

Perpetrator of Carcassonne and Trèbes terrorist attacks known to French intelligence agencies

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On March 23, Moroccan-born Redouane Lakdim, 25, carried out terrorist attacks in Carcassonne and Trèbes in southern France. Four people died in the incidents and 16 were wounded, several seriously.

As has been the case with all the significant terrorist attacks in France, this one raises questions about the responsibility of the state and intelligence agencies, which have infiltrated the Islamist networks as part of their war against the Assad regime in Syria.

Lakdim first stopped a car around 10 a.m. Friday morning on the outskirts of Carcassonne, where he lived, seriously wounding the driver and killing his passenger. He drove off in the car and later opened fire on four riot police who were jogging, wounding one. He then entered a supermarket in Trèbes, where he killed two people and took multiple hostages. He shot Arnaud Beltrame, a police lieutenant colonel who had exchanged himself for one of the hostages, multiple times. Beltrame died several hours later.

The terrorist reportedly cried, “Allah Akbar,” and claimed to be a member of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) before opening fire. According to Minister of the Interior Gérard Collomb (a Socialist Party politician), Lakdim called in particular for the liberation of his “brothers” and declared he was ready to die for Syria. Multiple media outlets, including France 2 national television, reported that Lakdim demanded the release of Salah Abdeslam, a principal suspect in the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015.

Lakdim was later killed during an assault by the French tactical police unit, GIGN, on the Super U supermarket.

The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attacks. According to a statement by its propaganda

arm, the Amaq News Agency, “The man who carried out the attack in Trèbes in the south of France is a soldier of the Islamic State, who was acting in response to a call” by the organisation “aimed at member countries of the coalition” against ISIS.

Friday night, Lakdim’s partner, “who shares his life,” was taken into police custody for “criminal association in a terrorist undertaking,” according to public prosecutor François Molins.

During a press briefing, officials claimed that the “monitoring” of Lakdim for radicalisation had “shown no evidence of a warning sign for the act.” Referring to a “loner” who “passed abruptly to the act,” Collomb declared, “We were following him and believed there had been no radicalisation.”

The theory of a “lone wolf” who, as in every other terrorist attack, slipped through the cracks, is not credible. Lakdim was known to both Spanish and French intelligence. Agence France Presse reports that sources close to the investigation reveal that Lakdim’s 18-year-old girl-friend has also been known to the security services for at least a year.

Spanish Interior Minister Juan Ignacio Zoido indicated to journalists that Lakdim “was part of one criminal organisation dedicated to drug trafficking and another which, at an international scale, carried out organised crime.” Lakdim has been known for being “connected with the radical Islamist movement” and linked to arms trafficking since 2014.

During a police search of his house in the summer of 2015, his telephone was searched and his SMS message exchanges revealed orders for a Kalashnikov and ammunition for 7.62mm and 5.56mm calibre guns.

Le Monde headlined its article on the recent episode,

“Aude [French department that includes Carcassonne] attacks: Redouane Lakdim, a terrorist followed by DGSI.” The daily newspaper noted that Lakdim was one of the targets “taken into account” by the General Directorate for Internal Security (DGSI), the French intelligence agency. He fit into the “upper-end of the spectrum,” according to *Le Monde*, where the most dangerous individuals were grouped.

Le Parisien writes that Lakdim was “very active on Salafist [ultra-conservative Sunni Islamic movement] social media networks [and]...suspected of having travelled to Syria.” According to *Libération*, he was a “Salafist active on the Internet.”

The bloody attack underlines the reactionary character of the Islamist elements that have been armed against Damascus by European and American imperialism. The various intelligence agencies closely watch but also *protect* these groups and individuals, because they are taking part in the Syrian intervention and may prove useful in future operations.

In announcing measures aimed at strengthening the police apparatus, the state is aiming above all at growing social opposition in France and across Europe.

The French government is cynically using the death of Beltrame to incite a chauvinist frenzy, as during the demonstrations that followed the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* and Hypercacher supermarket in Paris in January 2015.

A national service will be held for the policeman, “taking account of the heroism that he displayed and the example that this represents for the French people,” President Emmanuel Macron, who will deliver a eulogy, stated. Flags will be flown at half-mast.

Right on cue, the leader of the right-wing party, The Republicans, Laurent Wauquiez, called for the “internment of the most dangerous” individuals identified by the intelligence agencies as a threat to national security. Marine Le Pen of the National Front called for the expulsion of all such individuals and the interior minister’s resignation.

But the state of emergency and the extraordinary powers handed the police are not aimed principally at the terrorist networks sending recruits and arms from Europe to the Middle East. Lakdim was part of these criminal networks providing weapons to Islamist groups, which involve thousands of people in France and tens of thousands across Europe. He was not

impeded before carrying out the recent attack, whereas the state of emergency was immediately used to suppress protests in France against the labour law in 2016.

These attacks take place in an explosive international and social context. Large strikes of teachers are shaking Britain and the United States, where massive demonstrations of young people are taking place against violence and social conditions. In Europe, strikes have hit the metal sectors of Germany and Turkey, the British railways, and auto plants in Germany and eastern Europe.

In France, tens of thousands of railway drivers, educators, nurses, air-traffic controllers and other public-sector workers have struck against Macron’s right-wing labour reforms. A general strike is continuing on the Indian Ocean island of Mayotte, and another has taken place in French Polynesia. The ruling elite is promoting nationalism and preparing police repression to confront the anger of workers facing war and social austerity—not terror attacks by Islamist groups.

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