

Daesh, the self-styled Islamic State, is ramping up its public support for the Palestinian cause, and security services around the world are bracing themselves for the fallout. Last week, the group released a series of videos praising the recent spate of attacks against Israel's Jewish citizens and calling for further assaults, promising that "not one Jew will be left in Jerusalem." The videos, released amid already heightened tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, threaten to escalate the ongoing violence.

In the past, flare-ups in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have boded ill for Jewish targets elsewhere in the world. They have been known to inspire lone wolf attacks by Palestinian sympathizers, which in turn often prompt radical Jewish elements to launch reprisal assaults of their own. This time is no different, and with the added pressure of Daesh's direct calls for violence against Jews, the threat of lone wolf attacks against Jewish targets outside of Israel will likely grow in the coming weeks.

A wave of stabbings throughout the month of October has put Israeli authorities on heightened alert. Dubbed "the intifada of knives" by some and "the intifada of the young" by others, the recent bout of unrest has been characterized by both its emphasis on particular tactics ♦ lone wolf attacks using sharp weapons ♦ and by the youthful demographic promoting it. Social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook, where the hashtags #stabajew and #theknivesintifada have gone viral, have served as a primary platform for communication and recruitment among would-be Palestinian assailants.

Against this backdrop, Daesh has taken the opportunity to promote its own propaganda against Israeli Jews, marking one of the group's rare forays into Palestinian affairs. On Oct. 18, the Islamic State released six videos praising Palestinian attacks against Israel's Jewish citizens and urging Palestinians to continue their fight. One of the videos featured a Hebrew-speaking, knife-wielding Islamic State fighter who labeled the Jewish people the primary enemy and called for their deaths in Israel and throughout the world. Some of the videos made their way through social media outlets accompanied by the hashtag #BeheadtheJew.

Since the videos' release, there were several attacks motivated by anti-Semitic sentiments elsewhere in the world. On Oct. 18, vandals targeted Jewish cemeteries in Austria and the Czech Republic with anti-Semitic graffiti. The next day, demonstrators at a pro-Palestinian rally in Malmo, Sweden called for the killing of Jews and for more stabbings of Israel Defense Forces personnel. Then, on Oct. 21, the Greek neo-Nazi group Combat 18 Hellas vandalized the main Jewish cemetery in Athens, spray-painting swastikas and promising further damage in the future.

The attacks have become more violent. On Oct. 22, a 21-year-old man entered a school in Trollhattan, Sweden, wearing a sword, Nazi helmet and mask. He began stabbing bystanders, killing a teacher and a student, before police intervened and killed him. Then, two days later, an assailant stabbed a rabbi and two Jewish worshippers at a synagogue in Marseilles, France.

The uptick in assaults against non-Israeli Jewish targets is not unprecedented. As conflict escalates between Israelis and Palestinians, attacks often grow more frequent against Jewish sites and individuals, including Western diplomats who are seen ♦ or whose countries are seen ♦ as supporters of Israel. Robert F. Kennedy, for example, was assassinated in 1968 by Sirhan Sirhan, a Jordanian Palestinian who felt betrayed by Kennedy's vocal support for sending U.S. fighter jets to Israel during the Six-Day War. Four years later, members of the Palestinian terrorist organization Black September orchestrated the abduction and eventual killing of 11 Israeli athletes during the Munich Olympics. Though the group's immediate motive was to bargain for the release of 234 prisoners held in Israel, many of whom were Palestinian, the attack also brought the Palestinian cause international publicity. Black September then conducted a similar attack against the

Saudi Embassy in Khartoum in 1973, demanding the release of several Palestinians held in Israeli prisons in exchange for the lives of 10 hostages, including U.S. Ambassador to Sudan, Cleo Noel, and U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission to Sudan, George Curtis Moore. The militants eventually assassinated both men.

And the list goes on. From the killing of an IDF colonel in Bethesda, Maryland, to the assassination of American diplomats in Beirut, rising tensions among Israelis and Palestinians have repeatedly spilled beyond the boundaries of the zone of conflict. The current escalation is no exception, and with a widespread emphasis on the knife as a weapon of choice, security services around the world may have a particularly difficult time detecting and preventing the mounting threat to Jewish targets.

Tactically speaking, there is a certain brilliance to the simplicity of a knife attack. Knives are easy to obtain and conceal, whether on one's person or inside other objects. And without training it can be difficult to disarm a knife-wielding attacker. Perhaps unsurprisingly, assailants are often shot and killed before they can be detained. In addition, identifying potential attackers before they strike requires both tactical analysis and human intelligence, straining the capacity of security services. Major metropolitan areas such as New York City often have more capacity to cope with this type of resource-intensive threat than other, smaller cities that may have less funding. In much of the United States, the burden of protection falls squarely on the shoulders of federal security services such as the FBI and joint task forces, which are often already stretched thin by the many different demands on their time and attention.

That said, detecting an attack before it happens ♦ even one as difficult as a lone wolf knife attack ♦ is possible. In last year's stabbing attack against a Brooklyn synagogue, the assailant, Calvin Peters, was known to law enforcement and had a history of criminal behavior. He then exhibited suspicious behavior at the synagogue and was escorted out 90 minutes prior to his attack. Although he succeeded in stabbing a student when he later returned to the synagogue, he was clearly vulnerable to detection in the lead-up to his final attack. Thus, trained countersurveillance personnel can look for the pre-operational surveillance behaviors shown by assailants before an attack takes place.

Still, even the best security services cannot prevent every lone wolf attack. There are simply too many potential assailants to investigate and too many possible targets to guard. Therefore, as tensions escalate between Israel and Palestine, chances of a lone wolf assailant slipping through the cracks in protective intelligence will rise. And as the assaults against vulnerable Jewish targets mount, the threat of reprisal attacks by Jewish extremists will grow.

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