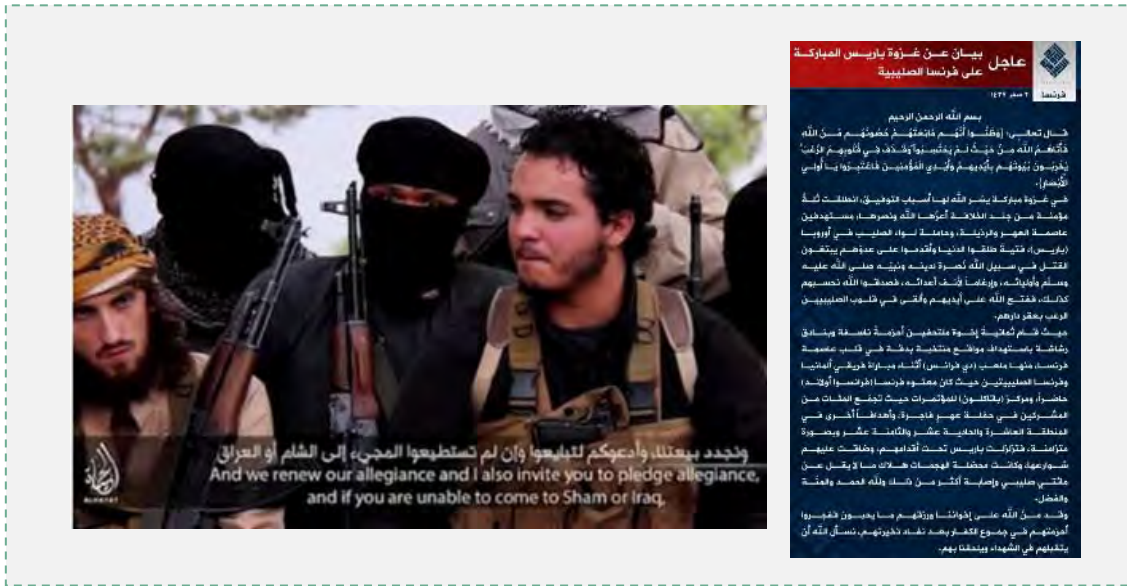




November 17, 2015

ISIS Terrorist Attack in Paris Initial Overview and Implications (Updated to November 16, 2015)



Left: A scene from an ISIS video showing a French-speaking terrorist operative calling for more attacks in France (Al-Jazeera, November 13, 2015). Right: ISIS's claim of responsibility for the terrorist attack in Paris (Akhbar al-Muslimin, November 14, 2015).

Overview

1. On the night of November 13, 2015, **ISIS carried out a coordinated terrorist attack in six locations Paris. Three squads** carried out the attack, involving **eight terrorist operatives**. According to Paris Prosecutor François Molins, **at least 132 people were killed** (of whom 103 have been identified so far). Three hundred fifty-two people were injured, 99 of them critically or mortally. **The worst terrorist attack on French soil since the Second World War**, it was a seminal event for the French. It was also **the largest attack ISIS has carried out in the West**. **ISIS claimed responsibility** for the attack and launched a media campaign **threatening France and other Western countries with more attacks**.
2. **The modus operandi of the attack differed from ISIS's operations in the West so far**. Since the attacks of the American-led coalition against ISIS began and until recently, ISIS's attacks in Western countries have been operationally unsophisticated and simple. They have been mostly carried out by lone operatives **in solidarity with or inspired by**

ISIS, but not acting under its direct orders and with direct support. The attack in Paris was apparently well planned, and directed by **ISIS operatives in Syria.** **Carrying out such an attack necessitates a different kind of planning and early operational, logistic and intelligence preparations. It was based on an operational infrastructure in France and had logistic backup in Belgium.**

3. ISIS regards the attack in Paris as **an operational success and a boost for its image.** It joins **its two previous "successes:"** the suicide bombing attacks in the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburb of Beirut (43 dead) and the downing of the Russian plane over the Sinai Peninsula (224 dead). **Those three terrorist attacks, carried out within the relatively short span of two weeks, demonstrated ISIS's operational capabilities to carry out complex attacks in various locations far from its power base in Syria and Iraq. The successes may encourage ISIS to carry out additional showcase attacks** to deter its enemies and reduce the pressure they exert on it in the battle zones in Iraq and Syria.

Sites of the Attacks in Paris

4. The attacks in Paris were carried out by **eight ISIS terrorists divided into three squads operating in six locations in central and northern Paris:**

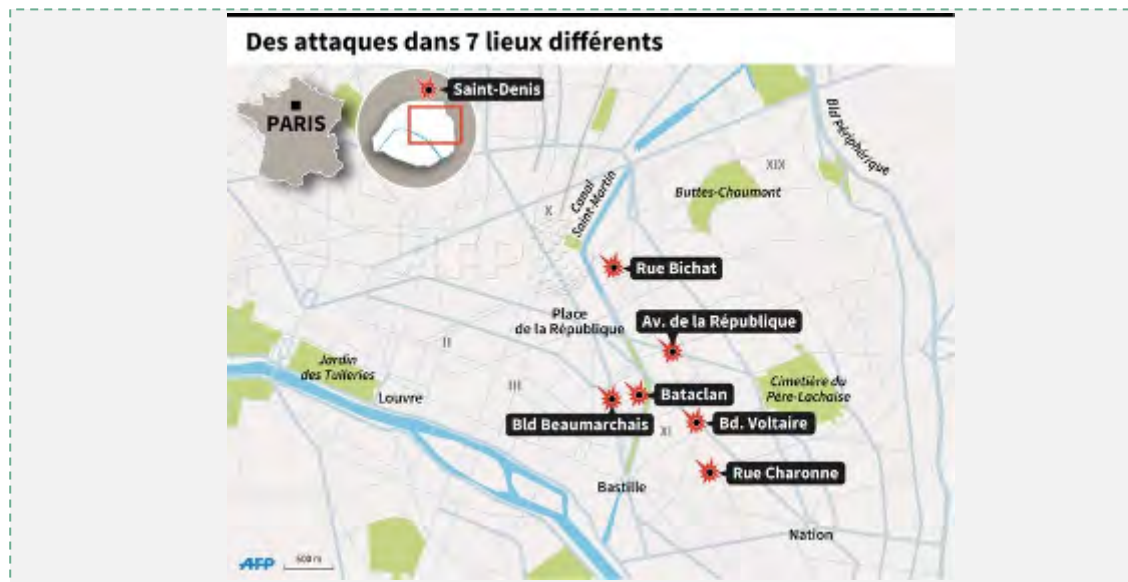
1) **The Bataclan theatre:** The main focus of the terrorist attack. At 21:40 **three armed terrorists** broke into the theatre in the middle of a rock concert and opened fire at the audience. At 00:20 (a relatively long time after the attack began) a police force entered the theatre. Two of the terrorists detonated explosive belts and the third was shot by police. **There were 89 fatalities and hundreds of wounded** (Lemonde.fr, Lefigaro.fr, November 14, 2015).



French police deployed at the Bataclan (YouTube).

- 2) **Stade de France, the stadium located in St. Denis, north of Paris: Three terrorists carried out suicide bombing attacks.** They bought tickets and tried to enter the stadium (all or some of them). At the time a France-Germany soccer match was being played, with French President Hollande in attendance. They were not permitted to enter the stadium and therefore blew themselves up outside. At 21:20 there was an explosion on Avenue Jules Rimet, near the stadium. At 21:30 a second terrorist detonated an explosive belt near one of the entrances. At 21:53 the third terrorist detonated an explosive belt. **One person was killed** in the first explosion.
- 3) **Two terrorists** drive in a black Seat to the center of Paris where they carried out **three shooting attacks and a suicide bombing attack:**¹
 - i) **Rue Alibert corner of Rue Bichat in the 10th Arrondissement:** At 21:25 two terrorists armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles went to Rue Alibet and opened fire at Le Carillon restaurant and its neighbor, a restaurant called Le Petit Cambodge. **They killed 15 people and wounded ten.**
 - ii) **Rue de Charonne:** At 21:36 terrorists in a black Seat went to a restaurant called Le Belle Equipe and opened fire, **killing 19 people.**
 - iii) **Rue de la Fontaine au Roi in the 11th Arrondissement:** At 21:32 terrorists in a black Seat went to a bar called Bonne Biere and opened fire, **killing five people.**
 - iv) **Boulevard Voltaire in the 11th Arrondissement:** A suicide bomber blew himself up near Le Comptoir Voltaire restaurant. **There were no casualties.**

¹ According to media reports on the morning of November 18, 2015, the terrorist squad may have had a third member. That has not yet been verified.



The locations of the terrorist attacks in central Paris and the stadium to the north (Twitter.com).

Initial Information about the Terrorist Attack

5. The terrorist attacks in Paris were carried out by eight ISIS operatives (according to another version, nine). Seven of them were killed during the attacks and one (or two) escaped. Six blew themselves up with explosive belts. Several shot Kalashnikov assault rifles before they detonated the belts. One of them was shot and killed by the French police.

6. **At least three of the terrorists were French. Some of them had been in Syria and fought in the ranks of ISIS. Apparently they had been sent from Syria to France for the specific purpose of carrying out the attack** (at least one, a suicide bomber, had gone through Turkey and **joined the Syrian refugees** making their way from Greece to Central Europe and the West). The attack seems to have been **planned, directed and supported by ISIS in Syria**. According to Iraqi intelligence sources, whose reliability is uncertain, the attack was planned in Al-Raqqah, ISIS's "capital" in Syria (AP, November 15, 2015).

7. According to the information issued to date, **the terrorists had logistic backup in Belgium (See below) and support from an auxiliary network in France. French security forces are currently working to expose the network**. According to the French minister of the interior, on the night of November 15, 2015, France carried out a wave of detentions, apprehending 23 individuals suspected of terrorism and placing 104 under house arrest. Arrests continue.² Speaking before the French Parliament on November 16, 2015, President Hollande said the attacks had been **planned in Syria, organized in Belgium and prepared on French soil**.

² On the morning of November 18, 2015, the French police raided a safe house in St. Denis in northern Paris. They suspected that Abdelhamid Abbaoud, one of the terrorists who planned the attack, was hiding there. According to initial media reports there was an exchange of fire during which a female suicide bomber blew herself up. According to initial reports Abdelhamid Abbaoud was not found in the safe house.

8. The following is initial information about the attacks, based on reports from the Paris prosecutor and information in the French and global media:

1) According to the Paris prosecutor, during the attacks **seven terrorists were killed** who operated in **three "coordinated terrorist teams."** **An eighth terrorist escaped** and was currently being hunted. The three teams of terrorists were equipped with **the same types of weapons and wore the same type of explosive belt.** "A police source" told Agence France-Presse that the terrorists were **young, well-trained**, not masked and wore jeans and sneakers (Agence France-Presse, November 15, 2015).

2) The two cars used by the terrorists were identified by investigators through the use of cameras and videos: they were a **black Seat** found in Montreuil with **three Kalashnikov assault rifles**, and a **black VW Polo** with Belgian registration. Four attacks were carried out in the center of Paris using the Seat; the Polo was used to bring the terrorists to the Bataclan (and possibly to the stadium).

3) The Paris prosecutor confirmed that one of the suicide bombers at the stadium was **in possession of a Syrian passport.** It belonged to a Syrian national born in 1990 registered as a refugee by Greece in October 2015. The passport may have been forged. Near the body of another stadium suicide bomber police found **an Egyptian passport** (Liberation, November 14, 2015).

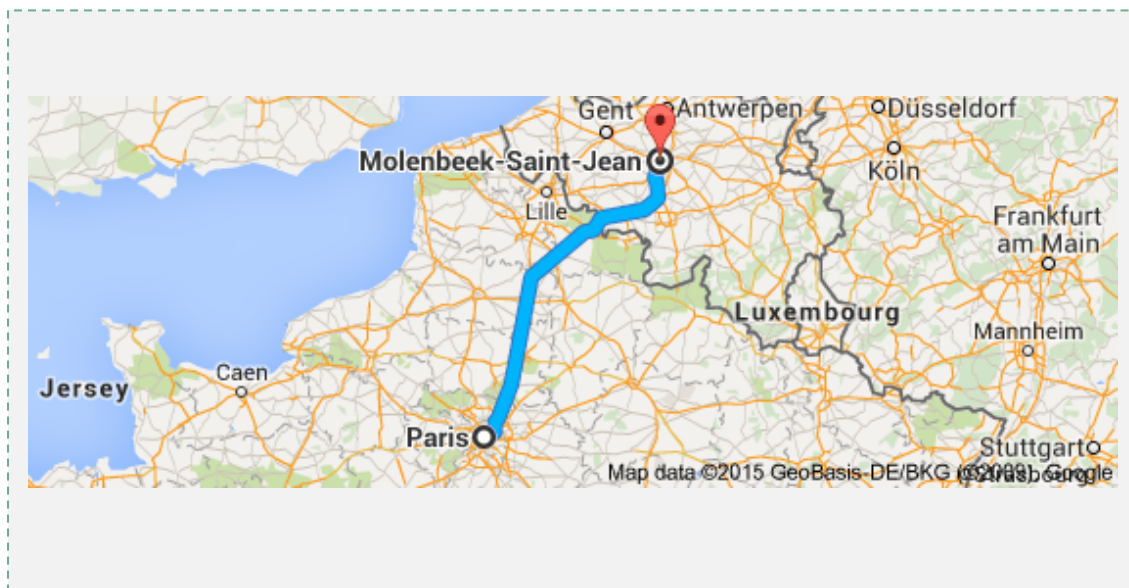


Paris Prosecutor François Molins (YouTube).

Belgium, the Logistic Backup of the Paris Attack

9. Belgium was the logistic backup of the terrorists who carried out the attack in Paris. After the attack 5-7 operatives were detained in Belgium, most of them apparently in the **Molenbeek municipality of Brussels** (a well-known jihadist stronghold). The media reported that **two of the French terrorists who carried out the attack had departed for Paris from Molenbeek**. After the attack collaborators who were involved in the attack fled there.

10. **Mehdi Nemmouche**, the terrorist who carried out the shooting attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels lived in Molenbeek. **Many Belgian jihadists have gone from Molenbeek to Syria to join ISIS**.³ The Molenbeek municipality is the home of the jihadist network called "Sharia4Belgium," which sent Belgian operatives to fight in Syria and provided them with logistic support. The network was outlawed in Belgium and several of its leaders were detained.⁴ However, **the jihadist infrastructure in Belgium continues functioning** despite the fact that the network was outlawed, obvious from the current terrorist attacks in Paris.



The route taken by the terrorists from Belgium to Paris (Google Maps).

³ **Molenbeek** has about 95,000 residents, more than a quarter of them Muslims. Unemployment is more than 30%. Most residents are not integrated into Belgian society. Molenbeek has 22 mosques, and is home to hundreds of young men who underwent Islamic religious radicalization. They are the human infrastructure for Belgians who join ISIS. According to the Belgian ministry of the interior, **270 Belgians have joined the ranks of ISIS** (Haaretz correspondent from Brussels, November 16, 2015).

⁴ For further information see the February 2, 2014 bulletin, "Foreign fighters from Western countries in the ranks of the rebel organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad in Syria."

Initial Information about the Terrorists and Their Collaborators

11. 11. The following is initial information about the identity of the terrorists who carried out the attacks in Paris and their collaborators. It is based on French and global media:

1) **Ismael Omar Mostefai: French national of Algerian descent**, born in 1985, one of the terrorists in the Bataclan. He comes from the town of Courcouronnes in the Essonne department. He has a criminal record, having committed crimes against property between 2004 and 2010. According to Le Monde **he was in Syria between the fall of 2013 and the spring of 2014**. He returned from Syria to the neighborhood of La Madeleine in Chartres (southwest of Paris), where he lived in recent years. The French intelligence services had him under surveillance as a member of a small group of Salafist operatives. He was sentenced to prison eight times but was never served a sentence. According to the Paris prosecutor he had connections with terrorist elements as early as five years ago (AP). The French police detained seven of his relatives for questioning.

2) **Three brothers of the Abdelsalam family, French nationals who lived in Belgium**, were involved in the terrorist attacks in Paris. One was a suicide bomber and the others were collaborators:

i) **Ibrahim Abdelsalam**, suicide bomber, 31, blew himself up near Le Comptoir Voltaire restaurant in the 11th Arrondissement. He owned a bar in Molenbeek. Two weeks before the attack the bar was closed because the police found drugs were being sold there.

ii) **Salah Abdelsalam: 26, French national, born in Belgium, responsible for the logistics of the attack**. Rented the VW Polo in Belgium used by the terrorists at the Bataclan. Was present in Paris during the attack, escaping afterwards and detained for questioning at the Belgian border. He was released several hours later; the reason is unclear. According to (unconfirmed) reports, he may have been detained in Molenbeek. He managed the bar in Molenbeek with his brother.

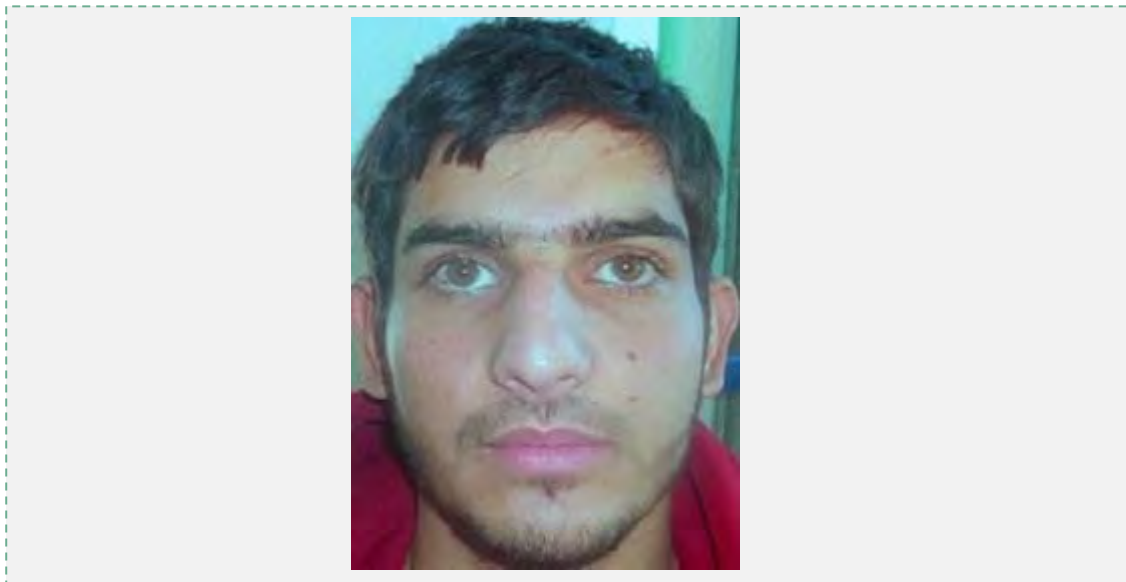


Salah Abdelsalam (Twitter account of the French police, November 15, 2015).

iii) **Mohammed Abdelsalam**: Involved in the terrorist attack in Paris and detained in Belgium

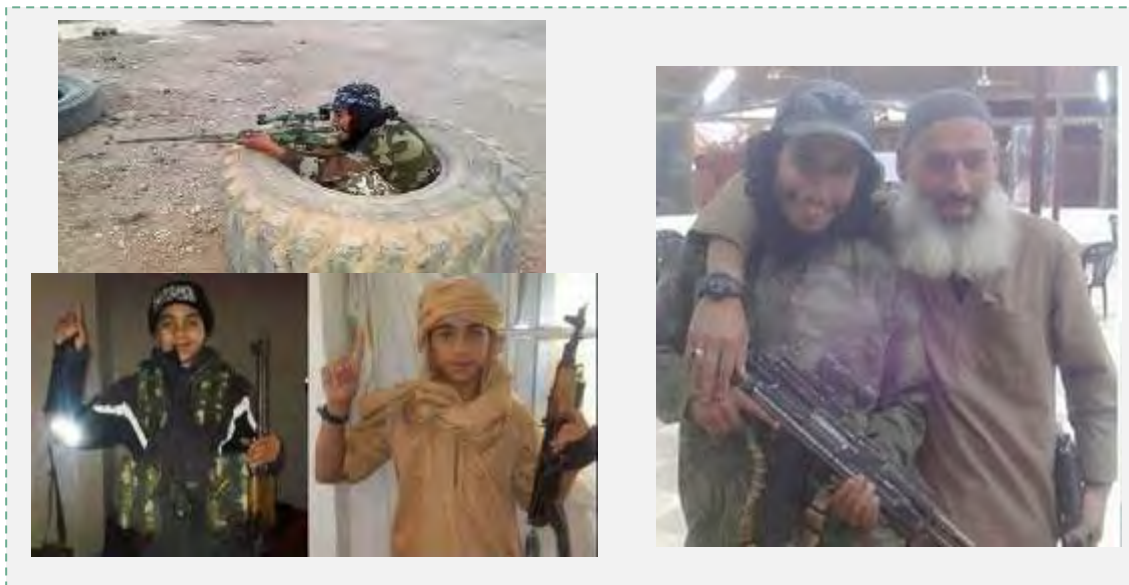
3) **Abdelhamid Abbaoud (or Aboud)**: **Belgian national, 27**, according to a French source **co-planned the terrorist attack in Paris**. He also grew up in Molenbeek. In the past he planned attacks on churches and railroads that were prevented. **Was in Syria and fought in the ranks of ISIS**. On the morning of November 18, 2015, the French police raided a safe house in St. Denis where they expected to find him. According to initial reports he was to there.

4) **Ahmed al-Muhammad**: **Syrian national, 24, from Idlib in northwestern Syria**. Apparently sent from Syria to Paris at the beginning of October 2015 to join the terrorists who would carry out the attack. He went from Turkey to the Greek island of Leros on October 3, and from there joined Syrian refugees going to Paris. Reportedly, he went to Leros in a boat that capsized, was saved by a Greek ship and received a Greek refugee card (Al-Arabiya, November 16, 2015). He went to Paris via Macedonia (October 7, 2015), Croatia (October 8, 2015) Hungary and Austria. **He was one the suicide bombers who blew themselves up at the stadium in St. Denis.**



Ahmed al-Muhammad, Syrian suicide bomber who arrived in Paris via Greece posing as a refugee (Al-Arabiya, November 16, 2015).

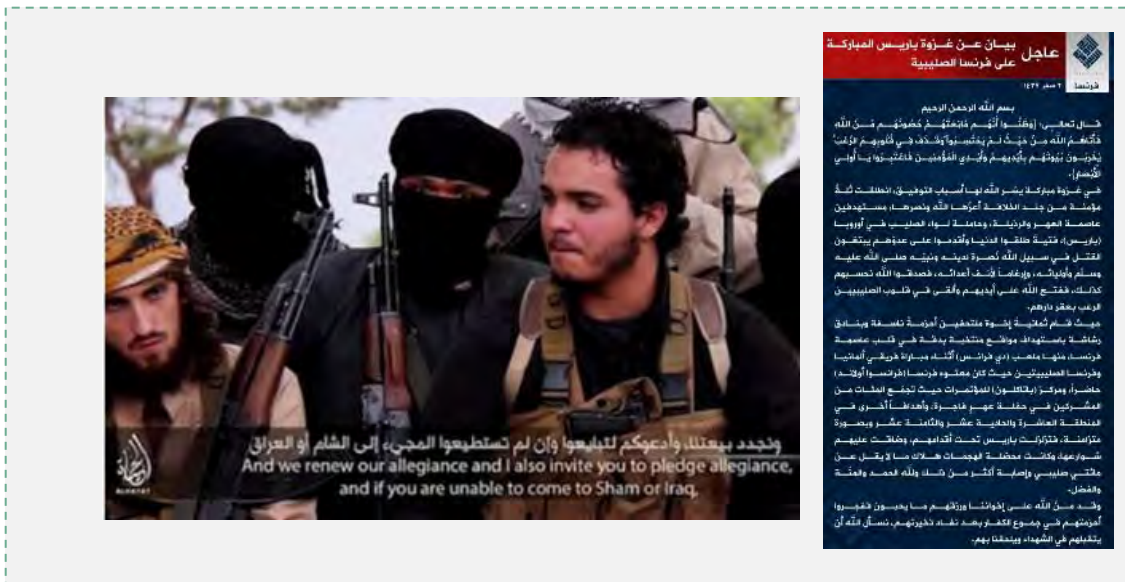
- 5) **Samy Amimour: French national, 28, lived in Drancy (northeast France).** One of the terrorists at the stadium (and according to another version, at Bataclan). In October 2012 he was tried for participating in a criminal conspiracy with a terrorist organization. He was placed under judicial supervision. In the fall of 2013 he violated the terms of his supervision and an international arrest warrant was issued for him.
- 6) **Bilal Hadfi: 20, lived in Belgium. Apparently fought in Syria in the ranks of ISIS.** Blew himself up at the stadium.
12. On November 16, 2015, Al-Arabiya TV reported that a **Belgian terrorist of Moroccan descent named Abdelhamid Abbaoud (aka Abu Omar Soudi) was suspected of having planned and financed the terrorist attack in Paris.** He went to Syria in 2014 and took his 13 year-old brother Younes with him.



Upper left: Abdelhamid Abbaoud. Lower left: Younes, Abdelhamid Abbaoud's younger brother, in Syria. Right: Abdelhamid Abbaoud with another ISIS operative (Al-Arabiya TV, November 16, 2015).

ISIS's Claim of Responsibility and Threats against France and Western Countries

13. **ISIS was quick to claim responsibility for the attack in Paris, and called for more terrorist attacks in France.** ISIS noted that "in the blessed attack of Allah, the squad of Caliphate soldiers shot and defeated Paris, the capital of abomination and perversion, which carried the flag of the Cross in Europe." It also claimed that the attack had been carried out by "eight brothers wearing explosive belts" and equipped with rifles, who attacked carefully chosen targets in the heart of the capital of France. ISIS also issued a video of a **French-speaking operative** calling on the masses [of Muslims] to swear allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, and to **carry out more terrorist attacks in France** (Akhbar al-Muslimin, November 14, 2015; Al-Jazeera, November 13, 2015).



Left: A scene from an ISIS video showing a French-speaking terrorist operative calling for more attacks in France (Al-Jazeera, November 13, 2015). Right: ISIS's claim of responsibility for the terrorist attack in Paris (Akhbar al-Muslimin, November 14, 2015).

14. **ISIS regards the terrorist attack in Paris as a great success.** Its operatives and supporters have expressed joy in various locations, including beyond Syria and Iraq (in Sirte, Libya, ISIS supporters handed out candy, and in the Kurdish city of Gaziantep, in southeastern Turkey, ISIS supporters with ISIS flags drove in a motorcade blowing their horns).

15. After the attack ISIS launched **an extensive media campaign**, mostly through Twitter accounts and Internet sites affiliated with the organization. The campaign had as participants ISIS operatives (some of whom spoke French). Reports about the attack in Paris (showing bodies, ambulances, security forces) were integrated. **The objective of the campaign was to sow fear and deter the West (and other countries) from taking measures against ISIS.** The campaign boasted about the success of the attack in France and called it "a huge victory over the Crusaders."

16. **ISIS called for more terrorist attacks against France and threatened that the country would soon take a worse beating** (according to the claim of responsibility, "France and those that follow in its footsteps should know that they will remain at the top of the Islamic State's list of targets"). ISIS also threatened **Germany** ("the next target") and **other Western countries, among them the United States** ("the Crusader front" waging war on ISIS). Arab countries were also mentioned, among them **Lebanon and Jordan, which operate against ISIS.**

17. The campaign called on Muslims in "the lands of apostasy" **to join the Islamic Caliphate and participate in jihad.** On November 16, 2015, **ISIS in Kirkuk Province in Iraq released a video of an ISIS operative threatening more terrorist attacks in Western and Eastern countries, especially France.** He called on the Muslims of Europe and the

West in general to attack Christians ("Crusaders") where they lived, "...by shooting them, with bombs, knives, cars or rocks or even kicking or slapping them" (Akhbar al-Muslimin, November 16, 2015).



ISIS operative from Kirkuk Province in Iraq praises the terrorist attack in Paris and calls for more (Akhbar al-Muslimin, November 16, 2015)