

Corps Relay is a regular bulletin designed to relay matters of high importance relating to Security, Crime, Terrorism and other related topics.

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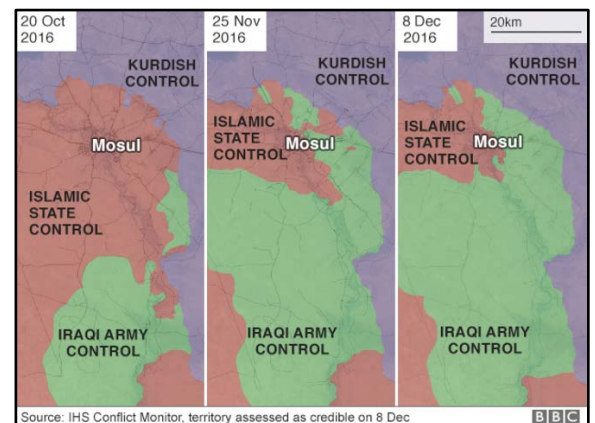
Terrorism Update 2017

Hello and welcome to our first 2017 edition of Corps Relay – the newsletter designed to help you protect your people and property. This month’s bumper edition includes an overview of the Battles for Mosul and how Daesh are losing ground, as well as an extended look at armed guarding within the UK. We also cover the atrocities in Istanbul and Berlin over the festive period, as well as a look at the additional security measures put in place for the London New Year celebrations following those attacks.

Daesh

Mosul is the last remaining stronghold for Daesh in Iraq after it fell to 800 militants in June 2014, and on 16th October 2016 forces started trying to retake the city. The Battle of Mosul is considered key in the military intervention against Daesh in the Middle East, and is a joint offensive by Iraqi government forces, allied militias and international forces.

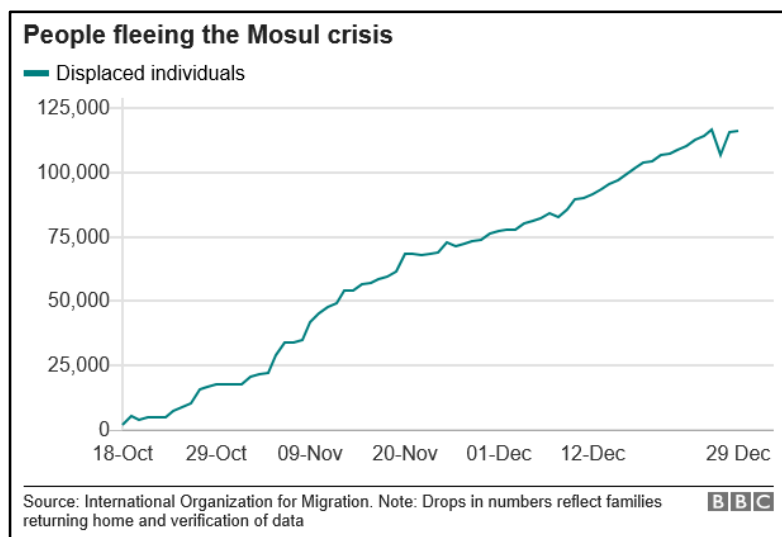
Throughout the end of 2016, the Iraqi forces rapidly advanced from the east and the south-east, recapturing small outlying towns and villages. However, once the forces reached Mosul itself, their progress slowed as they were in target range for snipers, suicide bombers and shellfire. It can also be noted that bad weather hampered their efforts, as poor visibility limited their use of aircraft.



From the map you can see the slowdown in advancements. Between October and November there is a clear difference in the amount of land

controlled by Daesh, but there are only minor differences between the November and December maps.

The UN have predicted that up to 1 million people could be displaced during this crisis, and that 700,000 could need emergency shelter. In the three months since the battles started upwards of 100,000 people have fled Mosul and more than 9000 families are currently living in camps constructed by UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).



It is worth noting however that Daesh aren't just losing ground in Mosul and Iraq. Throughout Syria the government are taking back land, but with this they find grisly discoveries: mass graves of tribal people. Estimates for the total number of bodies in these graves could range anywhere from 5,200 to more than 15,000. Sinjar Mountain in Northern Iraq is home to a large number of these graves. These result from the attack on the minority Yazidi population dating back to August 2014.

The Impact on Western Countries, including the UK

In addition to this, Daily Sabah has reported that a growing number of Western extremists are trying to return home after giving up on Daesh. This isn't easy though for the individual, nor is it easy for the country to which they return. Daesh policy considers those that defect traitors, and that they should be immediately executed. Should the individual escape, they then have a major job convincing the government of their home country that they genuinely want to give up that life and that they are not returning to carry out a suicide or terrorist attack, or to carry out espionage on behalf of Daesh.

Many reasons have been given for wanting to return to their home, including "Daesh is corrupt and un-Islamic". One returning terrorist has been reported as saying, "they think nothing of bringing down buildings with women and children inside, just to kill one person. It's just slaughter".

It's clear to see that Daesh are not only losing ground, but also followers. However lone attackers are still at work, and the threat to Western countries remains as high as ever.

Istanbul Atrocity

A lone gunman caused chaos in a Turkish nightclub in the early hours of the New Year when he began firing randomly into the crowd of at least 600 civilians. 39 people were killed and many more injured in the attack that lasted just seven minutes, including a security guard who was working on the doors and the first person to be killed.

Reina nightclub is a very fashionable venue, popular with foreigners and often visited by celebrities from around the globe. One of the victims in this attack was Bollywood director and producer, Abis Rizvi. Victims range in nationalities from Lebanese and Iraqi to German and Canadian.



Daesh claimed responsibility a day later, but not before the PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party) completely distanced themselves from it and condemned the attack, saying they would "never target innocent civilians". Turkey has been an active player in the fight against Daesh, and the Turkish Deputy Prime Minister said that the attack was a "message" against their operations in Syria, but that those operations would not be affected. The country has been working with Russia in trying to negotiate a peace between the government and moderate rebel forces. They also launched an operation in August with the intent of pushing back Daesh and Kurdish forces.

This isn't the first time that Turkey has been targeted by extremists; a string of terror attacks in recent months has put the country on high alert (approximately 17,000 police officers were on duty in the city the night of the Reina nightclub attack). Attacks on military convoys, a football stadium, Ataturk Airport and even a wedding party have hit the headlines around the world. Not all these attacks however were claimed by Daesh: Kurdish militants have also been active in causing terror within the country.

Police have currently made 12 arrests but the gunman remains at large, with the Turkish media reporting that the perpetrator could be of Uzbek or Kyrgyz nationality.

Berlin Christmas Market Attack

On 19 December 2016, a truck was deliberately driven into the Christmas market beside Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church at Breitscheidplatz in Berlin. The terrorist attack left 12 people dead and 56 others injured. One of the victims was the truck's original driver, Lukasz Urban, who was found shot dead in the passenger seat. The perpetrator was Anis Amri, a Tunisian failed asylum seeker.

On 23 December at around 03:00 CET, Amri was killed in a shootout with police in front of the railway station in Sesto San Giovanni near Milan, Italy. He had just arrived by train from Chambéry, France (via Turin). During a routine patrol, two police officers asked to search his backpack after he said he did not



have any identity documents. Amri pulled out a gun and shot one of the officers in the shoulder; the other officer shot Amri dead. The Italian Minister of the Interior, Marco Minniti, stated that a policeman had been hospitalized with a shoulder injury. On the same day, Amaq released a video of Amri pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIL.^[4] German officials have confirmed that Amri's fingerprints matched those in the inside of the truck.

On 28 December, German prosecutors said they had detained a 40-year-old Tunisian man, who they thought may have been involved in the attack. Amri had saved the number of this man in his phone. Prosecutors stated on the next day that he was released after investigations revealed that he was not a suspected contact of Amri. They also confirmed that the attacker had sent a mobile phone voice message and a picture to a contact shortly before carrying out the attack. The German police raided the homes of two suspected associates on 3 January 2017, including a 26-year-old Tunisian man they suspected of being in contact with Amri and knowing about the attack as well as a former flatmate of Amri. The Tunisian suspect who was suspected of either planning the attack or knowing about it, detained with federal prosecutors stating that he had known Amri since the end of 2015, had met him a day before the attack and both had "very intense conversations". Amri's former flatmate was also being investigated and the attacker had tried to contact him twice on 19 December.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the attack, saying the attacker answered its calls to target the citizens of states that are fighting against it. ISIL released a video of Amri pledging allegiance to the terror group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Increased Police Presence during London's New Year's Eve Celebrations

A huge police presence was on the streets for London's New Year fireworks display as the UK prepared to usher in 2017.

11,000 ticket holders from almost 100 countries flocked to the Thames to view the pyrotechnics, which began as Big Ben strikes midnight.

Thousands of police officers provided a protective ring around the display, and tactics were adjusted following this year's terrorist attacks in Europe.

About 3,000 officers were on duty within and outside ticketed areas, and armed police were a fixture on the tube as they travelled between jobs in a move aimed at reassuring passengers.

Fears of a mass-casualty terror plot targeting one of the country's New Year events were heightened after the use of lorries in devastating attacks on crowded areas of Nice and Berlin.

British Transport police extended officers' working hours on the night for a second year running.

Supt Andy Morgan said: "We developed and improved our security plan for last year's New Year's Eve event following the atrocities in Paris in the previous November and we, of course, have looked at good security, a thorough security boost following a different type of threat in Nice back in July.

"In general, we have a good eyeline on what could happen, we've got very, very good assets both covert and overt deployed out within the footprint and across London, almost joined at the hip with our colleagues from the Metropolitan police to make sure that we're working together to provide that security blanket across London."



Armed Policing in the UK – An Update...

There has been a lot of discussion in the media surrounding armed police since our last edition, so for this issue we have an extended piece regarding the arming of our police forces.

Specialist Unit

The government is planning to create a specialist armed police unit that would combine three current forces to better protect Britain's "critical infrastructure" against terrorist attacks. The Civil Nuclear Constabulary, the British Transport Police and the Ministry of Defence Police will be brought under one command to help protect Britain's nuclear power stations, critical road points, ports and airports. The new force would be approximately 4,000 officers strong and would also double up as a rapid deployment unit should the country come under attack. It will be named the Armed Infrastructure Constabulary force.

Northumbria Police

Northumbria Police is one of the nine forces in the UK to be given Home Office funding to increase the number of armed police officers in its ranks. The number of officers would be increased by approximately 50% and the force described this as "a significant uplift".

Officers have already been seen across the county at events such as the Sunderland Air Show and the Great North Run and have been "very well received by the public" says Chief Inspector Simon Hall, head of the firearms unit. They have also been present at the Stadium of Light for Sunderland Football Club home matches, although they keep a low profile.



Vauxhall Station

Armed police have been welcomed at the busy Vauxhall area of London. Both commuters and local businesses applauded the anti-terror crackdown around Vauxhall station. The station is a busy intersection between overground and underground lines. As well as the busy bus station nearby, it is the nearest train station to MI6 Headquarters and Vauxhall Bridge. The new American Embassy is also due to be completed later this year in the Nine Elms area. Travis Austin, manager at the Counter bar in the station has said "that puts a nice big red dot on Vauxhall. So it's good to have the extra police presence." Scotland Yard officers handed out leaflets to the public and, before the operation went live, to local businesses detailing the measures that officers plan to put in place. These include metal detection arches, more stop and search and search dogs. Plain-clothed officers will also be present, and they have said that the police will be using "other security measures that may not be visible".

Canterbury Cathedral

Armed police will be deployed at Canterbury Cathedral amongst other hotspots in the country's south-east. Bluewater Shopping Centre and the Port of Dover are also included in the list of iconic sites. Kent Deputy Chief Constable Paul Brandon is keen to stress, however, that there isn't an immediate danger to the area. He is quoted as saying "While we are not expecting a direct threat to the county, we do want to make sure that should circumstances change quickly, we are adequately prepared."



Future issues of Corps Relay will continue to provide updates on policing and security here in the UK. In the meantime the international terror threat level in the UK remains at severe, meaning an attack is "highly likely".

The current threat level from international terrorism for the UK was raised on 29 August 2014 and is now assessed as: **SEVERE**

The threat level for Irish related terrorism is set separately for Northern Ireland and Great Britain

In Northern Ireland it is: **SEVERE** and in Great Britain **SUBSTANTIAL**

NOTE:

- **CRITICAL** means that a terrorist attack is imminent
- **SEVERE** means that a terrorist attack is highly likely
- **SUBSTANTIAL** that an attack is a strong possibility
- **MODERATE** that an attack is possible but unlikely

Everyone should always remain alert to the danger of terrorism and report any suspicious activity to the

Police on 999 or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

REPORT IT!

You may end up saving a life or lives... and there is nothing more rewarding than that...

For further information, or for back copies of *Corps Relay*, feel free to contact our team direct on 07773 320234 or via e-mail at mbluestone@corpssecurity.co.uk or ebrooksbank@corpssecurity.co.uk

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