



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 2, 2017

ISIS Claims Responsibility for Knife Attack in Marseille

A knife-wielding terrorist stabbed two women to death on October 1 in the main train station in Marseille, on France's Mediterranean coast. France's Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told the press that some witnesses to the bloody attack reported hearing the assailant shout "Allahu Akbar!" Arabic for "God is great," as he attacked the two defenseless young women, ages 17 and 20. Islamic terrorists often shout the phrase while committing their attacks, though most Muslims would say that this usage is an abuse of what was meant to be an expression of praise to God.



The ISIS-linked Amaq news agency released a statement on the night of the attack stating that the assailant was acting in response to ISIS calls to target countries in the U.S.-led coalition fighting ISIS extremists in Syria and Iraq. France has been part of that coalition since 2014 and has been targeted by ISIS attacks on more than one occasion.

The French newspaper *Le Parisien* reported that the suspect is of Algerian origin.

Britain's *Daily Mail* reported that eyewitnesses described a man "dressed in black" who launched himself at the two women, who screamed for their lives as others ran for safety.

The *Daily Mail* quoted a police source, which added, "[The stabbings were] frenzied and took place in front of lots of witnesses. The man first shouted threats, and then launched into the two women."

"The two were killed by a knife, and then soldiers on anti-terrorism duties intervened. They shot the man dead," said the police.

French President Emmanuel Macron said in a tweet, "Deeply outraged by this barbaric act, in pain with the families and relatives of the victims of Marseille. I hail the Operation Sentinelle soldiers and the police forces who reacted with extreme calmness and efficiency."

Operation Sentinelle is a counterterrorist security operation involving armed patrols dispersed all over France.

The *Daily Mail* reported that the U.K. Foreign Office issued a statement for British nationals who might be visiting the Marseille area: "Following an incident at Marseille St Charles train station we are advising British nationals in the vicinity to take care and follow the advice of the local security authorities."

A report in the *Chicago Tribune* on October 1 observed that four American college students were attacked with acid at the same Marseille train station last month. Fox News reported on September 17 that the four women, all of whom were Boston College students in their 20s, were hospitalized after the attack. Two of the women had a corrosive liquid sprayed in their face, leaving one with a possible eye injury. Fox News cited a report in the regional newspaper *La Provence*, which stated that a 41-year-old woman, who reportedly had a history of mental health problems, had been arrested in connection with



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the acid attack. The prosecutor said the woman did not make any extremist declarations during the attack. French officials confirmed to Fox News that the incident was not terror-related.

This writer and his wife spent at least an hour in the Marseille train station in 2001, while waiting to change to a train to Nice. Even back then, 16 years ago, we felt like we had left France and were in Algeria or Tunisia, so heavy was the concentration of North Africans in the station.

While the nationality of the Marseille terrorist has yet to be made public by authorities, *Le Parisien* has reported that he is of Algerian origin.

It is easy to see how the large concentration of North Africans in Marseille would make it easier for a terrorist from Algeria or Tunisia to blend in. And there has definitely been terrorist activity in North Africa. A Fox News Report in 2014 cited former French President François Hollande's statement that an Algerian extremist group linked to ISIS had decapitated a French hostage in retaliation for France's airstrikes against militants.

The report noted that Algeria has been fighting Islamic extremists since the 1990s.

Another article in the *Daily Mail* in 2015 noted that the "Islamic State's deadly grip has stretched across the Middle East and into northern-Africa where today, only the Mediterranean Sea separates the militants from Europe."

In July 2016, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, a native of Tunisia living in Nice, deliberately drove an 18-ton truck into crowds celebrating Bastille Day along the seaside resort's Promenade des Anglais, killing a least 84 people. The attacker's rampage ended only after police shot and killed him. He reportedly shouted "Allahu Akbar" as he drove into the crowd.

Nice is just 98 miles from Marseille.

The subject of the Nice terrorist attack came up during last year's presidential campaign. In interviews with national talk-show hosts on July 14, 2016, candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton shared their views on the attack.

We noted [in an article in July 2016](#) that Trump had expressed his first thoughts on the attack via Twitter: "When will we learn? It is only getting worse."

Later on, prompted by former Fox News host Bill O'Reilly's question, Trump said, if elected, he would ask Congress for a declaration of war against ISIS. "This is war, Bill," Trump responded, adding, "Unless we get strong and really, really smart leadership, it's only going to get worse."

In a telephone interview, O'Reilly questioned Hillary Clinton about Trump's stated intention to wage war on the terrorists. Clinton replied, "It is the dream of ISIS to put American ground troops" in a land war in the Middle East.

The former secretary of state told O'Reilly, "We got to do more to understand that this is a war against these terrorist groups ... a different kind of group.... We have to be smart in how we wage it.... One of my priorities is to launch an intelligence surge."

Since assuming office, Trump has not followed through on his pledge as a candidate to go to war against ISIS. Perhaps he has had second thoughts on the wisdom of such a policy, and listened to non-interventionists such as former Texas congressman Ron Paul, who have constantly counseled against getting U.S. troops involved in overseas conflicts.



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What Trump *has* done, however, is to temporarily suspend travel by nationals from countries where terrorism is rampant, with the goal of keeping terrorists out of this country. Among the countries from which Trump banned immigration is Libya, a nation that has become a base for terrorists in North Africa, who have now spread to neighboring Tunisia and Algeria.

Photo of Marseille

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