

SPAIN TAKES DOWN TERRORIST CELL RECRUITING ONLINE FOR THE SO-CALLED ISLAMIC STATE

30 Oct 2020

[Press Release](#)

The alleged leaders of this cell feature among those arrested



On 28 October, Europol supported the CGI of the Spanish National Police (Comisaría General de Información de la Policía Nacional) in arresting three suspects linked to a terrorist cell actively recruiting and indoctrinating young people. The individuals, among which feature the alleged leaders of the cell, were arrested as a result of house searches carried out in San Sebastian and Pasaia in northern Spain. They are believed to have created the terrorist structure to carry out jihadist terrorism in support of the so-called Islamic State.

10 000 FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

This terrorist cell was very active online, disseminating a large amount of jihadist propaganda with the purpose of recruiting and indoctrinating young people. The content included a variety of violent visuals displaying minors involved in Islamic State jihadist combats and promoting them as role models. The suspects used social media accounts to disseminate propaganda. They created multiple profiles on social media networks, which counted numerous followers. Two of the accounts created accumulated over 10 000 followers.

PHYSICAL TRAINING AND MENTAL CONDITIONING OF MINORS

During planned meetings, the youngest members received physical training and mental conditioning

to carry out jihadist terrorism. The terrorist cell enabled the regular practice of contact sports and provided handbooks on the use and handling of weapons such as knives and firearms.

Investigators identified the existence of a hierarchy within the organisation structuring the relationship between its members. The suspects used various measures to conceal from the police the criminal activities taking place online and in physical environments.

TWO-YEAR INVESTIGATION

The arrests of the primary suspects of this terrorist cell was a result of a two-year-long investigation and an exhaustive analysis of information gathered throughout multiple operations conducted in the Spanish province of Guipuzcoa.

Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) supported the investigation by providing long-term analytical and operational support. During the action day, ECTC experts enabled real-time information exchange and analysis.

To ensure an effective response to the challenges posed by the terrorist threat, Europol created in 2016 the European Counter Terrorism Centre, an operations centre and hub of expertise that reflects the growing need for the EU to strengthen its response to terror.

Designed as a central hub in the EU in the fight against terrorism, the ECTC focuses on operational support to Member States in terrorist investigations. It cross-checks live operational data against the data Europol already has, quickly bringing financial leads to light, and analyses all available investigative details to assist in compiling a structured picture of the terrorist network.

CRIME AREAS [Terrorism](#)
TARGET GROUPS [General Public](#) · [Law Enforcement](#) · [Academia](#) · [Professor](#) · [Students](#) · [Researcher](#) · [Press/Journalists](#) · [Other](#)
SUPPORT & SERVICES [Operational coordination](#) · [Operational support](#) · [Information exchange](#) · [Analysis](#) · [Operational](#) · [Mobile office](#)

Source URL: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/spain-takes-down-terrorist-cell-recruiting-online-for-so-called-islamic-state>