

# FRANCE'S worst nightmare comes true

AFP, Paris

Simultaneous attacks on multiple targets by gunmen and suicide bombers working in unison: a nightmare scenario that France's anti-terror agencies had dreaded for months came true in Paris on Friday night.

Security officials and experts have predicted that an unprecedented attack was in the offing, and would be nigh impossible to thwart.

"Determined guys who are prepared to die, who have studied their target and have a solid operational background, they can do a lot of damage," Yves Trotignon, who used to work for DGSE intelligence agency's anti-terrorist service, recently told AFP.

"More jihadist fighters are graduating as veterans every day. Faced with that, it has to be said, the (security) services are overwhelmed," he said.

The events of Friday were exactly the kind of multi-pronged attack authorities had been dreading.

So far this year they have been fortunate: more than one potential bloodbath was prevented by the offender's own ineptitude.

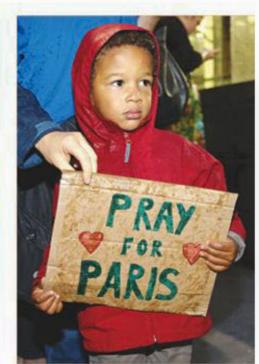
In April, Algerian IT student Sid Ahmed Ghlam was arrested after he shot himself in the leg by accident, leading police to uncover a plot to attack a church in Paris' Villejuif suburb. And in August, two off-duty US servicemen and a friend overpowered a gunman who opened fire on passengers on a high-speed train from Amsterdam to Paris.

But the authorities' luck was bound to run out as radicalised Muslims return from warzones battle-hardened and well-trained, said the experts.

And they are coming home in such great numbers that it is impossible to keep tabs on them all.

Since the January slaying of 17 people in joint attacks on Charlie Hebdo, known for its satirical caricatures of Islam, and a Jewish supermarket elsewhere in Paris, anti-terror, intelligence, police and rescue services have been rehearsing for another such multi-pronged assault.

Like anti-terror services the world over, French experts closely studied the Mumbai attacks in November 2008, in which 10 attackers struck five different spots in concert, killing about 170 people. But plan as they like, the experts agree there will always be an element of surprise. And on Friday, the whole was shocked.



(From top left, anti-clockwise) A member of the French fire brigade aids an injured individual near the Bataclan concert hall following fatal shootings in Paris; a body lies outside the concert hall; French soldiers patrol the area at the foot of the Eiffel Tower; and a man pays his respect yesterday outside the Le Carillon restaurant where people were slaughtered on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



## Libya IS head 'killed in US air strike'

AFP, Washington

The head of the Islamic State group in Libya was killed in an air strike overnight, the Pentagon announced yesterday.

Abu Nabil, also known as Wissam Najm Abd Zayd al Zubaydi, was an Iraqi national and an al-Qaeda operative, Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a statement.

Cook described Abu Nabil as the senior IS leader in Libya and said he may also have been the spokesman in a February 2015 video showing the execution of Coptic Christians.

"Nabil's death will degrade ISIL's ability to meet the group's objectives in Libya, including recruiting new ISIL members, establishing bases in Libya, and planning external attacks on the United States," Cook said.

The Pentagon spokesman said the operation against Abu Nabil was "authorized and initiated prior to the terrorist attack in Paris" on Friday night, in which at least 129 people were killed.

# Merkel's refugee stance faces tough test

BLOOMBERG

European capitals went into high security alert after Paris was rocked by terrorist attacks that threaten to open up a new dilemma for Angela Merkel and other leaders advocating an open-door policy for refugees from the Middle East.

With the French capital in shock, President Francois Hollande blamed Islamic State for the killing of at least 127 people in the city on Friday night in what could be further evidence of a shift in tactics by the Islamist terror group from the battlefields of Syria and Iraq to civilian targets in Europe.

If borne out, that pivot to Europe may give fuel to critics of the German chancellor who argue that allowing free entry to refugees risks making it easier for extremists to slip through the security net. French police said a Syrian passport was found on the body of one suicide bomber in Paris. The

Associated Press reported.

"Some populists will try to abuse this and say, 'This is what you get when you let people from this region in,'" Jan Techau, director of Carnegie Europe in Brussels, said by phone. In Germany, "the security situation in the Middle East will become a much bigger issue," he said.

For Merkel, the terror struck just as she struggles to rally the German public and her own party behind her refusal to restrict this year's record influx of refugees and migrants. In her first public comments on the attacks, she gave no sign of backing down and suggested that giving in to intolerance would hand the terrorists a victory.

"We believe in the rights of every individual to seek his fortune, in respect for others and in tolerance," she said yesterday in Berlin. "Let us reply to the terrorists by resolutely living our values and by redoubling

those values across all of Europe -- now more than ever."

While security concerns haven't been at the forefront of Germany's refugee debate, that may now change.

The Paris attacks "seriously raise the stakes for Merkel and her refugee policy," analysts at Eurasia Group in London said in a note. "It will now stir up a debate domestically about whether the government should be more careful about who they are letting in."

Just hours before the attacks, Merkel was on national television defending her stance on refugees, bucking pressure within her party bloc to restrict the number of arrivals. "I'm fighting, fighting for the approach I have in mind," she said in the interview.

Friday's carnage "changes everything," Markus Soeder, a member of the Bavarian state government, said in a Twitter post yesterday. "We can't allow illegal and uncontrolled immigration."

## 20-COUNTRY VIENNA TALKS Calendar agreed for Syria polls

### Assad's fate undecided

AFP, Vienna

World diplomats yesterday agreed on a path to Syrian elections in 18 months at talks in Vienna driven by a fresh sense of urgency after the Paris attacks, although the fate of President Bashar Al-Assad remained a sticking point.

The wave of attacks that left at least 129 dead in Paris dominated the second round of talks to end the war in Syria, spurring delegations from 20 countries and organisations to find common ground despite deep divisions.

The countries gathered in Vienna agreed that the elections will be held according to a new constitution and will be administered by the United Nations.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said delegates had agreed a transition government in Syria should be set up in six months and elections held in 18 months.

"No one is lying to themselves about the difficulties we are facing, but the determination to find a solution has progressed in 14 days," since the first round of talks in Vienna, Steinmeier said.

A final statement after the meeting said that the goal was to bring Syrian government and opposition representatives together by January 1.

"This political process has to be accompanied by a ceasefire. That will help to end the bloodshed as quickly as possible and I might add that will help rapidly to define who wants to be considered a terrorist and who is not," said US Secretary of State John Kerry.

"Make no mistake that resolve has only grown stronger in the wake of this unspeakable brutality," Kerry said of the attacks in Paris which were claimed by the Islamic State group operating out of Iraq and Syria.

"It is respect for life and for its possibilities that drove our efforts today in Vienna."

In almost five years, the war in Syria has left 250,000 dead, sparked a refugee crisis in Europe and birthed the Islamic State group whose actions have hit several nations at the negotiating table in Vienna.



A couple stands in the rain as the blue, white and red colours of France's national flag are projected onto the sails of Sydney's Opera House in Australia, yesterday. Many world monuments turned blue, white and red in solidarity with France after the carnage in Paris.



## Fire rips through French migrant camp

MAIL ONLINE

A huge fire broke out shortly after midnight at the refugee camp known as the 'Jungle' in Calais, France.

The fire is not thought to be related to the horrific terror events in Paris despite unsubstantiated claims that the fire was started by activists angered by the migrants presence in France.

No casualties have been reported from the site, where hundreds of migrants have been living in difficult conditions after making their long and dangerous journey to Europe.

Over 2,500 metres of tents and shelters

were burnt down in the fierce blaze which was believed to have been caused by an electrical wire.

The fire appears to have centred in the southeastern heath camp, where as many as 4,500 migrants have been living.

Gas cylinders in the packed camps reportedly exploded as they were consumed by the flames as fire fighters battled the flames.

The strong wind is believed to have further added to the ferocity of the flames before it was eventually put out.

## UN climate talks to go ahead

The UN climate conference scheduled on November 30 will go ahead as planned near despite the terror attacks that killed 129 people in the French capital, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said yesterday.

In Washington, an American official said President Barack Obama would participate in the meeting.

The talks aim at forging a post-2020 pact to curb greenhouse gases so that global warming does not exceed two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial levels. AFP, PARIS



A rose placed in a bullet hole in a restaurant window the day after a series of deadly attacks in Paris, yesterday. The note reads: "In the Name of What?" PHOTO: REUTERS

## PARIS CARNAGE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

### SYRIAN PEACE TALKS

Peace talks to end the Syrian civil war had drifted along for years before a snowballing refugee crisis in Europe this summer and Russia's dramatic entry into the conflict in September gave them new urgency. Given growing evidence of a Syrian link, the attacks in Paris will hit pressure on world leaders to overcome their deep divisions and solve a problem that is a key source of Islamic extremism.

### WESTERN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN SYRIA



Some of the Paris attackers were overheard telling hostages the attacks were in retaliation for France's bombing of the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. Paris's air strikes were also referenced by the group in a statement claiming responsibility. In step with increased diplomatic activity, the attacks appear likely to stiffen Western resolve to continue battlefield pressure against Islamic State -- with the risk of being sucked further into the conflict. French President Francois Hollande sounded defiant in his reaction on Saturday, saying he considered the carnage "an act of war" and promising a response that would be "pitiless".

### EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Europe is facing its biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War. Already facing anti-immigration sentiment, the attacks could further complicate efforts by European governments to persuade their populations to accept this burden. Fears have been regularly stoked by reports that IS operatives could be hiding among the 800,000 migrants who have arrived this year. Many on the far-right were quick to link the attacks -- so far without foundation -- to the refugee crisis which has distilled fears about the so-called "Islamisation of Europe." In early signs, Poland's incoming right-wing government yesterday said it would no longer accept refugees under an EU quota plan.

### 'BORDERLESS' EUROPE

Removing national barriers is a key part of the EU project, with Europeans allowed to travel without passports or visas in the 22-nation Schengen zone. The refugee crisis had already strained this system to breaking point and Friday's attacks have already complicated efforts. France, Belgium and Germany stepped up border controls, while any indication that the attackers or their weapons had travelled undetected across European borders would add to calls for more scrutiny over people and goods. AFP, PARIS

## WORLD REACTION IN QUOTES

"It's an attack not just on the people of France. But this is an attack on all of humanity and the universal values we share."  
-US President Barack Obama



"This tragedy has become another testimony of terrorism's barbarity, which poses a challenge to human civilization."  
-Russian President Vladimir Putin



"In these tragic times for the French people, I want... to condemn in the strongest ways this barbarous act."  
-Chinese President Xi Jinping



"I am shaken, I don't understand these things, done by human beings... There cannot be justification, religious or human. It's inhuman."  
-Pope Francis



"The secretary-general condemns the despicable terrorist attacks carried out today in various locations in and around Paris."  
-UN in a statement

