



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

Hamas is moving to Europe - are Tehran's broader plans behind it?



The series of arrests of Islamic extremists in Western Europe on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts is a new and more severe concern for Europeans than the previous pro-Palestinian protests.

For the first time since the Israeli action in Gaza and the October 7 terrorist strikes on Israel by Hamas, radicals were **detained** in Western Europe on suspicion of having coordinated terrorist acts.

Previous protests across Europe have raised concerns about security, particularly of Jewish communities and their property. However, the search and arrest of potential terrorists is a new priority for European security services.

At least 6 persons were detained on suspicion of planning terrorist attacks almost simultaneously in Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, and several others have been identified.

The national police provided scant details about those arrested and their connections. However, it is clear that they coordinated these actions and possibly received a warning from a partner, perhaps from Israel.

The government of Benjamin Netanyahu has not explicitly confirmed its role in these operations, even though it **stated** on this occasion that it would continue to cooperate with partner services.

Hamas is changing its operating model

German police classified those arrested as members of Hamas. The reason for the Dutch and Danish authorities' silence was apparently to keep the investigation secret rather than having reservations about their Hamas affiliation.

This organisation has already significantly altered its operating model, considering the likelihood that Hamas members have been found and taken into custody in each of the 3

Western European countries.

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Hamas has traditionally refrained from participating in, and even showing solidarity with, the actions of Islamic extremists in Europe. It insisted on operating only in what it considers to be "historic Palestine" – Israel, Gaza and the West Bank.

This does not appear to be the case any longer, given that Hamas, like many of its predecessors from the circle of international Islamist terrorist groups, has been resorting to actions in the West.

The shared factor among those arrested is that they planned attacks on the facilities and property of Jews in Western Europe. Most of the Western European police forces have increased the protection of Jewish facilities since the start of the Israeli action in Gaza and the protests that followed throughout Europe due to that operation.

However, this week's arrests in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands revealed an open terrorist threat, which will force national governments to raise the level of protection against terrorism even more.

Holiday season – security risk

The migration of Hamas terrorist potential from the Middle East to Europe is a direct consequence of its destruction in Gaza during the Israeli military action.

It comes at the time of the holiday season in Europe, when numerous people travel, spend time outdoors and gather in public spaces, which favours potential terrorist plots.

The security services have much more trouble controlling and thwarting possible terrorist actions in such conditions.



Ylva Johansson: There is a huge risk of terrorist attacks in the European Union

With the already constant pro-Palestinian protests, which often turn violent, the potential new threat of terrorism would be a nightmare for European police.

“With the war between Israel and Hamas, and the polarisation it causes in our society, with the forthcoming holiday season, there is a huge risk of terrorist attacks in the European Union”, **said** Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, last week.

A parallel with the Red Sea attacks

It is particularly worrying that the discovery of Hamas' preparations for terrorist actions in Europe coincides with a tightening of conditions in the shipping hubs of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Attacks on merchant and military ships of Western allies off the coast of the Middle East are carried out by pro-Iranian forces from Yemen, undoubtedly at the request and with the support of Tehran.

That is why the operations of Hamas in Europe, as one of the pro-Iranian extremist organisations from the Middle East, appear to be part of a synchronised operation under the control of Tehran to put pressure on Israel's allies at several places at the same time.

The goal of terrorist attacks on Jewish facilities in Europe would undoubtedly be to create an

atmosphere of complete insecurity and influence the Western European governments to put pressure on Israel to stop its action in Gaza.

Individually, these incidents are serious and worrying, but together they paint a picture of something bigger (Mette Frederiksen, Danish PM)

The attacks of the Houthi militia from Yemen on merchant ships in the Red Sea and its surroundings have the same goal, which has been yielding results, as some large container carriers have already begun to bypass the usual route to the Suez Canal.

“It is very, very serious”, said Mette Frederiksen, Danish Prime Minister, in Brussels last Friday, drawing a parallel between the arrest of potential terrorists in her country and the attacks on ships at the entrance to the Red Sea.

“Individually, these incidents are serious and worrying, but together they paint a picture of something bigger. That we are facing a more serious and complex threat picture”, said the Danish PM.