

## October 2020 Terror Attacks

*In October 2020 five terror attacks were registered in Europe. In two cases the information available was not sufficient to insert them in the chart.*

**October 16<sup>th</sup>, Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, France:** Abdoullakh Abouyedovich Anzorov, an 18-year-old French/Chechen stabbed to death and beheaded middle-school teacher Samuel Paty. Anzorov had reached France with refugee status, together with his family, 12 years earlier as a six-year-old boy. The motivation for the murder was that Paty had, in a class on freedom of expression, shown his students Charlie Hebdo's satirical cartoons depicting the Muslim prophet Muhammad.

In the aftermath of the attack, several individuals were arrested, including Islamist preacher Abdelhakim Sefrioui, leader of the pro-Hamas "Sheikh Yasin" group, and Brahim Chnina, the father of a girl in Paty's class. The two individuals have been indicated by French authorities as the ones who instigated the murder through online activity.<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>

**October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Lyon, France:** A woman wearing a niqab and carrying several bags threatened to detonate herself next to a rail at Part-Dieu train station. The woman was isolated by French special units and placed under arrest.<sup>5 6 7</sup>

**October 29<sup>th</sup>, Nice, France:** 21 years-old Tunisian citizen Brahim Aouissaoui stabbed three people to death and beheaded one of them. The attack took place in the early morning at Notre-Dame cathedral. The perpetrator was wounded by the police and arrested. Investigation revealed that Aouissaoui had arrived on the island of Lampedusa in September onboard a boat of illegals; he had then been transferred to the port of Bari where Italian authorities identified him, took his mugshot, and simply let him free with a paper warning him to leave the country within seven days. His entry into France was facilitated by the identity card given to him by the Red Cross refugee Ngo.<sup>8 9 10 11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/france-security-school-parents-idINKBN27201Z>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54581827>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.parismatch.com/Actu/Societe/Prof-d-histoire-decapite-l-assaillant-etait-un-Russe-tchetchene-de-18-ans-ne-a-Moscou-1707848>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.sky.com/story/france-terror-attack-47-year-old-decapitated-in-paris-suburb-named-as-teacher-samuel-paty-12105885>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/one-arrested-after-woman-threatens-to-blow-up-lyon-railway-station-french-police-2314321>

<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.ilmessaggero.it/mondo/lione\\_attacco\\_donna\\_stazione\\_francia\\_terrorismo\\_ultime\\_notizie\\_oggi\\_22\\_ottobre\\_2020-5539695.html](https://www.ilmessaggero.it/mondo/lione_attacco_donna_stazione_francia_terrorismo_ultime_notizie_oggi_22_ottobre_2020-5539695.html)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.itstime.it/w/terrorismo-islamista-francia-sotto-pressione-by-g-giacalone-m-lombardi-m-maiolino/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ibtimes.sg/who-brahim-aouissaoui-tunisian-born-nice-church-attacker-arrived-france-just-weeks-before-attack-52939>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/30/nice-terror-suspect-phoned-family-hours-before-church-attack-brahim-aouissaoui>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-security-nice/two-dead-in-knife-attack-in-french-church-official-say-terrorism-suspected-idUSKBN27E17D>

<sup>11</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/nice-knife-attack-dle-intl/index.html>

**October 29<sup>th</sup>, Avignon, France:** a 33 years-old individual belonging to the far-right group Mouvance Identitaire was shot dead by the police after threatening people with a handgun in the Montfavet district. <sup>12 13 14</sup>

**October 31st, Lyon, France:** Greek-Orthodox priest Nikolaos Kakavelakis was shot at twice with a hunting rifle and seriously injured in the stomach at about 4 pm as he was closing the church in the city's seventh arrondissement. French media sources revealed that a man answering a police description of the alleged attacker had been arrested soon after 7 pm in a kebab shop in the city; however, the individual was not carrying the weapon at the time of arrest and he was later released as no evidence of his connections to the attack were found. The perpetrator currently remains at large. <sup>15 16 17</sup>

## Summary Table

Location	Site	Year, month	Day	Target	Attacker(s)	Sex	Weapon(s)	Nationality	Age	Mental ill.	Motivation	Dec. attackers	Dec. vict.	Inj. vict.	Previous Conviction
Paris (France)	Urban	2020, 10	16	Civilians	1	M	Knife, airgun	Chechen/French	18	n/a	Islamist	1\1	1	0	n/a
Nice (France)	place of Worship	2020, 10	29	Civilians	1	M	Knife	Tunisian	21	n/a	Islamist	0\1	3	0	n/a
Avignon (France)	Urban	2020, 10	29	Civilians	1	M	Handgun	French	33	yes	Far right	1\1	0	0	n/a

## Comments

All five attacks perpetrated this month in Europe were carried out on French soil. Three of them have a clear Islamist motivation, one of them far-right, while the one perpetrated against the Greek-Orthodox priest has no clear motivation at this time. In two cases, the available information on the attackers was not sufficient to insert them in the chart.

All attacks appear to be the result of individual initiative, but this does not imply that the perpetrators did not receive support from accomplices, specifically in the cases of Samuel Paty's beheading and the Nice cathedral attack where a conspicuous number of individuals were detained.

The Islamist attacks can be related to the one occurred on September 25<sup>th</sup> outside the former Charlie Hebdo headquarter in Paris. Hence, it is possible to refer to a wave of attacks that began immediately after the new publication of satirical cartoons picturing prophet Mohamed in September, in concurrence with the beginning of the trial against fourteen individuals accused of supporting the terrorists who struck France in 2015. <sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/france-terror-avignon-attack-stabbing-police-shooting-nice-today-b1420399.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/breaking-avignon-man-shot-dead-22924296>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/france-security-avignon/french-police-shoot-dead-person-who-threatened-passerby-with-a-weapon-idINKBN27E21T>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/31/lyon-attack-priest-shooting-church-france>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.leprogres.fr/faits-divers-justice/2020/10/31/pretre-blesse-par-balle-un-suspect-arrete-ce-samedi-soir-a-lyon-3e-rue-baraban-orthodoxe-balles>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54771643>

<sup>18</sup> <https://observationanalysis.files.wordpress.com/2020/10/september-2020-terror-attacks-1.pdf>

France has become the target of Islamist terrorism for three reasons:

1- Macron's hard stance against jihadism and domestic Islamism, often referring to the phenomenon as "Islamist separatism" and adding that it will have no place in France.<sup>19 20</sup>

2- Charlie Hebdo's satirical publications of the Muslim prophet, Mohammed and Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan.

3- France's crackdown against Islamist associations and leaders accused of spreading hateful propaganda and the deportation of over 230 Islamist extremists; the measures were implemented immediately after the murder of Samuel Paty.

It is also important to recall that on October 25<sup>th</sup> a group of over 200 Turkish and Azeri extremists shouting "Allahu akbar" tried to physically attack Armenian demonstrators in the city of Lyon.<sup>21 22</sup>

France is now being seen by global Islamists as their number one enemy and there are high risks that more attacks will be perpetrated in the upcoming months.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-macron-separatism-idUSKBN26N213>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/02/world/europe/macron-radical-islam-france.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turks-azeris-lyon-france-armenians-vienne-video-b1422175.html>

<sup>22</sup> <https://ahvalnews.com/grey-wolves/turkish-nationalist-grey-wolves-linked-targeting-armenians-france>