

# **Vehicles as Weapons of Terror**

November 2018

**COUNTER  
EXTREMISM  
PROJECT**



Via [Alamy](#)

### **Vehicles as Weapons of Terror**

On July 14, 2016, Tunisian-born [Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel](#) drove a 19-ton truck into a crowd celebrating Bastille Day at Nice’s Promenade des Anglais, killing 86 people and wounding more than 430 others. [ISIS](#) claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack two days later, calling Lahouaiej-Bouhlel a “soldier of the Islamic State.”<sup>1</sup> The attack in Nice, though not the first of its kind, was the deadliest modern vehicular terrorist attack<sup>2</sup> in Europe, launching a wave of terrorist and ISIS-claimed vehicular attacks around the world. Since the Nice attacks, CEP has documented

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Jones, Angelique Chrisafis, and Caroline Davies, “Nice truck attack: Islamic State claims responsibility,” *Guardian* (London), July 16, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/16/islamic-state-claims-responsibility-for-nice-truck-attack>.

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) defines vehicle ramming as an “attack in which a perpetrator deliberately aims a motor vehicle at a target with the intent to inflict fatal injuries or significant property damage by striking with concussive force.”

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major vehicular incidents in Vienna,<sup>3</sup> Ohio,<sup>4</sup> Berlin,<sup>5</sup> London,<sup>6</sup> Antwerp,<sup>7</sup> Stockholm,<sup>8</sup> Paris,<sup>9</sup> Barcelona,<sup>10</sup> Edmonton,<sup>11</sup> and New York.<sup>12</sup> On August 14, 2018, an attacker struck pedestrians and bicyclists in London before crashing his car into security barriers outside the Houses of Parliament, leaving three people wounded.<sup>13</sup>

The 2016 Nice attack set off a wave of vehicular terrorist attacks in autumn of that year, which collectively left 12 people dead and 67 others wounded. In September 2016, an assailant drove his car at shoppers in Vienna's Favoriten district while shouting "Allahu Akbar," leaving no injuries.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Vehicle Ramming Attacks," Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>; Lizzie Dearden, "Man Who Drove Into Pedestrians Shouting Allahu Akbar 'Was Just Singing Along To Rap Music While Buying Pizza' Parents Say," *Independent* (London), October 7, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vienna-favoriten-car-ramming-attack-allahu-akbar-pizza-against-isis-rap-music-singing-cannabis-a7349876.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Mitch Smith, Richard Perez-Pena, and Adam Goldman, "Suspect Is Killed in Attack at Ohio State University That Injured 11," *New York Times*, November 28, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/28/us/active-shooter-ohio-state-university.html>.

<sup>5</sup> "Truck Plows into Berlin Christmas Market," Reuters, last updated December 23, 2016, [http://live.reuters.com/Event/Truck\\_plows\\_into\\_Berlin\\_Christmas\\_market\\_2](http://live.reuters.com/Event/Truck_plows_into_Berlin_Christmas_market_2).

<sup>6</sup> Vikram Dodd and Josh Halliday, "Lee Rigby Killing: Two British Muslim Converts Convicted of Murder," *Guardian* (London), December 19, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/dec/19/lee-rigby-killing-woolwich-verdict-convicted-murder>.

<sup>7</sup> Milan Schreuer, "Man in Antwerp, Belgium, Tries to Drive Into Crowd," *New York Times*, March 23, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/23/world/europe/antwerp-belgium-car-attack.html>; Erin McLaughlin and Holly Yan, "Antwerp Police Intercept Speeding Car and Thwart 'Attempted Terrorist Attack,'" CNN, March 23, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/23/europe/belgium-antwerp-car-intercepted/>.

<sup>8</sup> David Crouch and Helena Bengtsson, "Truck Drives into Crowd in Stockholm, Killing Four People," *Guardian* (London), April 8, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/07/truck-crashes-in-central-stockholm-sweden>.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Samuel, "Paris Police Launch Terror Investigation After Car 'Deliberately' Crashes Into Police Van On The Champs-Elysees," *Telegraph* (London), June 19, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/19/police-operation-way-champs-elysees-paris/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Barcelona Attack: Van Driven Into Crowd In Las Ramblas District - Latest Updates," *Guardian* (London), August 17, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2017/aug/17/barcelona-attack-van-driven-into-crowd-in-las-ramblas-district>.

<sup>11</sup> Madison Park and Dakin Andone, "Five Hurt as Edmonton Attacks Spark Terror Investigation," CNN, October 2, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/01/americas/edmonton-vehicle-attacks-investigation/index.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Mueller, William K. Rashbaum, and Al Baker, "At Least 6 Reported Dead as Truck Careens Down Bike Path in Manhattan," *New York Times*, October 31, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/police-shooting-lower-manhattan.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=a-lede-package-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>; Melanie Grayce West, Kate King, and Mara Gay, "Eight Killed in Terror Attack in New York," *Wall Street Journal*, October 31, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/at-least-6-die-in-lower-manhattan-incident-1509483701>.

<sup>13</sup> "Westminster car crash: Man arrested on suspicion of terror offences," BBC News, August 14, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-45180120>; William Booth, "London police: Car rampage outside Westminster treated as 'terrorist incident,'" *Washington Post*, August 14, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/car-smashes-into-security-barriers-outside-britains-parliament-driver-arrested-amid-injuries/2018/08/14/c778ce66-9f97-11e8-8e87-c869fe70a721\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.8eec4ea9eaa6&wpscrc=al\\_world\\_alert-world&wpmk=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/car-smashes-into-security-barriers-outside-britains-parliament-driver-arrested-amid-injuries/2018/08/14/c778ce66-9f97-11e8-8e87-c869fe70a721_story.html?utm_term=.8eec4ea9eaa6&wpscrc=al_world_alert-world&wpmk=1).

<sup>14</sup> "Vehicle Ramming Attacks," Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>; Lizzie Dearden, "Man Who Drove Into Pedestrians

In November 2016, Somali-born [Abdul Razak Ali Artan](#) carried out a car and knife attack at Ohio State University, wounding 11 people.<sup>15</sup> In December 2016, Tunisian-born [Anis Amri](#) charged at pedestrians attending the Christmas Market in Berlin, killing 12 people and wounding 56 others in an attack claimed by ISIS. Footage released by the ISIS-affiliated Amaq News Agency showed Amri pledging allegiance to the group's leader, [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#), vowing "we will slaughter" the "crusaders who are shelling the Muslims every day."<sup>16</sup>

CEP has documented at least 38 vehicular terrorist attacks since 2006, collectively resulting in the deaths of at least 197 people and the injury of at least 1,056 others.

Vehicular attacks continued into 2017, leaving at least 32 people dead and more than 240 wounded. On March 22, 2017, terrorist assailant [Khalid Masood](#) killed five people and wounded 50 more during a vehicle and stabbing attack in London.<sup>17</sup> The following day, a similar attack was thwarted in Antwerp, Belgium.<sup>18</sup> On April 7, another assailant carried out a suspected terrorist attack, this time in Sweden, hijacking a truck and careening into crowds of pedestrians at the Ahlens Mall in Stockholm, killing four people and wounding 15 more.<sup>19</sup>

On the evening of June 3, 2017, three assailants drove a van at high speed into crowds on the London Bridge and exited the vehicle to stab other pedestrians at the nearby Borough Market.<sup>20</sup> The attack, claimed by ISIS, left eight people dead and 48 others wounded, and followed a call by ISIS on May 17 to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States, United Kingdom, and European

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Shouting Allahu Akbar 'Was Just Singing Along To Rap Music While Buying Pizza' Parents Say," *Independent* (London), October 7, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vienna-favoriten-car-ramming-attack-allahu-akbar-pizza-against-isis-rap-music-singing-cannabis-a7349876.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Katie Mettler, "Ohio State Attacker Complained Bitterly in Facebook Post of Treatment of Muslims 'Everywhere,' Report Says," <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/11/29/ohio-state-attacker-in-facebook-post-complained-bitterly-of-treatment-of-muslims-everywhere-reports-say/>.

<sup>16</sup> "Anis Amri: Three arrested including suspect's nephew," CNN, December 24, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/24/europe/anis-amri-berlin-attack-milan>.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Mendick and Emily Allen, "Khalid Masood: Everything We Know about the London Attacker," *Telegraph* (London), March 27, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/24/khalid-masood-everything-know-london-attacker/>; Kim Sengupta, "Last Message Left by Westminster Attacker Khalid Masood Uncovered by Security Agencies," *Independent* (London) April 27, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/last-message-left-by-westminster-attacker-khalid-masood-uncovered-by-security-agencies-a7706561.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Milan Schreuer, "Man in Antwerp, Belgium, Tries to Drive Into Crowd," *New York Times*, March 23, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/23/world/europe/antwerp-belgium-car-attack.html>; Erin McLaughlin and Holly Yan, "Antwerp Police Intercept Speeding Car and Thwart 'Attempted Terrorist Attack,'" CNN, March 23, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/23/europe/belgium-antwerp-car-intercepted/>.

<sup>19</sup> David Crouch and Helena Bengtsson, "Truck Drives into Crowd in Stockholm, Killing Four People," *Guardian* (London), April 8, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/07/truck-crashes-in-central-stockholm-sweden>.

<sup>20</sup> "London Attack: Theresa May Says Enough is Enough after Seven Die," BBC News, June 4, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-40148737>;

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Union using knives and trucks.<sup>21</sup> On June 19, 2017, an assailant drove at a crowd of worshipers near a mosque in north London, leaving at least eight people wounded.<sup>22</sup> Later that day, an armed assailant rammed his vehicle at a police car on the Champs-Elysees street in Paris, seriously injuring himself but leaving no other casualties.<sup>23</sup>

On August 17, 2017, a van was deliberately driven into a crowd of tourists in Las Ramblas, a tree-lined street in the center of Barcelona. The attack, claimed by ISIS, left 16 people dead and 120 others wounded.<sup>24</sup> On September 30, 2017, an assailant launched two vehicular terror attacks in Edmonton, Canada, collectively injuring five people. In the first attack, the assailant used a car to ram into a police officer before exiting the car and stabbing him. The assailant later used a truck to ram into pedestrians, injuring another four people. An ISIS flag was later found in the suspect's vehicle.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the recent uptick of ISIS-claimed attacks, vehicular attacks are not a new phenomenon. Terrorists have carried out car-ramming attacks for more than a decade, in locations ranging from

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<sup>21</sup> CEP, Twitter post, June 4, 2017, 3:53 p.m. EST, <https://twitter.com/FightExtremism/status/871137860346404864>; "Islamic State Claims Responsibility for London Attack," Reuters, June 4, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-security-claim-idUSKBN18V14P?il=0>; "London Bridge attack: last of eight victims identified as Xavier Thomas," *Guardian* (London), June 7, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/07/london-bridge-attack-last-of-eight-victims-identified-as-xavier-thomas>.

<sup>22</sup> "What We Know So Far About the Finsbury Park Terror Attack," *Guardian* (London), June 19, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/19/what-we-know-so-far-van-hits-pedestrians-near-london-mosque>.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Samuel, "Paris Police Launch Terror Investigation After Car 'Deliberately' Crashes Into Police Van On The Champs-Elysees," *Telegraph* (London), June 19, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/19/police-operation-way-champs-elysees-paris/>.

<sup>24</sup> "Van Hits Crowds in Barcelona – Latest Updates," BBC News, August 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/live/40966524>; Associated Press, Twitter post, August 17, 2017, <https://twitter.com/AP/status/898268669465198598>; Stephen Burgen, "Spanish Attacks Death Toll Rises to 16 after Woman Dies in Hospital," *Guardian* (London), August 27, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/27/death-toll-spain-terror-attacks-rises-barcelona>.

<sup>25</sup> Madison Park and Dakin Andone, "Five Hurt as Edmonton Attacks Spark Terror Investigation," CNN, October 2, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/01/americas/edmonton-vehicle-attacks-investigation/index.html>.



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North Carolina<sup>26</sup> to Jerusalem,<sup>27</sup> Tel Aviv,<sup>28</sup> Quebec,<sup>29</sup> Dijon,<sup>30</sup> Nantes,<sup>31</sup> the West Bank,<sup>32</sup> Graz,<sup>33</sup> and Xinjiang.<sup>34</sup> The recent uptick in vehicular attacks, however, appears to have been in large part inspired by ISIS's explicit calls to employ cars as weapons. In May 2017, the U.S. Transportation

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<sup>26</sup> "Terrorist Use of Vehicle Ramming Tactics," Federal Bureau of Investigation, December 13, 2010, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/DHS-TerroristRamming.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> Jeffrey Heller and Avida Landau, "Palestinian Kills 3 in Jerusalem Bulldozer Attack," Reuters, July 2, 2008, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-israel-tractor-idUKL0243020020080702>.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander Marquardt and Bruno Nota, "Terror Attack Outside Tel Aviv Nightclub Filled With 2,000 Teenagers," ABC News, August 29, 2011, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/palestinian-drives-stolen-taxi-israelis-stabs/story?id=14403744>.

<sup>29</sup> Ian Austen, "Hit-and-Run That Killed Canadian Soldier Is Called Terrorist Attack," *New York Times*, October 21, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/22/world/americas/canadian-soldier-run-down-in-what-officials-call-act-of-terror-dies.html>.

<sup>30</sup> "French Driver Reportedly Heard Yelling 'Allahu Akbar' Slams Pedestrians, Injures 13," Fox News, December 22, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/12/22/in-tense-france-driver-rampages-in-lyon-area-slamming-into-passersby.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Guillaume Fouin, "Man Rams Van into Christmas Market in France," Reuters, December 23, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/uk-france-crash-idUKKBN0K01Q120141223>.

<sup>32</sup> Ilan Ben Zion, "Palestinian Vehicle Smashes into IDF Soldiers in West Bank," Times of Israel, November 5, 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/car-rams-west-bank-bus-stop-in-possible-fresh-terror-attack/>; "Palestinian Confesses to West Bank Car-Ramming Attack," Times of Israel, May 14, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-confesses-to-west-bank-car-ramming-attack/>; Stuart Winer, " Hamas and Islamic Jihad Praise 'Brave' Attack, Call for Escalation," Times of Israel, August 6, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-and-islamic-jihad-praise-brave-attack-call-for-escalation/>; "Lapid: PM Using Latest Car-Ramming Attack to Deepen Societal Divide," Times of Israel, August 7, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-pm-using-latest-car-ramming-attack-to-deepen-societal-divide/>; "Soldier Lightly Hurt in Suspected Car-Ramming Attack," Times of Israel, August 30, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/soldier-lightly-hurt-in-suspected-car-ramming-attack/>; Gili Cohen, "Four Wounded in Car-Ramming Attack at Tapuah Junction, West Bank," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), November 24, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.687957>; Adiv Sterman and Raoul Wootliff, "IDF Soldier Said Lightly Hurt in Possible Car-Ramming Attack," Times of Israel, January 26, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-soldier-said-lightly-hurt-in-possible-car-ramming-attack/>; "Four Israeli Border Police Injured in Suspected Car Ramming in West Bank," i24NEWS, February 13, 2016, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy-defense/102735-160213-hebron-palestinian-assailant-attempts-to-stab-israeli-soldier-is-shot-dead>; Judah Ari Gross, "Troops Thwart Attempted Car-Ramming in West Bank," Times of Israel, February 19, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/troops-thwart-attempted-car-ramming-in-west-bank/>; Judah Ari Gross, "Soldier Lightly Hurt in West Bank Car-Ramming Attack," Times of Israel, March 4, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-lightly-hurt-in-apparent-west-bank-car-ramming-attack/>; Yaakov Lappin and Daniel K. Eisenbud, "Gun Attack Followed by Car Ramming Near Hebron; 3 Palestinian Terrorists Shot Dead," *Jerusalem Post*, March 14, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Initial-report-Attempted-car-ramming-attack-at-Kiryat-Arba-entrance-447827>; Tovah Lazaroff, "3 Soldiers Wounded in Vehicular Terrorist Attack Near Talmon," *Jerusalem Post*, May 3, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Report-Palestinian-allegedly-rams-car-into-three-Israelis-in-West-Bank-452993>; Tovah Lazaroff, "Watch: Security Cameras Capture Car Ramming Attack Near Kiryat Arba," *Jerusalem Post*, June 24, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/One-lightly-injured-in-attempted-car-ramming-attack-in-Kiryat-Arba-457628>; "Palestinian Attempts To Injure Israeli Soldiers In Car-Ramming, Stabbing Attack," i24NEWS, October 29, 2016, <http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy-defense/128812-161029-palestinian-attempts-to-injure-israeli-soldiers-in-car-ramming-stabbing-attack>; Tovah Lazaroff and Anna Ahronheim, "Israeli Soldier Killed in West Bank Ramming Attack," *Jerusalem Post*, April 6, 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Initial-report-Suspected-car-ramming-attack-in-West-Bank-486259>; Judah Ari Gross, "Israeli Man Lightly Hurt In West Bank Car-Ramming Attack," Times of Israel, April 19, 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-man-lightly-hurt-in-west-bank-car-ramming-attack/>.

Security Administration (TSA) issued a warning to truck and bus companies urging companies to watch out for potential vehicular terrorist assailants and listing more than a dozen car-ramming attacks since 2014 that have collectively killed more than 170 people.<sup>35</sup> As the TSA wrote in its memo, terrorist groups will likely continue to encourage “unsophisticated tactics such as vehicle-ramming” since these types of attacks are difficult to prevent and “could inflict mass casualties if successful.”<sup>36</sup>

### *Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Hamas Call for (and Claim) Attacks*

Terrorist groups like al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Hamas have long called for—and claimed responsibility for—vehicular terrorist attacks. Al-Qaeda’s second issue of *Inspire* magazine, released in October 2010, contained an article calling for vehicular attacks and referring to a pickup truck as a potential “mowing machine” that can be used to “mow down the enemies of Allah.”<sup>37</sup> *Inspire* editor-in-chief Yahya Ibrahim urged al-Qaeda followers to “[g]o for the most crowded location” and “pick up as much speed as you can” in order “strike as many people as possible.”<sup>38</sup> An FBI memo released in December of that year noted the emerging danger from vehicular attacks, which may allow terrorists with “limited access to explosives or weapons” the ability to conduct an attack with “minimal prior training or experience.”<sup>39</sup>

Following the October 31, 2017, truck-ramming attack in New York City, several old images praising vehicular and other attacks reappeared on pro-ISIS channels on the encrypted messaging service Telegram. In addition, ISIS propaganda calling for vehicular attacks was accessible online the same day of the attack.

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<sup>33</sup> Melanie Hall, “Bosnian ‘With History Of Beating Wife’ Accused Of Ploughing Car Into Austria Crowd,” *Telegraph* (London), June 21, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/austria/11689726/Graz-car-attack-kills-three.html>.

<sup>34</sup> “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

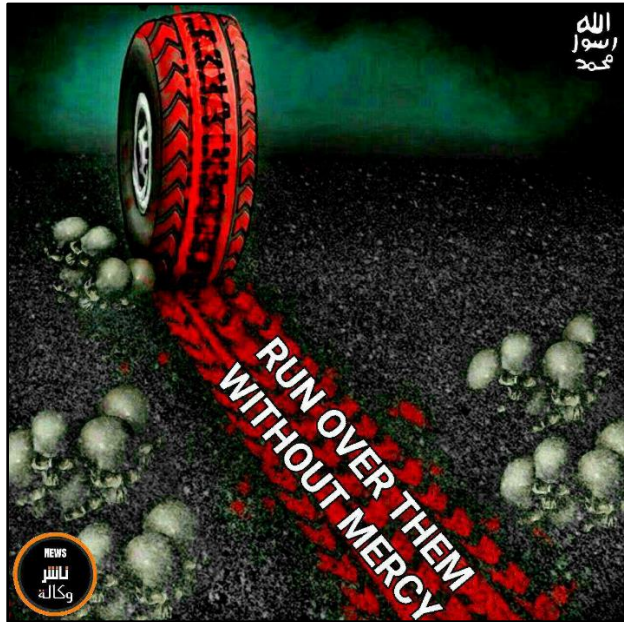
<sup>35</sup> CEP has added to the TSA’s findings, identifying several other terrorist incidents during this period and since 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Jason Hanna, “TSA Warns Truckers: Watch For Possible Ramming Terror Attacks,” CNN, May 5, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/04/politics/tsa-ramming-terror-attacks-warning/>.

<sup>37</sup> Yahya Ibrahim, “The Ultimate Mowing Machine,” *Inspire*, October 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Yahya Ibrahim, “The Ultimate Mowing Machine,” *Inspire*, October 2010.

<sup>39</sup> “Terrorist Use of Vehicle Ramming Tactics,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, December 13, 2010, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/DHS-TerroristRamming.pdf>.



*An old ISIS propaganda image from Nashir, a news organization affiliated with the group, recirculated on a pro-ISIS Telegram channel on October 31, 2017.*

On October 16, 2017, an Internet user uploaded to the U.S. Internet Archive an ISIS video instructing how to carry out a ramming attack. The video is a 26-second segment of the longer video, “*We Will Surely Guide Them to Our Ways,*” which features the self-identified American fighter Abu Hamza Al-Amriki, who encourages lone wolf attacks with knives and motor vehicles. The video also features several short clips of U.S.-based locations, including New York City’s Times Square. The video was originally released on May 17, 2017.





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A 26-second video clip on truck attacks available on the Internet Archive, taken from the longer ISIS video “We Will Surely Guide Them to Our Ways,” (originally released May 17, 2017). CEP located the clip October 31, 2017.

In September 2014, ISIS spokesman [Abu Muhammad al-Adnani](#) issued a call to kill non-believers using any means at their disposal. “[S]ingle out the disbelieving American, Frenchman, or any of his allies,” he said. “Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run him over with your car.”<sup>40</sup> In November of that year, French foreign fighter [Abu Salman al-Faranci](#) appeared in a video reiterating ISIS’s call for followers—particularly in France—to carry out domestic attacks if they could not join ISIS abroad. As Faranci said to his viewers: “Terrorize them and do not allow them to sleep due to fear and horror. There are weapons and cars available and targets ready to be hit.”<sup>41</sup>

In mid-November 2016, ISIS’s third issue of online magazine *Rumiyah* included an article calling for its followers to carry out vehicle attacks. The article specified the ideal type, weight, and speed of a car needed for terror purposes, and encouraged attacks on “large outdoor conventions and celebrations, pedestrian-congested streets, outdoor markets, festivals, festivals, parades[, and] political rallies.”<sup>42</sup> Later that month, Somali-born Abdul Razak Ali Artan carried out a car and knife attack at Ohio State University, wounding 11 people.<sup>43</sup>

Following the wave of vehicular terrorist attacks in 2016 and 2017, ISIS has continued to issue calls to violence and warnings of additional car-ramming attacks. On May 17, 2017, the group released a video threatening attacks in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States, especially in New York, Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C. ISIS has also threatened and encouraged vehicular attacks on gay pride parades.<sup>44</sup> In June 2017, an account operating under the name of ISIS’s Nashir agency released a renewed call for ISIS supporters to “[r]un over people by vehicles and [c]ut off their necks in any time [sic].”<sup>45</sup>

ISIS and al-Qaeda are not the only terrorist groups to urge or claim credit for vehicular terrorist attacks. One of the first documented vehicular attacks was carried out by an unaffiliated Iranian-American, who wounded nine people at the University of North Carolina in 2006.<sup>46</sup> As the assailant Mohammed Reza Taheri-azar told investigators, he had had carried out the attack in an

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<sup>40</sup> Yara Bayoumy, “Isis Urges More Attacks On Western ‘Disbelievers,’” *Independent* (London) September 22, 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-urges-more-attacks-on-western-disbelievers-9749512.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Duncan Gardham, “ISIL Issued Warning to ‘Filthy French,’” *Politico*, November 15, 2015, <http://www.politico.eu/article/paris-terrorist-attacks-isis-issued-warning-to-filthy-french/>.

<sup>42</sup> “Just Terror Attacks,” *Rumiyah*, November 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Katie Mettler, “Ohio State Attacker Complained Bitterly in Facebook Post of Treatment of Muslims ‘Everywhere,’ Report Says,” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/11/29/ohio-state-attacker-in-facebook-post-complained-bitterly-of-treatment-of-muslims-everywhere-reports-say/>.

<sup>44</sup> “We Will Surely Guide Them To Our Ways,” Islamic State Wilayah Ninawa, May 17, 2017; CEP, Twitter post, June 4, 2017, 3:53 p.m. EST, <https://twitter.com/FightExtremism/status/871137860346404864>.

<sup>45</sup> Counter Extremism Project.

<sup>46</sup> “Terrorist Use of Vehicle Ramming Tactics,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, December 13, 2010, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/DHS-TerroristRamming.pdf>.

effort to punish the U.S. government and “avenge the deaths or murders of Muslims around the world.”<sup>47</sup>

A slew of car-ramming attacks have also been carried out by Palestinian assailants in Israel and the West Bank. In November of 2014, Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups—including the [Palestinian Islamic Jihad](#) (PIJ)—praised a wave of vehicular attacks and called for more. One such image posted online read, “Run [them] over, son of Hebron...and son of Jerusalem. Take your car...and run over the Zionists.”<sup>48</sup>

### *Recent Vehicular Terrorist Attacks*

Terrorists have carried out attacks using cars and trucks in a wide range of countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, France, Canada, China, Germany, Israel, and Belgium. In some cases, assailants have used gas canisters or other explosives to supplement the potential damage from car-ramming attacks. This type of planning could be seen in the June 2007 Islamist attack targeting Glasgow Airport in Scotland,<sup>49</sup> the May 2014 attack in China’s Xinjiang province,<sup>50</sup> and the June 2015 attack on a gas plant in southern France.<sup>51</sup>

In other cases, extremists have managed to launch deadly or harmful vehicular attacks using low-sophistication tactics like car-ramming and stabbing. CEP has documented more than two dozen vehicular terrorist attacks since 2000. Of these, the single deadliest attack was the July 2016 Bastille Day attack in Nice, when terrorist assailant Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel killed 86 people and wounded 434 more at Nice’s Promenade Des Anglais.<sup>52</sup>

- **March 4, 2006:** North Carolina, United States. Iranian-born Mohammed Reza Taheri-azar uses an SUV to ram into pedestrians at the University of North Carolina, wounding nine people.<sup>53</sup> Taheri-azar tells investigators that he carried out the attack in order to punish the U.S. government and “avenge the deaths or murders of Muslims around the world.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Associated Press, “Man Is Charged After Driving Into Group of Students,” *New York Times*, March 5, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/05/us/man-is-charged-after-driving-into-group-of-students.html>.

<sup>48</sup> “Vehicular Attack in Jerusalem,” Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, November 6, 2014, <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/articleprint.aspx?id=20726>.

<sup>49</sup> Associated Press, “4 Arrested In Glasgow Incident; Officials Link It To London Events,” *USA Today*, July 1, 2007, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-06-30-britain-saturday\\_N.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-06-30-britain-saturday_N.htm).

<sup>50</sup> “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> “France Attack: Man Decapitated at Factory near Lyon,” BBC News, June 26, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33284937>.

<sup>52</sup> “Nice Attack: What We Know about the Bastille Day Killings,” BBC News, August 19, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671>; “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> “Terrorist Use of Vehicle Ramming Tactics,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, December 13, 2010, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/DHS-TerroristRamming.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Associated Press, “Man Is Charged After Driving Into Group of Students,” *New York Times*, March 5, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/05/us/man-is-charged-after-driving-into-group-of-students.html>.

## COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT

- **June 30, 2007:** Scotland, United Kingdom. Terrorists drive a flaming jeep into the entrance of Scotland's Glasgow Airport, wounding five people.<sup>55</sup>
- **2008—Present:** West Bank. Assaultants carry out more than two dozen vehicular terrorist attacks targeting Israeli civilians and soldiers in the West Bank since 2008. The attacks collectively leave dozens of people wounded and at least one person dead.<sup>56</sup>
- **July 2, 2008:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assaultant rams a front-end loader into buses and cars in Jerusalem, killing three people and wounding 40 others.<sup>57</sup>
- **July 22, 2008:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assaultant rams a bulldozer into nearby vehicles in Jerusalem, wounding at least 16 people.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Associated Press, "4 Arrested In Glasgow Incident; Officials Link It To London Events," *USA Today*, July 1, 2007, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-06-30-britain-saturday\\_N.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-06-30-britain-saturday_N.htm).

<sup>56</sup> Ilan Ben Zion, "Palestinian Vehicle Smashes into IDF Soldiers in West Bank," *Times of Israel*, November 5, 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/car-rams-west-bank-bus-stop-in-possible-fresh-terror-attack/>; "Palestinian Confesses to West Bank Car-Ramming Attack," *Times of Israel*, May 14, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-confesses-to-west-bank-car-ramming-attack/>; Stuart Winer, " Hamas and Islamic Jihad Praise 'Brave' Attack, Call for Escalation," *Times of Israel*, August 6, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-and-islamic-jihad-praise-brave-attack-call-for-escalation/>; "Lapid: PM Using Latest Car-Ramming Attack to Deepen Societal Divide," *Times of Israel*, August 7, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-pm-using-latest-car-ramming-attack-to-deepen-societal-divide/>; "Soldier Lightly Hurt in Suspected Car-Ramming Attack," *Times of Israel*, August 30, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/soldier-lightly-hurt-in-suspected-car-ramming-attack/>; Gili Cohen, "Four Wounded in Car-Ramming Attack at Tapuah Junction, West Bank," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), November 24, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.687957>; Adiv Sterman and Raoul Wootliff, "IDF Soldier Said Lightly Hurt in Possible Car-Ramming Attack," *Times of Israel*, January 26, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-soldier-said-lightly-hurt-in-possible-car-ramming-attack/>; "Four Israeli Border Police Injured in Suspected Car Ramming in West Bank," *i24NEWS*, February 13, 2016, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy-defense/102735-160213-hebron-palestinian-assailant-attempts-to-stab-israeli-soldier-is-shot-dead>; Judah Ari Gross, "Troops Thwart Attempted Car-Ramming in West Bank," *Times of Israel*, February 19, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/troops-thwart-attempted-car-ramming-in-west-bank/>; Judah Ari Gross, "Soldier Lightly Hurt in West Bank Car-Ramming Attack," *Times of Israel*, March 4, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-lightly-hurt-in-apparent-west-bank-car-ramming-attack/>; Yaakov Lappin and Daniel K. Eisenbud, "Gun Attack Followed by Car Ramming Near Hebron; 3 Palestinian Terrorists Shot Dead," *Jerusalem Post*, March 14, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Initial-report-Attempted-car-ramming-attack-at-Kiryat-Arba-entrance-447827>; Tovah Lazaroff, "3 Soldiers Wounded in Vehicular Terrorist Attack Near Talmon," *Jerusalem Post*, May 3, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Report-Palestinian-allegedly-rams-car-into-three-Israelis-in-West-Bank-452993>; Tovah Lazaroff, "Watch: Security Cameras Capture Car Ramming Attack Near Kiryat Arba," *Jerusalem Post*, June 24, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/One-lightly-injured-in-attempted-car-ramming-attack-in-Kiryat-Arba-457628>; "Palestinian Attempts To Injure Israeli Soldiers In Car-Ramming, Stabbing Attack," *i24NEWS*, October 29, 2016, <http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy-defense/128812-161029-palestinian-attempts-to-injure-israeli-soldiers-in-car-ramming-stabbing-attack>; Tovah Lazaroff and Anna Ahronheim, "Israeli Soldier Killed in West Bank Ramming Attack," *Jerusalem Post*, April 6, 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Initial-report-Suspected-car-ramming-attack-in-West-Bank-486259>; Judah Ari Gross, "Israeli Man Lightly Hurt In West Bank Car-Ramming Attack," *Times of Israel*, April 19, 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-man-lightly-hurt-in-west-bank-car-ramming-attack/>.

<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey Heller and Avida Landau, "Palestinian Kills 3 in Jerusalem Bulldozer Attack," *Reuters*, July 2, 2008, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-israel-tractor-idUKL0243020020080702>.

<sup>58</sup> Rebecca Harrison, "Bulldozer in Jerusalem Rampage Before Obama Visit," *Reuters*, July 22, 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-israel-idUSL2252341920080722>.

## COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT

- **September 22, 2008:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assailant rams his car into a group of Israelis in Jerusalem, injuring 15 Israeli soldiers and four civilians.<sup>59</sup>
- **March 5, 2009:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assailant uses a bulldozer to ram into an Israeli police car in Jerusalem, injuring two officers.<sup>60</sup>
- **August 29, 2011:** Tel Aviv, Israel. A suspected Hamas member drives a stolen taxi into a police checkpoint outside of a Tel Aviv nightclub filled with teenagers before exiting the vehicle and stabbing pedestrians. Nine people are wounded in the attack, including four police officers.<sup>61</sup>
- **May 22, 2013:** London, United Kingdom. Two British-born assailants—[Michael Adebolajo](#) and [Michael Adebowale](#)—ram a car into British soldier Lee Rigby before attacking and killing him with knives and a meat cleaver.<sup>62</sup>
- **May 23, 2014:** Xinjiang, China. Assailants ram two SUVs into a street market and throw explosives in Urumqi, the capital of China’s Xinjiang province, killing 39 people and injuring more than 90 others.<sup>63</sup>
- **August 4, 2014:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assailant plows a construction tractor at pedestrians, killing one person and wounding five others.<sup>64</sup>
- **October 20, 2014:** Quebec, Canada. Canadian-born ISIS supporter Martin Couture-Rouleau rams a car into a group of soldiers at a shopping center in Quebec, killing one soldier and wounding another. During the attack, Couture-Rouleau instructed a 911 dispatcher “to alert Canada, the governor and everyone who is responsible for the army” to leave the anti-ISIS coalition.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Adam Entous, “New Jerusalem Vehicle ‘Attack’ as Livni Seeks Govt,” Reuters, September 23, 2008, <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-35602020080922>.

<sup>60</sup> Rory McCarthy, “Bulldozer Rams Israeli Police Car,” *Guardian* (London), March 5, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/05/palestinian-bulldozer-shot-israel-police>.

<sup>61</sup> Alexander Marquardt and Bruno Nota, “Terror Attack Outside Tel Aviv Nightclub Filled With 2,000 Teenagers,” ABC News, August 29, 2011, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/palestinian-drives-stolen-taxi-israelis-stabs/story?id=14403744>.

<sup>62</sup> Vikram Dodd and Josh Halliday, “Lee Rigby Killing: Two British Muslim Converts Convicted of Murder,” *Guardian* (London), December 19, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/dec/19/lee-rigby-killing-woolwich-verdict-convicted-murder>; Tom Whitehead, “Drummer Lee Rigby was ‘Hacked like a Joint of Meat’ in ‘Barbarous and Cowardly Killing’, Court Hears,” *Telegraph* (London), November 29, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10485460/Drummer-Lee-Rigby-was-hacked-like-a-joint-of-meat-in-barbarous-and-cowardly-killing-court-hears.html>.

<sup>63</sup> “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>; “Urumqi Attack Kills 31 in China’s Xinjiang Region,” BBC News, May 23, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-27502652>.

<sup>64</sup> “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>65</sup> Kamika Hinkson, “Assailant in Quebec Hit-and-Run Attack Was Intent on Killing Other Soldiers, Coroner’s Report Reveals,” CBC News, December 16, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/martin-couture-rouleau-patrice-vincent-coroners-report-1.3899842>; Mark Gollom and Tracey Lindeman, “Who Is Martin Couture-Rouleau?” CBC News, October 21, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/who-is-martin-couture-rouleau-1.2807285>.

## COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT

- **October 22, 2014:** Jerusalem, Israel. A suspected Hamas member rams his car into a crowd of pedestrians at a light rail train station in Jerusalem, killing two people—including a three-month-old girl—and wounding seven more.<sup>66</sup>
- **November 5, 2014:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assailant with alleged ties to Hamas drives into a crowded area in Jerusalem and continues to attack pedestrians using a metal pipe, killing three people and wounding 13 others. Hamas and PIJ both praise the recent wave of vehicular attacks and call for more.<sup>67</sup>
- **December 21, 2014:** Dijon, France. A man rams his car into crowds in the eastern French city of Dijon while shouting “Allahu Akbar,” injuring 13 people.<sup>68</sup>
- **December 22, 2014:** Nantes, France. A man rams a van into a crowd of pedestrians at a Christmas market in Nantes, western France, killing one person and wounding 10 others.<sup>69</sup>
- **March 6, 2015:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assailant rams his car at border police in Jerusalem, wounding four policewomen and one pedestrian, before exiting the vehicle wielding a meat cleaver. Hamas spokesman [Sami Abu Zuhri](#) posts a statement on Facebook praising the attack on behalf of the terrorist group and calling it “historic.”<sup>70</sup>
- **April 15, 2015:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assailant rams his car into a bus stop in Jerusalem, killing one person and wounding another.<sup>71</sup>
- **June 20, 2015:** Graz, Austria. Assailant rams into a crowd of pedestrians before exiting the vehicle and stabbing passersby, killing three people and wounding three dozen more.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Sasha Goldstein, “Second Victim Dies after Jerusalem Terror Attack that Killed 3-Month-Old American Baby,” *New York Daily News*, October 26, 2014, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/victim-dies-jerusalem-terror-attack-killed-3-month-old-baby-article-1.1987915>.

<sup>67</sup> Jeffrey Heller, “Palestinian Man Kills One in Jerusalem Car Attack: Police,” Reuters, November 5, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-jerusalem-violence-idUSKBN0IP17920141105>; Joshua Keating, “Why Terrorists Use Vehicles as Weapons,” *Slate*, November 5, 2014, [http://www.slate.com/blogs/the\\_world/2014/11/05/car\\_attack\\_in\\_jerusalem\\_why\\_are\\_terrorists\\_ramming\\_vehicles\\_into\\_crowds.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_world/2014/11/05/car_attack_in_jerusalem_why_are_terrorists_ramming_vehicles_into_crowds.html); Marissa Newman, “Palestinian Victim of Jerusalem Car-Ramming Attack Dies,” *Times of Israel*, December 8, 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-victim-of-jerusalem-car-ramming-attack-dies/#ixzz3LK1FGRHE>; “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>68</sup> “French Driver Reportedly Heard Yelling ‘Allahu Akbar’ Slams Pedestrians, Injures 13,” Fox News, December 22, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/12/22/in-tense-france-driver-rampages-in-lyon-area-slamming-into-passersby.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Guillaume Frouin, “Man Rams Van into Christmas Market in France,” Reuters, December 23, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/uk-france-crash-idUKKBN0K01Q120141223>; Milos Krivokapic and Lori Hinnant, “France Finds No Links among 3 Attacks in 3 Days,” Associated Press, <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-france-says-car-attackers-apparently-mentally-ill-2014dec23-story.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Daniel K. Eisenbud, “5 Injured in Car Ramming Attack in Jerusalem,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 6, 2015, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Car-rams-into-5-pedestrians-in-suspected-terror-attack-in-Jerusalem-393138>.

<sup>71</sup> “Palestinian Rams Car into Bus Stop, Killing Israeli,” Reuters, April 16, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-violence-idUSKBN0N71CI20150416>.

<sup>72</sup> “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>; Melanie Hall, “Bosnian ‘With History Of Beating Wife’ Accused Of Ploughing Car Into Austria Crowd,” *Telegraph* (London), June 21, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/austria/11689726/Graz-car-attack-kills-three.html>.



## COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT

- **June 26, 2015:** Lyon, France. Assailant Yassin Salhi decapitates his boss and drives his van into a gas plant where he worked in Lyon, southern France, lobbing gas cylinders, causing an explosion, and wounding two people.<sup>73</sup>
- **October 13, 2015:** Jerusalem, Israel. Assailant rams his car into a bus stop in Jerusalem before exiting the vehicle and stabbing pedestrians, killing one person and wounding two others.<sup>74</sup>
- **January 1, 2016:** Valence, France. Assailant drives his car into a group of French soldiers guarding a mosque in Valence, southern France, injuring one person.<sup>75</sup>
- **July 14, 2016:** Nice, France. Tunisian-born [Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel](#) carries out the Bastille Day attacks in France, killing 86 people and wounding 434 more. ISIS claims responsibility.<sup>76</sup>
- **September 29, 2016:** Vienna, Austria. Assailant drives his car at shoppers in Vienna's Favoriten district while shouting "Allahu Akbar," leaving no injuries.<sup>77</sup>
- **November 28, 2016:** Ohio, United States. Somali-born [Abdul Razak Ali Artan](#) carries out the car and knife attack at Ohio State University, wounding 11 people. Prior to the attack, Artan calls al-Qaeda propagandist [Anwar al-Awlaki](#) "our hero" in a message posted to Facebook. ISIS claims responsibility.<sup>78</sup>
- **December 19, 2016:** Berlin, Germany. Tunisian-born Anis Amri carries out the Christmas Market attack in Berlin, killing 12 people and wounding 56 others. ISIS claims responsibility.<sup>79</sup>
- **March 22, 2017:** London, United Kingdom. British-born [Khalid Masood](#) carries out a car-ramming and stabbing attack, killing five people and wounding 50 others. Masood first rams a crowd of pedestrians on London's Westminster Bridge, killing four people and

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<sup>73</sup> "France Attack: Man Decapitated at Factory near Lyon," BBC News, June 26, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33284937>; "Vehicle Ramming Attacks," Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>74</sup> Peter Beaumont, "Israelis Killed in Jerusalem Bus Stabbing and Car Ramming," *Guardian* (London), October 13, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/13/jerusalem-bus-stabbing-escalation-in-violence-israel-palestine>.

<sup>75</sup> Agence France-Presse, "Driver Shot as He Drove Car at Troops Guarding French Mosque," *Telegraph* (London), January 1, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/12077870/Driver-shot-as-he-drove-car-at-troops-guarding-French-mosque.html>; Reuters, "Man Who Rammed Car into French Soldiers 'Not Linked to Terror Group,'" France24, last updated January 4, 2016, <http://www.france24.com/en/20160102-man-who-rammed-car-soldiers-not-linked-terrorist-group-valence-mosque>.

<sup>76</sup> "Nice Attack: What We Know about the Bastille Day Killings," BBC News, August 19, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671>; "Vehicle Ramming Attacks," Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>77</sup> "Vehicle Ramming Attacks," Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>; Lizzie Dearden, "Man Who Drove Into Pedestrians Shouting Allahu Akbar 'Was Just Singing Along To Rap Music While Buying Pizza' Parents Say," *Independent* (London), October 7, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vienna-favoriten-car-ramming-attack-allahu-akbar-pizza-against-isis-rap-music-singing-cannabis-a7349876.html>.

<sup>78</sup> Katie Mettler, "Ohio State Attacker Complained Bitterly in Facebook Post of Treatment of Muslims 'Everywhere,' Report Says," <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/11/29/ohio-state-attacker-in-facebook-post-complained-bitterly-of-treatment-of-muslims-everywhere-reports-say/>.

<sup>79</sup> "Vehicle Ramming Attacks," Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>; "Truck Plows into Berlin Christmas Market," Reuters, last updated December 23, 2016, [http://live.reuters.com/Event/Truck\\_plows\\_into\\_Berlin\\_Christmas\\_market\\_2](http://live.reuters.com/Event/Truck_plows_into_Berlin_Christmas_market_2).

wounding dozens more. Masood then crashes his car into the gates of the Palace of Westminster. He stabs to death a police officer outside the nearby Houses of Parliament before being shot and killed by police. ISIS claims responsibility.<sup>80</sup>

- **March 23, 2017:** Antwerp, Belgium. A man is intercepted while driving at high speed toward crowds at De Meir, the major shopping street in Antwerp.<sup>81</sup>
- **April 7, 2017:** Stockholm, Sweden. An assailant drives a truck into a crowd at a shopping mall in Stockholm, killing four people and wounding 15 more.<sup>82</sup>
- **June 3, 2017:** London, United Kingdom. Three assailants drive a van at high speed into crowds on the London Bridge and exit the vehicle to stab other pedestrians at the nearby Borough Market. The attack leaves at least eight people dead and least 48 others wounded. The attackers are later identified as Youssef Zaghba, Khuram Butt, and Rachid Redouane.<sup>83</sup>
- **June 19, 2017:** London, United Kingdom. An assailant drives at a crowd of worshipers near a mosque in north London, leaving at least eight people wounded.<sup>84</sup>
- **June 19, 2017:** Paris, France. An armed assailant rams his vehicle at a police car on the Champs-Elysees street in Paris, seriously injuring himself but leaving no other casualties.<sup>85</sup>
- **August 17, 2017:** Barcelona, Spain. A van is deliberately driven into a crowd of tourists in Las Ramblas, a tree-lined street in the center of Barcelona. The attack, claimed by ISIS, leaves 16 people dead and 120 others wounded.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Jodie Halford, “London Attack: Khalid Masood Identified As Killer,” BBC News, March 23, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-39372154>; Dominic Evans and Omar Fahmy, “London Attack Bears Islamic State ‘Signature’ but No Clear Link,” Reuters, March 24, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-security-islamicstate-idUSKBN16V25A>; Dan Bilefsky, “Andrea Cristea, Who Fell Into Thames During U.K. Attack, Dies,” *New York Times*, April 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/07/world/europe/uk-andreea-cristea-thames-westminster-attack.html>; “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>81</sup> Jennifer Rankin, “Belgian Police Arrest Man Who Tried to Drive into Crowd in Antwerp,” *Guardian* (London), March 23, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/23/antwerp-belgium-police-arrest-man-drive-crowd-high-speed>; “Belgian Police Find ‘Knives and Shotgun’ in Car after Man Tries to drive into crowd in Antwerp,” *Telegraph* (London), March 23, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/23/belgian-police-arrest-man-trying-drive-crowd-antwerp/>.

<sup>82</sup> David Crouch and Helena Bengtsson, “Truck Drives into Crowd in Stockholm, Killing Four People,” *Guardian* (London), April 8, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/07/truck-crashes-in-central-stockholm-sweden>.

<sup>83</sup> “London Attack: Theresa May Says Enough is Enough after Seven Die,” BBC News, June 4, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-40148737>; “London attack: Third attacker named as Youssef Zaghba,” BBC News, June 6, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-40169985>; “London Bridge attack: last of eight victims identified as Xavier Thomas,” *Guardian* (London), June 7, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/07/london-bridge-attack-last-of-eight-victims-identified-as-xavier-thomas>.

<sup>84</sup> “What We Know So Far About the Finsbury Park Terror Attack,” *Guardian* (London), June 19, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/19/what-we-know-so-far-van-hits-pedestrians-near-london-mosque>.

<sup>85</sup> Henry Samuel, “Paris Police Launch Terror Investigation After Car ‘Deliberately’ Crashes Into Police Van On The Champs-Elysees,” *Telegraph* (London), June 19, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/19/police-operation-way-champs-elysees-paris/>.

<sup>86</sup> “Van Hits Crowds in Barcelona – Latest Updates,” BBC News, August 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/live/40966524>; Associated Press, Twitter post, August 17, 2017, <https://twitter.com/AP/status/898268669465198598>; Stephen Burgen, “Spanish Attacks Death Toll Rises to 16 after Woman Dies in Hospital,” *Guardian* (London), August 27, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/27/death-toll-spain-terror-attacks-rises-barcelona>.

## COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT

- **September 30, 2017:** Edmonton, Canada. A Somali assailant is suspected behind two vehicular attacks, collectively injuring five people. In the first attack, the assailant uses a car to ram into a police officer before exiting the car and stabbing him. The assailant later uses a truck to ram into pedestrians, injuring another four people. An ISIS flag is later found in the suspect's vehicle.<sup>87</sup>
- **October 31, 2017:** New York, United States. Uzbek immigrant Sayfullo Saipov drives a rented Home Depot truck onto a bicycle path along New York City's West Side Highway for approximately 20 blocks. The driver strikes several people before he drives into a school bus. Police shoot and arrest the driver after he exits the truck carrying a paintball gun and a pellet gun. At least eight people are killed and at least 12 are wounded. Mayor Bill de Blasio calls the attack "an act of terror." It is the deadliest terror attack in New York since 9/11. Police find handwritten notes near the truck attributing the attack to ISIS, and Saipov is reportedly linked to social media accounts that posted ISIS-related material.<sup>88</sup>
- **November 17, 2017:** West Bank. A 17-year-old Palestinian attacker drives a car into a 70-year-old pedestrian at the Efrat South Junction near the Israeli settlement of Efrat. The attacker then continues to the nearby Gush Etzion Junction where he strikes a 35-year-old pedestrian. The attacker exits his vehicle and attempts to stab an Israeli soldier, who shoots and wounds the attacker. Both pedestrians are wounded but survive. The attacker is arrested.<sup>89</sup>
- **March 16, 2018:** West Bank. Alaa Rateb Aa-Latif Kabha drives a car into a group of soldiers outside the Mevo Dotan settlement in the northern West Bank, killing two soldiers and wounding two others. Kabha is detained and taken to a hospital with injuries. The Israeli military labels the ramming a terrorist attack. Hamas praises the attack but does not claim credit.<sup>90</sup>
- **August 14, 2018:** London, United Kingdom. A man drives his car into bicyclists and pedestrians during morning rush hour in London before crashing into security barriers

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<sup>87</sup> Madison Park and Dakin Andone, "Five Hurt as Edmonton Attacks Spark Terror Investigation," CNN, October 2, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/01/americas/edmonton-vehicle-attacks-investigation/index.html>.

<sup>88</sup> Benjamin Mueller, William K. Rashbaum, and Al Baker, "At Least 6 Reported Dead as Truck Careens Down Bike Path in Manhattan," *New York Times*, October 31, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/police-shooting-lower-manhattan.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=a-lede-package-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>; Melanie Grayce West, Kate King, and Mara Gay, "Eight Killed in Terror Attack in New York," *Wall Street Journal*, last updated November 1, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/at-least-6-die-in-lower-manhattan-incident-1509483701>; Nicole Chavez and Holly Yan, "New York terror suspect linked to social media with ISIS-related material," CNN, November 1, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/01/us/new-york-attack/index.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Yotam Berger, "Two Israelis Wounded in West Bank Car-ramming Attack," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), November 17, 2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.823342>; "Palestinian Stabs, Rams Israelis in Terror Spree Across West Bank," *Jerusalem Post*, November 17, 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Two-morning-terror-attacks-in-West-Bank-leave-three-wounded-514496>.

<sup>90</sup> Ali Samudi, "Palestinian ramming attack kills 2 Israeli soldiers in West Bank: military," Reuters, March 16, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinian-ramming/palestinian-ramming-attack-kills-2-israeli-soldiers-in-west-bank-military-idUSKCN1GS214>.

outside the Houses of Parliament, wounding three. Police label the incident an act of terrorism and arrest the driver, whose identity is not immediately revealed.<sup>91</sup>

- **November 26, 2018:** West Bank. Ramzi Abu Yabes drives his car into a group of soldiers on a sidewalk along the Route 60 highway near the Karmeit settlement, wounding three. The driver is shot dead.<sup>92</sup>

### *Conclusion:*

As the TSA notes, vehicular terrorist attacks are becoming “more commonplace around the globe.”<sup>93</sup> Indeed, terrorists are increasingly relying on low-sophistication tactics like car-ramming and stabbing to kill or injure large groups of people without easy detection or intervention by law enforcement. These assailants often target locations where large numbers of people congregate, particularly on or around major national holidays, when civilians are likely to be outdoors shopping or celebrating.<sup>94</sup>

Although there is little that can be done to prevent the weaponization of motor vehicles, the TSA has encouraged bus and trucking companies to be vigilant about indicators—like modifications to vehicles—that may suggest a vehicular terrorist attack. The TSA has also encouraged the use of vehicle barriers to prevent vehicles from accelerating into populated areas, protecting large crowds of people from attacks at outdoor venues like concerts, sporting events, and holiday markets.<sup>95</sup>

As CEP notes, far more can also be done by tech companies to counteract calls to violence by groups like ISIS, al-Qaeda, and Hamas. After the March 2017 Westminster attack, YouTube was “inundated with violent ISIS recruitment videos,” according to findings by the U.K. government. The British government noted that YouTube failed to block this slew of content, despite the videos being easily searchable and posted under usernames like “Islamic Caliphate.”<sup>96</sup> After the June 2017 London Bridge attack, U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May called for increased regulation on

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<sup>91</sup> “Westminster car crash: Man arrested on suspicion of terror offences,” BBC News, August 14, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-45180120>; William Booth, “London police: Car rampage outside Westminster treated as ‘terrorist incident,’” *Washington Post*, August 14, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/car-smashes-into-security-barriers-outside-britains-parliament-driver-arrested-amid-injuries/2018/08/14/c778ce66-9f97-11e8-8e87-c869fe70a721\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.8eec4ea9eaa6&wpisrc=al\\_world\\_alert-world&wpmk=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/car-smashes-into-security-barriers-outside-britains-parliament-driver-arrested-amid-injuries/2018/08/14/c778ce66-9f97-11e8-8e87-c869fe70a721_story.html?utm_term=.8eec4ea9eaa6&wpisrc=al_world_alert-world&wpmk=1).

<sup>92</sup> Judah Ari Gross, “3 soldiers hurt in suspected car-ramming attack in central West Bank,” *Times of Israel*, November 26, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/three-injured-in-suspected-car-ramming-attack-in-central-west-bank/>.

<sup>93</sup> Jason Hanna, “TSA Warns Truckers: Watch for Possible Ramming Terror Attacks,” CNN, May 5, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/04/politics/tsa-ramming-terror-attacks-warning/>.

<sup>94</sup> For more on common terror targets, see CEP’s report, *Terror Targets in the West: Where and Why*.

<sup>95</sup> “Vehicle Ramming Attacks,” Transportation Security Administration, May 2017, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/TSA-VehicleRamming.pdf>.

<sup>96</sup> “Hate Crime: Abuse, Hate and Extremism Online Fourteenth Report of Session 2016–17,” U.K. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, May 1, 2017, <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/609/609.pdf>.

the Internet, where terrorist recruitment and incitement to violence largely takes place remotely.<sup>97</sup> Despite Google's claims to have improved its takedown efforts, CEP has tracked the appearance and reappearance of major ISIS videos on YouTube (Google's subsidiary), including those calling for vehicular terrorist attacks. CEP's findings raise serious questions about Google's stated commitment to confronting terrorist recruitment using hashing technology, which prevents flagged content from being re-uploaded to a platform.

CEP has tracked the appearance and reappearance of major ISIS videos on YouTube calling for vehicular terrorist attacks. CEP's findings raise serious questions about the company's stated commitment to confronting terrorist recruitment on its platform.

In many cases, assailants themselves are active on tech platforms like Google, Facebook, and WhatsApp prior to carrying out an attack. Abdul Razak Ali Artan, perpetrator of the November 2016 Ohio State University attack, called al-Qaeda cleric [Anwar al-Awlaki](#) "our hero" in a message posted to Facebook.<sup>98</sup> Khalid Masood, perpetrator of the March 2017 Westminster attack, sent a message on WhatsApp announcing his intention to wage jihad minutes before launching his assault.<sup>99</sup>

While it is impossible to prevent all vehicular terrorist attacks, far more can and should be done to reduce the threat. Tech companies, for one, can do far more to prevent groups like ISIS, al-Qaeda, and Hamas from using their platforms to recruit new members and reach their target audiences. These companies can also be more proactive and cooperative with law enforcement about the activity of lone-wolf terrorists on their platforms. Although we cannot prevent each and every vehicular attack, efforts to prevent even a few attacks can have the foreseeably large impact of reducing widespread fear and, most importantly, saving lives.

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<sup>97</sup> "Theresa May Says the Internet Must Now Be Regulated Following London Bridge Terror Attack," *Independent* (London), June 4, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-may-internet-regulated-london-bridge-terror-attack-google-facebook-whatsapp-borough-security-a7771896.html>.

<sup>98</sup> Jake Tapper, Twitter post, November 28, 2016, 5:56 p.m., <https://twitter.com/jaketapper/status/803417243547799552>.

<sup>99</sup> Rozina Sabur, "Westminster Terror Attacker Khalid Masood's Final Message Revealed," *Telegraph* (London), April 28, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/04/28/westminster-terror-attacker-khalid-masoods-final-message-revealed/>.