

February 2020 Terror Attacks

In February 2020 there were four attacks within Europe, three of which concentrated in the first three days of the month.

February 2nd, London, United Kingdom: at approximately 2pm, a 20 years old individual stole a knife from a shop located on Streatham High Road and stabbed by-passers. Police officers reached the scene approximately one minute after the attacker initiated the assault and shot him dead. The officers saw that a device was strapped to his body and called in specialist explosives officers and additional armed officers to deal with the potential threat. The suicide vest then turned out to be fake. Three civilians were injured in the attack and in the police counter-offensive. The attacker, [Sudesh Amman](#), was under police surveillance at the time of the attack as he had just been released from prison and was being hosted at a near-by bail hostel (while in Approved Permisses). ^{1 2 3}

February 2nd, Ghent, Belgium: a 26 years-old woman stabbed four people in a commercial area of the city, in the early afternoon, before being shot and wounded by police officers. The motivation of the attack remains unknown. The woman was charged with “attempted murder”. ^{4 5 6}

February 3rd, Dieuze, France: a 19 years-old individual armed with a knife entered a police station and wounded an officer before being shot. The attacker was shot and injured. The fact was later related to a call received by the operational center of the gendarmerie shortly before, in which an individual declared that he was a soldier, that there was going to be carnage in Dieuze and that he was a member of Islamic State," as exposed by prosecutor Christian Mercuri in a press conference. In the following

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51351844>

² <https://news.sky.com/story/streatham-terror-attack-sudesh-amman-caught-on-cctv-being-tailed-by-police-before-attack-11927725>

³ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/02/02/sudesh-amman-17-year-old-student-became-terrorist-shot-police/>

⁴ <https://www.brusselstimes.com/belgium/93371/woman-in-ghent-stabbing-attack-will-be-charged-with-attempted-murder/>

⁵ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7958407/Belgian-police-shoot-knifeman-stabbed-two-people-Ghent.html>

⁶ <https://www.brusselstimes.com/all-news/belgium-all-news/93206/police-shoot-woman-after-stabbing-attack-in-ghent/>

days it emerged that the attacker was a young soldier (two months into initial training) and that no obvious links to jihadist networks were found.^{7 8 9 10}

February 20th, Hanau, Germany: German citizen Tobias Rathjen opened fire against two shisha bars located in Hanau, killing eleven people and wounding six others. The case was classified as a “far-right terrorist attack”. The individual had left statements invoking the annihilation of foreign people who cannot be expelled and, on February 14th, he had also posted a YouTube video about “Americans being controlled by secret societies”. Rathjen and his mother were both found dead in his apartment; very likely the result of a homicide-suicide.^{11 12 13}

February 22nd, Stuttgart, Germany: a gunman attacked a shisha bar in the city; police said there was no one in the building when the incident occurred. The perpetrator escaped and nobody was injured.^{14 15 16}

Summary table

Location	Site	Day	Target	Sex	Weapon(s)	Nationality	Age	Motivation	Dec. attackers	Dec. vict.	Inj. vict.
London (United Kingdom)	Urban	2	Civilians	M	knife	British (Sri Lankan origin)	20	islamist	1\1	0	3
Ghent (Belgium)	Urban	2	Civilians	F	knife	n/a	n/a	n/a	0\1	0	4
Dieuze (France)	Police station	3	Police officers	M	knife	n/a	19	islamist	0\1	0	1
Hanau (Germany)	Urban, shops, domestic	19	Civilians	M	gun	German	43	suprematism	1\1	10	5
Stuttgart (Germany)	Urban, shops	22	Civilians	n/a	gun	n/a	n/a	n/a	0\1	0	0

⁷ <https://www.france24.com/en/20200203-french-police-shoots-knife-assailant-who-entered-police-station-in-eastern-france>

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-security/french-barracks-attacker-was-a-trainee-soldier-idUSKBN1ZY115>

⁹ <https://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/french-police-attacker-inspired-by-isis-made-pre-attack-call-to-pledge-allegiance-1.974047>

¹⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-security/french-police-shoot-barracks-intruder-following-attack-warning-idUSKBN1ZX2DV>

¹¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/police-report-several-people-shot-to-death-in-german-city/>

¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/world/europe/germany-shooting-hanau.html>

¹³ <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/19/europe/hanau-germany-shootings-intl/index.html>

¹⁴ <https://en.trend.az/world/europe/3196086.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-bullet-holes-discovered-at-stuttgart-hookah-bar/a-52485811>

¹⁶ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-02/23/c_138809279.htm

Comments

A first element worth of notice is the fact that the Ghent stabbing occurred only a few minutes after the London attack. Even if there is no evidence that the two events were related in any way, it is still legitimate to ponder if the Ghent attacker was in any way aware of the attack that had occurred shortly before in the UK and if she was conditioned by it, in any way.

Regarding the London attack, a full analysis has already been published on February 10th and it is possible to read it [here](#).

As to the Dieuze attack, even if very limited information has been made public, the very interesting aspect of the case lays in the fact that the attacker was a young soldier who was still in the initial training phase; once again France finds itself dealing with jihadist extremism within its own military and law enforcement, as already emerged on several occasions.^{17 18 19}

The double attack in Hanau was classified as an extreme-right terrorist attack and clearly not the first one on German soil. The individual had previously posted a video in his YouTube channel where he encouraged Americans to revolt against “secret societies that were controlling the country” and to “not rely on mainstream media”. The profile of the attacker clearly indicates some conspiracy-theorist traits combined with an extreme-right ideology.

Two days later, in Stuttgart, an unidentified individual shot against a shisha bar and fled the scene. Nobody was injured in the attack as the place was empty. It is plausible to consider this attack an emulation of the one perpetrated in Hanau two days before.

Regarding the reported casualties, in the month of February, 2 attackers and 10 victims were killed within Europe. Additionally, 2 attackers and 13 victims were injured.

¹⁷ <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/22938>

¹⁸ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/islamic-extremists-infiltrating-ranks-of-french-police-pp0gxp8vb>

¹⁹ <https://www.newsweek.com/french-police-radical-islam-ou-sont-passes-nos-espions-where-have-our-spies-541730>