



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on December 9, 2016

EU Report: ISIS Has Sent Up To 1,750 Terrorists to Europe

A report to be delivered on December 9 by Gilles de Kerchove, the EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, says that between 1,500 and 1,750 Islamic fundamentalists who left Europe to fight alongside ISIS in Iraq and Syria in recent years have been sent back to Europe to carry out "specific missions."



A December 9 report in Britain's *Express* newspaper noted that an estimated 5,000 Islamic extremists traveled from Europe to Syria and Iraq to fight alongside ISIS, with about 15-20 percent of those being killed during fighting.

An estimated 30-35 percent of those who left Europe to fight with ISIS have been sent back to Europe with "specific missions" presumed to be terrorist in nature. Those remaining will stay in Syria and Iraq to fight.

The *Express* cited a statement de Kerchove made earlier this month in which he said that it is impossible to know for sure how many Islamic militants were already in Europe.

The EU official, who is a lawyer from Belgium, said, "We have to be prepared because some of them will come to Europe. They may try to come back home and we don't want to repeat the mistake we made in the late 80s when the Russians left Afghanistan and we left these mujahideen in the wild."

De Kerchove added: "The physical caliphate ... is collapsing but we still have the virtual caliphate and this allows the organization to direct attacks." "So far the terrorist organizations have not used the Internet as a weapon, to mount an attack through the Internet," he continued, indicating such possible ISIS targets as nuclear power stations, dams, electricity grids, or even air traffic control systems.

De Kerchove continued, "It has not happened so far ... but I don't exclude that before five years we will be confronted by this."

Britain's *Express* and *Sun* quoted from the EU report: "There are largely two categories of returnees: those in the majority who will drift back and those who will be sent back on specific missions, which are of most concern."

The *Sun* cited statements from the report recalling that foreign fighters who have returned to Europe have staged both foiled and successful attacks, including the slaughter in Paris in November last year and this year's bombings in Brussels in March.

The report further stated: "There is also a significant foreign terrorist fighter contingent with Daesh [ISIS] in Libya which might attempt to use their nationality or family connections to return to Europe."

De Kerchove's warning about ISIS terrorists entering Europe bring to mind similar warnings made by President-elect Donald Trump's pick for Homeland Security secretary, Marine General John Kelly (now retired), who, in his capacity as commander of the U.S. Southern Command, testified before a Senate



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Armed Forces Committee hearing in March 2015.

At that hearing, Kelly testified about “the relative ease with which human smugglers moved tens of thousands of people to our nation’s doorstep” and cautioned that “these smuggling routes are a potential vulnerability to our homeland.”

“As I stated last year, terrorist organizations could seek to leverage those same smuggling routes to move operatives with intent to cause grave harm to our citizens or even bring weapons of mass destruction into the United States,” said Kelly.

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