

Terrorist Attacks in France, Tunisia and Kuwait Kill Dozens

BEIRUT, Lebanon – In a matter of hours and on three different continents, militants carried out attacks on Friday that killed scores of civilians, horrified populations and raised thorny questions about the evolving nature of international terrorism and what can be done to fight it.



The Imam Sadiq Mosque in Kuwait City after a suicide bomber killed at least 25 Shiite worshipers during Friday Prayer. Credit Raed Qutena/European Pressphoto Agency

On the surface, the attacks appeared to be linked only by timing.

In France, a man stormed an American-owned chemical plant, decapitated one person and apparently tried to blow up the

facility. [In Tunisia](#), a gunman drew an assault rifle from a beach umbrella and killed at least 38 people at a seaside resort. And in Kuwait, a suicide bomber blew himself up inside a mosque during communal prayers, killing at least 25 Shiite worshippers.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attacks in [Tunisia](#) and Kuwait, according to statements on Twitter. But it almost did not matter for terrorism's global implications whether the three attacks were coordinated. Each in a different way underlined the difficulties of anticipating threats and protecting civilians from small-scale terrorist actions, whether in a mosque, at work or at the beach.



A body on a Tunisian beach. Credit European Pressphoto Agency

The attacks occurred at a time of fast evolution for the world's most dangerous terrorist organizations, which continue to find ways to strike and spread their ideology despite more than a decade of costly efforts by the United States and others to kill their leaders and deny them sanctuary.

The United States has killed leaders of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, [Yemen](#) and elsewhere, but the group has maintained a string of branches and melded itself into local insurgencies. The Islamic State, also known as [ISIS](#) or ISIL, has worked on two levels, seeking to [build its self-declared caliphate](#) on captured territory in Iraq and Syria while inciting attacks abroad.

Fueling that expansion are civil wars and the collapse of state structures in Arab countries from Libya to Yemen that have opened up ungoverned spaces where jihadists thrive, while social media has given extremists a global megaphone to spread their message.

While officials in the three countries investigated the attacks, many noted that leaders of the Islamic State have repeatedly called for sympathizers to kill and sow mayhem at home.

Earlier this week, the spokesman for the Islamic State, [Abu Mohammed al-Adnani](#), greeted the group's followers for [Ramadan](#), telling them that acts during the Muslim holy month earned greater rewards in heaven.

"Muslims, embark and hasten toward jihad," Mr. Adnani said in an audio message. "O mujahedeen everywhere, rush and go to make [Ramadan](#) a month of disasters for the infidels."

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