
INCREASED TERROR THREAT LEVEL

IN SWEDEN

2023-08-17

On the 17th of August the Swedish security agency, Säpo, announced an elevation in the terrorist threat level - from a 3 (elevated threat) to a 4 (high threat).

Despite no immediate evidence of an impending attack, Säpo cited a noteworthy shift that has occurred over the past year. Sweden has transitioned from being a "legitimate" target to a "prioritized" target for attacks - particularly within the spectrum of general threats against Western countries. The security agency's evaluation underlines their expectation of prolonged period of security instability.

Trends and background

Al-qaeda and Al-shabaab's impact

Over the weekend 12-13 August, Al-Qaeda published a statement calling for "revenge" against Sweden and Denmark after the Quran burning incidents in both countries. Other organisations involved in terrorism, Al-Shabaab, has also threatened Sweden. However, Al-Shabaab operations are concentrated in the Horn of Africa, especially in Somalia, so its capabilities in Europe are limited. Moreover, Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Shiite militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon, declared that Sweden would be considered a country "at war with Islam and Muslims" if the desecration of the Quran continued, and that Muslims should "punish" those who facilitate attacks on the Quran.

These statements raise the risk for lone-wolf attacks against Swedish domestic and foreign security in the short term. These actors might act in accordance with the exhortations from larger terrorist organisations. In the long term (six to 12 months), the risk of attacks by larger terrorist organisations is likely to increase. Primary attacks are likely to target large events, touristic places, Christian religious sites, and transportation hubs.

Vulnerabilities beyond borders

Notably, Swedish diplomats and facilities abroad have become vulnerable targets, as demonstrated by recent attacks on the Swedish embassy in Baghdad and the attack on the Swedish consulate employee in Izmir. The escalating risks also include larger terrorist organisations, with projected possibilities of inducing attacks over a longer time frame/horizon. Prime targets include major events, tourist destinations, christian religious sites, and transportation hubs.

Economic and diplomatic repercussions

Global impact on Swedish economy

International repercussions have begun materializing, as various countries, including the US, Australia, Canada, and the UK, have issued travel advisories due to the heightened level of threat in Sweden. The potential for terrorist attacks has cast a shadow on economic prospects, leading to postponed investments, canceled business trips, and reduced tourism. Boycotts of Swedish products, called for by Hezbollah's leader and others, could further strain the Swedish economy.

Managing the unfolding situation

Ongoing concerns and preparedness

In response to the evolving scenario, Swedish authorities are reviewing the public order act to empower the police in declining future Quran burnings. This expected change, however, lacks majority parliamentary support at present. The upcoming Stockholm culture festival, and other upcoming large events in Sweden, emphasizes the importance of vigilance at large gatherings, underscoring the dynamic nature of the threat landscape.

Säpo's recommendations

Proactive measures and counteraction

The heightened terrorist threat level serves as a call to action for various societal actors, including government agencies and corporations, to take appropriate measures to safeguard their operations. SÄPO prioritizes personnel security, physical security, and information security as critical aspects of counteracting terrorist attacks. Recognizing the role of disinformation in exacerbating security challenges, SÄPO encourages scrutiny of sources and the dissemination of accurate information to combat these issues. This approach is vital to curbing the dissemination of false rumors, especially during ongoing security incidents.

In the short term, 2Secure's recommendations are as follows:

Recomendations

Individuals



Do not be afraid but be aware. Exercise caution and increase attention to your surroundings, especially at large gatherings. Remember previous training or contact 2Secure if you need assistance with training.



Try not to look at your mobile phone, text, or email and try to minimise the use of your digital devices in public spaces. Do not wear headphones when you are in public places or when travelling by plane, train, metro, or bus. It is important to be able to hear if something happens.



Be cautious about your sources of information. Always double check and verify the information through legitimate sources. Trust Swedish Government information and advice.



Localise emergency exits at crowded sites and work on the mental preparation of how you will act and react if you find yourself in a difficult situation. Preparation and training are key elements in dealing with emergency situations.



Please always follow the Swedish Government's recommendations. Check the MSB's [checklists](#) and [training](#) material, which are a minimum, and contact 2Secure if you have further questions.



If you see something unusual in a public place, report it to the police.



If you have recently changed your mobile phone number or email address, make sure your 2Secure personal advisor has the latest contact information in case we need to reach you quickly.

Corporations



Assess threats to your business, carry out a robust risk assessment, and strengthen security. For this it is crucial to identify vulnerabilities and most important assets.



Review your existing emergency and crisis plans. Businesses should consider what kind of crisis preparedness they have in place, how they can manage a lockdown, whether they have food and water for their staff.



Organisations should be able to identify insider threats and conduct background checks on all their staff. Businesses should review key positions and evaluate if they have redundancy.



Ensure effective communication in the event of an emergency.



Swedish and Danish companies operating in or travelling to Muslim countries are advised to increase security measures at their premises, review their crisis management plans, ensure 24/7 emergency support systems and provide security training for their employees, as well as monitor the locations and actions of protests.



Swedish and Danish nationals working in or travelling to Muslim countries are advised to keep a low profile and avoid displaying symbols representing their countries.



Swedish and Danish organisations operating in Muslim countries should review their business continuity plans, as boycotts of Swedish products are very likely.

Do you want to know more about how this situation can affect your employees or your business?

Contact 2Secure or email
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2Secure can support organisations and individuals to better understand the risks and threats domestically and internationally, provide strategic advice, monitor the situation domestically and internationally, provide relevant training, and review crisis management and emergency procedures. For more information, contact info@2secure.se

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