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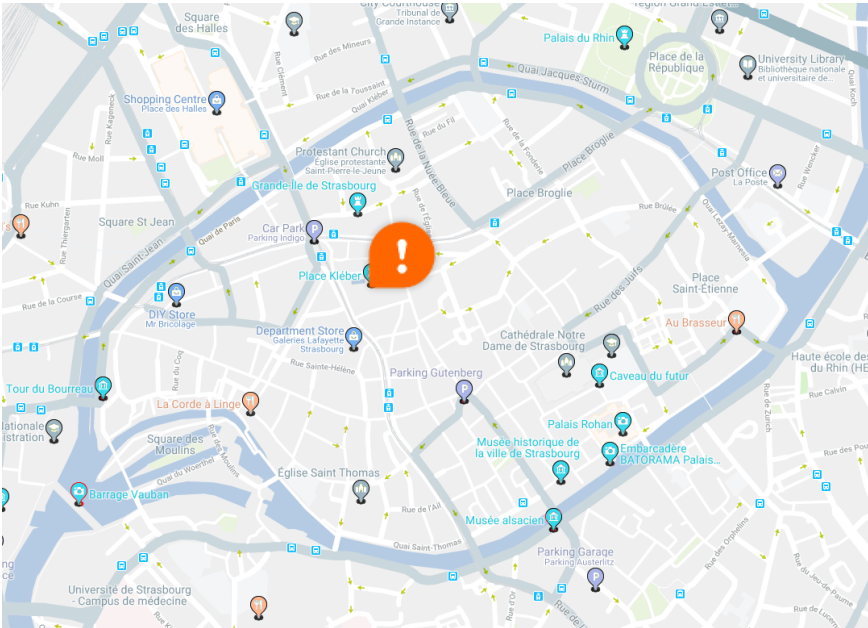
LATEST

TRAVEL ADVISORY




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France Raise Terror Threat Level Following Shooting at Christmas Market in Strasbourg



KEY EVENTS

 **FRANCE: LOW** travel risk

 Risk of Terrorism: **LOW**

Strasbourg: Exercise enhanced vigilance; anticipate heightened security following suspected terror attack near Place Kleber.

FRANCE (LOW) 

KEY POINTS

- Two people were killed, and at least 14 were injured after a gunman indiscriminately opened fire on crowds attending the Strasbourg Christmas market near Place Kleber at approximately 20:00 (local time).
- The suspect fled the scene after the initial attack and managed to reach a taxi which dropped him off near Neudorf on the border with Germany. The gunman is yet to be detained by French authorities, with some speculating he could have fled over the border into Germany.
- France have subsequently raised their terror level to the highest level. However, despite the recent attack, the risk from terrorism in the country remains low due to the capabilities and preventative measures implemented by the French authorities.

SITUATIONAL SUMMARY

In what has been described by the French anti-terrorist prosecution service as a terror attack, a gunman opened fire at a crowded Christmas market in the centre of Strasbourg (Grand Est region) at 20:00 local time on 11 December before fleeing in a Taxi towards the border Germany, evading capture by security forces. Police responded to the incident immediately after the first shots were fired, leading to an exchange of fire before the assailant fled in Taxi towards Neudorf, a town on the German border. It is believed that police managed to wound the assailant in the exchange of firefight.

The assailant has since been identified as a 29-year-old French national of Moroccan descent who was released from prison in Germany in 2017 and deported back to France. He had been placed on a French terror watch list that profiled self-styled Jihadist with the capability to carry out attacks in France. It is believed the gunman was radicalised during multiple spells in Prison. Police had earlier raided the suspects home in an unrelated criminal case finding knives, grenades and a firearm but failed to detain the assailant. While some reports suggest that the assailant shouted "Allahu Akba" prior to the attack, this remains unconfirmed and the motive is yet to be established.

The attack occurred in the vicinity of Place Kleber, home to France's oldest Christmas market. Strasbourg also remains the official seat of the European Parliament which was in session during the attack. The city has been a target for Islamist plots in the past and security has been

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elevated since the Paris attacks in 2015. The Christmas market and surrounding street were closed for around 12 hours following the attack but have since reopened. France has subsequently raised its terrorism threat level to the highest level. Security remains elevated within the centre city and surrounding areas. Heightened security measure and associated delays should be expected at the border crossing to Germany.

LOW TERRORISM RISK 

- Travel to central Strasbourg and Place Kleber can continue; however, travellers should exercise enhanced vigilance awareness and report any suspicious behaviour or packages to the local authorities.
- Anticipate a heightened security force presence throughout the Grand Est region, including in the city centre and at border crossings. Such measures will likely stay in place until the gunman is apprehended.
- Travel disruption is expected throughout the city and towards the German border as security is increased. Comply with all official directives issued by local authorities and local police.
- Refrain from acting upon or sharing unverified information. Consult local media, in country contacts as well as Solace Global Alerts for accurate and up to date information.



Solace Global remains available to provide the full range of Travel Risk Management services to clients. Solace Global is also able to provide comprehensive crisis management, in-country journey management, tracking, response, and evacuation services.

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