Paris.

The assailant mortally stabbed Jean-Baptiste Salvaing, identified in press reports as a 42-year-old official in the judicial police of Les Mureaux, outside his house on Monday evening. He then took Salvaing's 36-year-old wife Jessica Schneider and their three-year-old child hostage in their residence, launching a standoff with the RAID (Research, Assistance, Intervention, Deterrence) police special forces unit.

The assailant then posted on Facebook pictures of his victims and a call to murder policemen, prison wardens, journalists and rappers. He also called for terror attacks on the Euro 2016 football cup, declaring, "The Euro cup will be a graveyard."

At a briefing later yesterday, Paris prosecutor François Molins said, "During his negotiations with the RAID, the killer said he was a practicing Muslim, adding that he had pledged allegiance three weeks before to the commander of the faithful of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. He also said he had responded to a call by this emir to 'kill unbelievers, at their home with their families'."

The RAID unit assaulted the house at midnight Tuesday, killing the assailant and discovering Schneider's lifeless body and the couple's young child. Schneider's throat had been slit in front of the child, whom authorities described as "physically unharmed but traumatized." The young orphan is now receiving psychiatric treatment.

Yesterday morning, French intelligence and police services identified the deceased assailant as Larossi Abballa. As in the *Charlie Hebdo* and November 13

mass shootings in Paris last year, and the March 22 Brussels bombing last year, Abballa was well-known to the intelligence services. Inexplicably, he was somehow able to develop ties with ISIS and plan his attack with impunity, though he was under intense police surveillance.

A 25-year-old man with a substantial police record of petty crime, he was arrested in 2011 and convicted in 2013 of participating in an Islamist terror network. He had received a three-year sentence, the last six months of which were suspended, for "criminal associations aiming to prepare terrorist acts." He was apparently involved in Islamist networks running between Pakistan and France, and sentenced along with seven other defendants.

Domestic intelligence agencies opened an "S" file on Abballa, his phone was tapped, and he was being followed by judicial police due to his ties with a man who had traveled to fight in the Syrian war. Abballa "did not seem to pose a sufficient and concrete enough threat" to justify further action, however, according to intelligence officials who spoke to *Le Parisien*.

ISIS reportedly claimed responsibility for the killing yesterday, identifying Abballa as an ISIS fighter. The US-based SITE intelligence group issued a translation of an article it had found posted to the web site of the ISIS news agency Amaq, declaring: "Islamic State fighter kills deputy chief of the police station in the city of Les Mureaux and his wife with blade weapons."

At 7 a.m. yesterday, as he went into a crisis meeting at the Elysée palace, President François Hollande promised that "full light will be shed" on "this abominable event."

Gilbert Collard, a close associate of neo-fascist National Front (FN) leader Marine Le Pen, denounced the PS government for allowing the attacks to unfold,

writing on Twitter that “Islamist terrorism is now into our houses: government of incompetent cowards.”

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve responded shortly afterwards, denouncing the murder as an “abject terrorist act” as he came out of the meeting with Hollande. “The government is totally mobilized,” Cazeneuve insisted, indicating that he would go visit “immediately the policemen who are colleagues of the two police officials who were killed.”

The horrific murder of the two policemen only served to intensify the right-wing atmosphere that prevails in official French circles. Prime Minister Manuel Valls demanded “national unity” behind the police, who are currently engaged in a bitter crackdown against masses of workers who are fighting the government’s unpopular and socially regressive labor law.

Several members of the right-wing Les Republicans (LR) party of former President Nicolas Sarkozy called for imprisoning everyone on whom the intelligence services have opened an “S” file. This would imply the conversion of France into a police state, since intelligence services can open “S” files at will, and this would effectively allow them to imprison anyone arbitrarily simply by opening up an “S” file on them.

The investigation is only beginning, and more important facts about the circumstances in which the attack was planned and then unfolded will doubtless come to light. However, the evidence available so far already makes clear that this crime is deeply rooted in the proxy war for regime change pursued by the NATO powers in Syria from which ISIS emerged.

As in the previous terror attacks in France and Belgium, a major factor in the assailant’s ability to prepare the attack under the noses of the police will likely have been the tacit support that Islamist networks recruiting fighters for the Syrian war receive from European intelligence services.

The most striking example of this was the attack this spring in Brussels, where Belgian intelligence had received detailed warnings as to the identity and targets of the attackers. Nonetheless, the attackers were not arrested, and security at the target locations was not increased in the run-up to the March 22 attacks—a decision that proved to have deadly consequences.

Whatever the personal merits of Salvaing and Schneider—who were widely praised by their colleagues and friends as a dedicated professional and a devoted

mother closely involved in the municipal schools, respectively—the attempts by top French officials to exploit the killings to whip up a law-and-order atmosphere reek of hypocrisy.

Through their wars in Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and beyond, France and the other NATO powers bear immense responsibility for creating the conditions in which the attack was carried out. Moreover, the attacks in Paris, Brussels, and now Magnanville—in which ISIS fighters brought to France and Belgium the methods they have used in Syria ever since NATO launched its war in the country in 2011—are themselves reminders of the criminal character of this war.

The shock and horror settling over Magnanville and all of France after Monday’s attack give an idea of the character of the far greater impact of the NATO war upon Syria: hundreds of bombings and raids by NATO-backed Islamist “rebels” triggered a war in which over 250,000 people have lost their lives and over 10 million were forced to flee their homes.



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