Seen on euronews: Refugees and the Paris attacks: what you need to know

NEWS

Refugees and the Paris attacks: what you need to know

By Kateryna Khinkulova

20/11 09:11 CET | updated at 23/11 - 12:12



In the aftermath of the Paris attacks as the police and security services all over Europe are seeking out masterminds and assailants of the mass atrocities, a bigger question is emerging: where did the attackers come from and could there be more? A finger of accusation has been pointed towards the refugees and asylum seekers from Syria and Iraq who are currently flooding Europe. Is it fair to blame them and is there evidence that more potential attackers could be hiding in their midst?

"ISIS is keen to create a divide between Muslims and the West. It is up to us to not fall into the trap"

Were refugees involved in Paris terror attacks?

It appears that one of the suicide bombers entered the European Union on a boat of refugees arriving from Turkey last month. The fingerprints of one of the suicide bombers who massacred concert-goers at the Bataclan venue match those taken from a man claiming asylum in Greece, A Syrian passport used on the border found on the scene corroborates this link.

What is unclear is why ISIS used the refugee route when it seems to have been able to slip operatives such as attack mastermind Abdelhamid Abaaoud into Europe without needing to register at the border. The group also seems to have been able to draw on a large pool of French or Belgian nationals, who made up all of the Paris attackers whose identities are known.

In addition, the presence of the passport, a fake , suggests the group intended the link with refugees to be made.

It's not even clear who the "refugee" was. The passport he was carrying is in the name of Ahmad al-Mohammad, a soldier fighting for Syria's Bashar al-Assad By using this website, you agree with our use of cookies to improve its performance and

enhance your user experience. More info in our Cookies policy page. ok
wany terrorist organisations have exploited refugees given the current case is that ISIS has played a major part in causing the current crists.

Right now, writes Daniel L. Byman of the Brookings Institution, "The Islamic State might call for attacks in the West, but it has focused its own money, fighters, and suicide bombers on defeating its enemies in the Middle East. The refugees themselves, fleeing war and extremism, are not strong supporters of the most violent groups: if they were, they would have stayed in Iraq or Syria."

Should EU countries stop granting asylum to Syrians?

EU term president Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn has criticized populist and right wing politicians for making scapegoats of refugees after Paris attacks.

"It's not the wave of refugees that carries terrorism in Europe, certainly not," he said at a security conference last week.

The EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini added: "Let me underline—the profile of the terrorists so far identified tells us this is an internal threat. It is all EU citizens so far."

Some politicians, including Britain's Nigel Farrage of the UKIP have nevertheless argued that the time has come to stop asylum seekers from coming to Europe. Farrage tweeted:



Follow

Isis themselves have said they will use migrant tide to flood European continent with their jihadists.

9:03 PM - 16 Nov 2015

755 652

Such rhetoric, says lnes von Behr of the RAND global policy think tank, is playing into the hands of ISIS. "ISIS is keen to create a divide between Muslims and the West, It is up to us to not fall into the trap, It is in ISIS' interest of self-legitimization to claim that Muslims are not welcomed in Europe," she argues,

The Paris attacks already seem to be affecting the US plans to resettle refugees: on Thursday the House of Representatives passed a bill tightening the restrictions on such resettlement. The measure was passed with 289 supporting it and 137 against. President Barack Obama has said he will veto the bill if it reaches his desk.

Have EU-born radicals learnt to exploit Europe's open borders?

It may be wrong to accuse the movement of refugees of the increased terror threat but Europe's accessibility and open borders do appear to have helped the terrorists: check-free movement from Belgium to France and back made it easier to organise the attacks.

Assailants have learnt to fool the system by laying low: several of them seem to have gone to the Middle East and North Africa to fight and returned without attracting much attention of the authorities,

"Foreign-born terrorists tend to enter on student visas, tourist visas, business visas, have asylum applications pending, or are lawful permanent residents – all non-immigrant or immigrant categories face fewer security and background screenings than refugees do," stresses political analyst Alex Nowrasteh of the Cato Institute.

"Many radicals come from rough neighbourhoods with high unemployment rates and faced with social exclusion. Instead of only worrying about the situation and the potential influx of radicals from abroad, Europe needs to start looking into their home-grown problem of radicalisation and extremism and start to tackle the situation on their own soil," – says lines von Behr of RAND.

Supporters of the theory that some refugees could be a source of terror point to the Boston Marathon bombers, Tsarnayev brothers who sought asylum in the USA and have been naturalised before committing the attack in April 2013. But the opponents maintain that the brothers were children in 2002 when their parents applied for asylum.

Analyst Alex Nowrasteh of the Cato Institute: "They did not adopt a radical interpretation of Islam or start plotting a terrorist attack until years after coming here. Their case does not reveal flaws in the refugee vetting process."

Refugees and radicalised Europeans: a dangerous mix?

Some analysts argue that asylum seekers could and will be targeted by extreme Islamist groups within Europe even if they arrive hoping to build a new life, leaving violence behind. Dr James Corum, a counter-insurgency historian who served in the US army in Iraq in 2004 and researched security issues extensively claims that there is a large number of "radicalised communities in Europe".

He believes that a link-up between at least some of the new asylum seekers and these communities is inevitable. "So you have a situation where if there's a fire and you want to put it out you don't go and throw gasoline on the fire," argues the analyst.

So how can the European governments put out radicalism fires? There is an active debate over whether:

- 1) it is possible to check the new arrivals identities effectively and
- 2) there is a chance for long-term integration into society which will prevent alienation and disenfranchising.

Dr Corum who teaches at University Of Salford, Manchester, believes the European countries willingness to admit refugees is suicidal. "If I wished to strike at the Western nations that are carrying out military operations against me, I would certainly slip in some dedicated and trained and organised terrorists in with the refugees and let them carry out attacks," he says.

But Daniel L.Byman of the Brookings Institution disagrees with such view. "The actual security risks now are low, but the potential ones are considerable if the refugee crisis is handled poorly," he writes. He argues that there is a need for policing, service provisions and changes to local governance in the areas where refuges are to be settled. All of them have to be introduced with a long-term prospective in mind.

Inviting the refugees and then losing interest to them would be the most unwise and dangerous scenario.

By Kateryna Khinkulova

More about: Paris Paris Attacks Refugees Syria Terrorish

Recommended for you

by Taboola

Hasna Aitboulahcen did not detonate a suicide vest during the St. Denis shoot out

Mothers in Molenbeek appeal to the Belgian interior minister

ISIL publishes video to "celebrate" Paris attacks as France continues airstrikes

From The Web Sponsored Links by Taboola

Is gamification the way forward for pensions?

Professional Pensions

Sparta: The Strategy Game Phenomenon of 2015
Sparta Online Game

That's How You Find Super Cheap Flights! Save70

Check out today's top stories

by Taboola

Oil: Air strikes hit ISIL where it hurts

Belgium questioned 'terror brothers' before Paris attacks - but didn't tell France

Thousands trapped as Balkans filter migrant flow to Europe

