

RETURNING FOREIGN FIGHTER ARRESTED IN SPAIN

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The suspect was part of the so-called Islamic State in the Iraqi-Syrian conflict zone.

Europol supported an operation of the Spanish National Police (Policía Nacional) leading to the arrest of a member of the so-called Islamic State. The suspect had recently returned from the conflict zone on the border of Iraq and Syria. Two other individuals associated with the suspect were also arrested during the operation in Barcelona.

On 24 December law enforcement officers detected a potentially dangerous individual that had recently arrived in Spain. The investigation determined that this individual was hiding out in a run-down property in Barcelona. Officers later discovered that the suspect was not living there alone. The fact that the suspect was so determined to cover their tracks and the risk of their location meant officers were swift to act and arrest the individuals.

The individual, a jihadist returning from the Iraqi-Syrian conflict zone, would have been active as a member of the so-called Islamic State for a considerable amount of time. On his way back from the conflict zone, the suspect travelled through Iraq, Turkey and Senegal where he continued his terrorist activity. Before entering Spain, the suspect was based in Algeria, where he was in touch with a branch of the so-called Islamic State in North Africa. This arm of the so-called Islamic State has been subject to significant law enforcement operations in recent weeks.

Europol facilitated the information exchange and supported the case with operational analysis. On the action day, Europol provided support by deploying two experts to Spain to cross-check

operational information against Europol's databases and provide links to investigators in the field. Europol also provided technical support for the analysis of the seized electronic devices.

Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, we support the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. We also work with many non-EU partner states and international organisations. From its various threat assessments to its intelligence-gathering and operational activities, Europol has the tools and resources it needs to do its part in making Europe safer.

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