

Europe Monitoring

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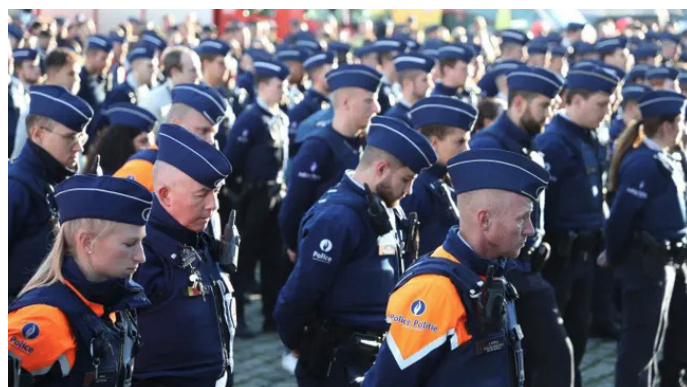


Belgium

Police killer was on terror list

In mid-November, a man attacked two police officers with a knife in the Belgian capital of Brussels. Officers were taken to the hospital, one of whom later died from his injuries. A spokesman for the public prosecutor's office in Brussels said the attacker shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) in Arabic during the attack. He was gunned down, according to police. As for his state of health, it was only said that he was in the hospital unfit for interrogation. The assassin was born in Belgium in 1990 and was in prison from 2013 to 2019 for violations

According to Belgian media reports, the man stabbed the patrol officers near the Gare du Nord



Mourning Belgian police remember the victims Photo: Imago

train station in the Schaerbeek district. A police officer summoned to reinforce the attacker shot and "put him out of action," reported the Belga news agency. The man was arrested and taken

to a hospital. According to media reports, he was shot in the stomach and leg.

Belgium's Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden wrote on Twitter that she was in close contact with the police and Mayor Philippe Close. He described the incident as a "horrible tragedy". The President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, wrote that she was shocked by the murder of a police officer on duty.

"My thoughts are with the family and friends of the deceased official," Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said on Twitter. He hopes the hospitalized officer is doing well.

The alleged cop killer in Brussels was on an official list of terrorist suspects. The convicted man was on a list of potential terrorists, prosecutors spokesman Eric Van Der Sypt said. The suspect came to a police station and expressed his hatred of the police. The officers could not have arrested him.

A justice spokeswoman said the suspect volunteered for psychological help at the police station. He was therefore not arrested, but sent to a hospital. He left shortly thereafter.

Islamist-motivated attacks took place in Brussels in March 2016. A total of 32 people were killed and 340 others injured in the attacks at Brussels airport and in a metro station. Since then there have been a number of attacks on police officers or soldiers in Belgium.

Most recently, in May 2018, there was an attack on police officers classified as terrorist. At that time, a man in Liège killed two policewomen and a student while shouting "Allahu Akbar". The at-

tacker was shot dead by police officers. In August 2017, a man attacked soldiers with a knife in central Brussels. He was also shot.

In August 2016, an Algerian man in Charleroi attacked two female police officers in front of a police station while shouting "Allahu Akbar", injuring their faces and necks before he was shot dead. The jihadist militia Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the crime.

European Union

Are Iranian Revolutionary Guards a terror organization?

EU foreign ministers at their meeting this month imposed new sanctions on Iran, including on commanders and a Revolutionary Guard company. But they still shy away from another symbolic step: classifying the Iranian dictatorship's Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization. You have to prove this possibility very carefully, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said in Brussels after she had expressed sympathy for it.



Revolutionary Guards in Tehran / Photo: dpa

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard was formed after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 as the elite unit of the Ayatollah regime. It is subordinate to the spiritual leader and is seen as the most important pillar of the regime. Their troop strength is estimated at 150,000 men in all arms. In the EU, the Revolutionary Guard has been subject to sanctions since 2010 for being responsible for the country's nuclear program, which violated UN regulations. Entry bans and asset freezes were also imposed on leading members.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the EU introduced its own list of people and or-

ganizations involved in terrorist acts. The initiative for this lies with the member states. A "competent authority" must have initiated an investigation based on "conclusive evidence or circumstantial evidence". The Council of Member States then decides unanimously on inclusion in a joint list. 13 people and 21 organizations are currently on it, including the PKK.

The EU foreign policy representative Josep Borrell referred to this procedure. However, he did not mention that as late as May he himself was campaigning for the United States to remove the Revolutionary Guard from its terrorist list. Borrell wanted to get things moving in the negotiations about the nuclear agreement with Tehran. A senior EU official warned before the foreign ministers' deliberations that they should now abandon these negotiations and put maximum pressure on Iran. The Vienna talks are the only way to contain the well-advanced nuclear program with which Iran is getting the option of a nuclear bomb. Economic sanctions would have to be lifted for an agreement with Tehran. According to Iranian ideas, this also applies to the wide network of companies that are controlled by the Revolutionary Guards.

Although many foreign ministers supported this approach, they nonetheless urged a sharper course. Eastern states in particular pointed out the danger of Iran supplying more weapons to Russia. According to Ukrainian information, Moscow is now trying to acquire Fateh-110 (range up to 300 kilometers) and Zolfaghar (up to 700 kilometers) ballistic missiles from Iran, following on from kamikaze drones. However, there is still no evidence of a delivery of these rockets.

Turkiye

Istanbul mayor facing trial

The public prosecutor wants Erdogan critic Ekrem Imamoglu to be found guilty of insulting the Supreme Electoral Council. In its conclusion to the trial, the prosecution stated that Imamoglu should be punished and banned from holding public office. The popular CHP politician is considered one of the most important opponents of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.



Luise Amtsberg; Photo: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

Critics see the trial of Imamoglu as an attempt to remove a potential challenger to Erdogan from the political scene. Imamoglu's election victory in March 2019 was a severe blow to Erdogan's AKP party, which had been the mayor of Istanbul for 25 years. The AKP petitioned to have the vote invalidated, which led to a re-election a few months later - with a clear majority for Imamoglu. The mayor is accused of insulting the electoral council by calling it stupid to cancel legitimate elections on November 4, 2019. Imamoglu says his remark was not directed at the electoral council but at Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu, who called him "a fool" and accused him of criticizing Turkey during a visit to the European Parliament. The trial was adjourned until December 14 after the prosecutor's plea. Then the defense should hold their closing arguments and by then a motion for bias against the judges' panel should be decided.

Erdogan demanding „neutral stance“ from German Chancellor

After German Chancellor Olaf Scholz defended Greece against threats from Turkey this month, Erdogan called for a "neutral stance" in a phone call with the German Chancellor. Against the background of tensions with Athens, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called for a "neutral stance" from Germany. Erdogan announced this to Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) in a telephone call, according to a tweet from the Turkish Ministry of Communications. Relations with neighboring Greece are currently at a low point. Ankara argues, for example, that Athens is violating international treaties by militarizing islands in the East Aegean. Greece justifies it with a threat from Ankara and the right to self-defense. Erdogan had recently repeatedly threatened Greece with the sentence: "We could suddenly come one night." During his first visit to Athens, Scholz defended Greece against threats from Turkey. Greece had also decided to station the first six German Marder armored personnel carriers delivered as part of a Ukraine ring exchange on the border with Turkey.



Erdogan and Scholz Photo: German Government

In the phone call with Scholz, Erdogan also suggested reviving the dialogue between Ankara and the European Union, the talks on updating the customs union and the accession negotiations. The EU accession negotiations with Turkey, which began in 2005, have been on hold for several years because of the unsatisfactory developments in the country from Brussels' perspective.