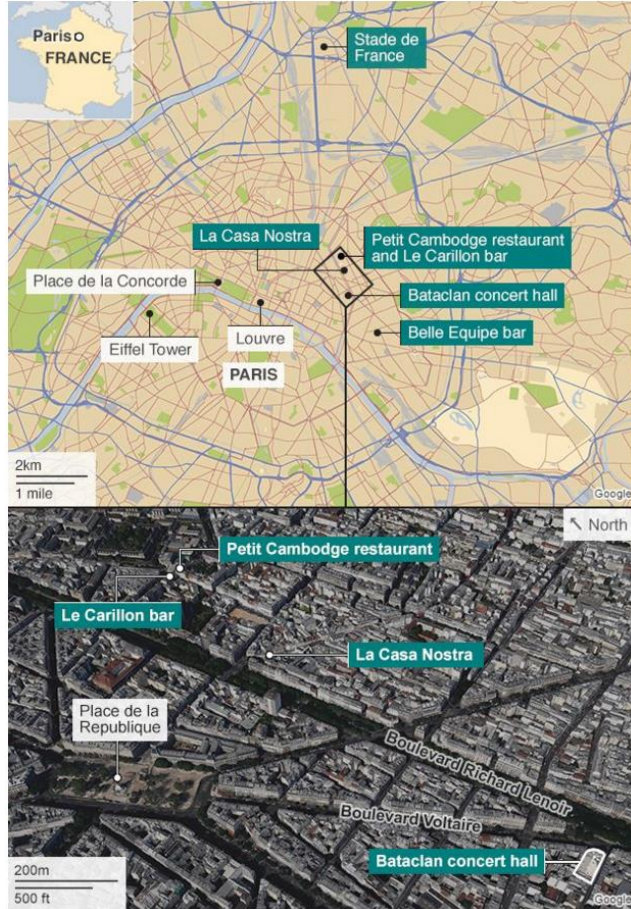


## Multiple swarm attack in Paris, France

### *Insights and recommendations*

#### Event Summary

- On Friday November 13, 2015 a series of coordinated attacks were carried out by three teams on six locations in Paris and nearby areas. One of the targets was a near a stadium hosting an exhibition soccer match between France and Germany in which French President Hollande was in attendance. A second target, in which the largest number of fatalities occurred, was at the Bataclan, a concert hall in which fans were listening to American rock back Eagles of Death Metal. Other targets included crowded bars and restaurants in Paris.
- French authorities have placed the number of dead at 129, though the death toll is expected to increase. Another 352 people were injured, with 99 of those critically wounded.
- Eight terrorists are dead following the attacks on the six locations. Government officials are not able to confirm at this time whether all terrorists have been killed nor has the total number of attackers involved been conclusively verified. Of the eight attackers, seven died in suicide bombings. The eighth was killed in a gun fight with French authorities.
- One of the attackers had a ticket to the soccer game and attempted to enter the venue, which holds 80,000 people. A security guard reported that the attacker was discovered wearing an explosive vest when he was searched at the entrance to the stadium. The attacker detonated the vest while attempting to back away from security. Approximately three minutes later, a second terrorist blew himself up outside the stadium. A third suicide attacker detonated explosives at a nearby McDonalds.
- Police waited roughly two hours before entering the Bataclan, during what they are calling a hostage crisis inside the concert hall. Tweets reportedly received from inside the Bataclan stated that the terrorists were killing people indiscriminately. According to reports from surviving witnesses, the attackers stood at the back of the concert room and shot at the



crowd, some execution style. At least 80 people were killed in the attack at Bataclan with the French Interior Ministry reporting as many as 112 people. The theater is located in close proximity to the Charlie Hedbo offices.

- ISIS has claimed responsibility for the simultaneous terror attacks which the French President has called an 'act of war.' A statement claiming to be from the Islamic State identified France as a 'key target' in retaliation for France's bombing in Syria.
- The type of explosives used by the attackers wearing suicide vests was TATP. Attackers were also in possession of assault rifles and ammunition.

### The attackers

- Omar Ismail Mostefai was the first gunman identified by authorities using his fingerprint. His remains were found among the rubble of the Bataclan concert hall.

He is a 29-year-old French national, known by authorities with a criminal record for eight petty crime convictions. In 2010 he had been singled out as a high priority target for radicalization but was never implicated in an investigation or terrorist association. Investigators are looking into the possibility that he took a trip to Syria last year.

- A Syrian passport was found in close proximity to the body of a second stadium attacker. The passport belonged to a refugee who arrived in Europe through the Greek island Leros on October 3, 2015. There is speculation that the passport may be fake or stolen. An intelligence official reported that the passport did not contain the correct numbers for a legitimate Syrian passport and that the photograph did not match the name.
- Three of the attackers are believed to have been from Brussels, Belgium. Police raided the Brussels neighborhood Molenbeek in which the attackers are believed to have lived and made a number of arrests.

### Insights and lessons learned

- Due to recent events in Syria and Iraq and the increased stress on ISIS, it is clear that the terrorist group is escalating its activity and retaliating outside of their traditional territories of operation. We can assume that this will not only continue but is also likely to escalate as pressure on the group from international coalitions and strikes increase.
- ISIS has demonstrated the capability to carry out large scale attacks within a short period of time including the October 30 plane crash in Sinai, a double suicide bombing in Beirut, Lebanon which left 43 people dead and another 250 injured on November 12 and the most recent coordinated multiple armed assault and suicide bombings in Paris, France (November 13).

- The Paris attack can be defined as a suicide operation as the perpetrators had no known escape plan nor intention to escape, which is typical of this type of ideologically motivated attack. The attackers demonstrated both an intention and willingness to die during the attack. It was the first time that a suicide operation had been carried out in the course of a terrorist attack in France.
- We believe that ISIS may have been influenced by the ramifications of the 2004 Madrid train bombing in which a series of simultaneous, coordination bombings were carried out on the commuter train system of Madrid, as a motivating factor in the choice of target for the attack. The Madrid bombings, carried out an al Qaeda inspired cell, were timed to take place just three days prior to general elections and significantly impacted the change of government that followed. The new Spanish government implemented a significant policy change with respect to involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan which included pulling out of the coalition.

The implications of the Madrid attack may have encouraged terrorist organizations in the Middle East, including ISIS, to carry out attacks aimed at inflicting pain upon liberal societies in which public opinion may be affected and can influence government policies allowing them to continue their atrocities and promote their objectives. We know that ISIS has a clearly declared and defined objective to establish a global caliphate, beginning with Muslim countries and then moving into Europe.

- It is not difficult to acquire weapons and explosives in Europe, as demonstrated by this attack and other incidents in recent years.
- The ability to plan and prepare an attack in one country and carry out the attack in another is a modus operandi we have seen before in previous terror attacks in Europe and appears to be the case in the Paris attack.
- Based on current information, it appears as though one of the attackers may have recently arrived among the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Syria for Europe. In the event that this report is accurate, it validates fears of security risks emerging from arriving refugees which has been and will continue to be a concern for European governments. It is reasonable to assume that ISIS may utilize this strategy as a means of adding pressure on Western governments.
- From what we know of the attackers to date, the group was comprised of a combination of at least one French local, a number of foreigners and a possible refugee. We believe that the use of a combination of persons from different origins has been successful and we may expect that ISIS will continue to utilize this strategy.
- We know that ISIS commits attacks in a highly public manner aimed at garnering as much international attention and media coverage as possible. We cannot disregard the fact that

Paris was selected as a target on this particular date due to the soccer match being played between Paris and Germany that same night. It may have been the intention of the attackers to explode themselves inside the stadium in front of live international television crews. Although one attacker failed to penetrate the stadium, due to security and access control measures in place, live coverage of the game does record the sound of the explosions made by the three suicide bombers who exploded in close proximity to the stadium during the game and the subsequent panic.

- The events which took place in the Bataclan theater with respect to police response have yet to be conclusively determined. However, at this time, reports suggest that the attack was responded to by law enforcement in a manner consistent with a conventional hostage situation. If this is in fact the case, it is a mistake to attempt to deal with terrorists in this way as we know that it was their intention to die during the attack and were allowed to continue their indiscriminate killings of those inside while police were coordinating a response outside the theater.
- Incitement is a significant contributing factor by which people who are not directly or otherwise unaffected by the events in Syria may be so strongly indoctrinated that they are prepared to kill and to be killed. Areas known to be sources of possible recruitment may include jails, mosques and lower income neighborhoods.

French local Mostefai was originally from the Courcouronnes, a poorer suburb south of Paris, just five miles south of Juvisy-sur-Orge, home to the shooter involved in the Charlie Hedbo shootings and the killing of four hostages in a kosher supermarket before being shot by anti-terrorism forces in January 2015.

There are also increasing concerns regarding the threat posed by returning fighters, as appears to be the case with the French attacker who may have visited Syria recently.

### Recommendations

- Given our assumption regarding ISIS objectives and as pressure on ISIS continues to increase, we should expect additional attacks to be carried out by ISIS and by ISIS supporters.
- Policies and doctrines for law enforcement pertaining to terror attacks should be revised. The main objective of any policy should be on a rapid response and the need to operate in a timely manner to stop indiscriminate killing, typical of Muslim extremist organizations.
- For the foreseeable future, there is a need to deploy additional forces on the ground in order to maintain a strong visible presence capable of responding to possible attacks, deterring additional attacks and providing reassurance to the public.

- Governments should place issues related to incitement as their first priority. Incitement of any kind should not be tolerated. We acknowledge that there is a fine line between freedom of speech, as the cornerstone for any democratic liberal society. That being said, the issue should be addressed and policies with respect to incitement need to be revised.
- There is a need to communicate directly with different communities and particularly Muslim communities. It is our belief that these attacks are not supported by the vast majority of Muslim communities both in Europe and throughout the world. Open channels of communication between these communities and the authorities may help intelligence and law enforcement agencies to better focus their efforts.
- Locals returning from Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Yemen and other countries known to have direct links to terrorism who stayed in those countries for a considerable period of time (which should be defined) should be subject to questioning upon arrival to prevent importing of terrorist ideas and capabilities.
- Terrorists are able to take advantage of the open borders in Europe to plan their attack in one country and execute it in another. As events from this attack have demonstrated, there may be a need to enhance cooperation between countries, particularly neighboring countries, vis-à-vis potential suspects of extremism or other links to terrorist involvement.
- Special attention should be given to major events with high publicity. Although we know in this case that the stadium was protected to a level which prevented the suicide bomber from entering, we believe that in the future terrorist groups may learn from this incident and change their modus operandi to circumvent security measures in place.