



ALERT +

Fatal attack in Kongsberg

Kongsberg, Norway

October 2021

SITUATION SUMMARY

On 13 October, an individual armed with a bow and arrows attacked and killed five people in the Norwegian town of Kongsberg. Officials have stated that he may have also had 'other weapons' but the nature of these has not been disclosed. Two other people were injured during the attack, including an off-duty police officer.

Police confirmed that the attack began at a Co-op Extra Supermarket in western Kongsberg and later spread to several other locations across the town. Kari Anne, the Mayor of Kongsberg, later clarified that the attack had occurred in the Vestiden area of the town.

Following the attack, a town-wide shelter-in-place order was implemented amidst a major police operation, with multiple properties being evacuated. The police detained a male suspect at 18:47 local time, approximately 34 minutes after the first reports of the attack emerged. In the hours after his arrest, a police spokesperson confirmed the suspect was known to the police and had been involved in "several different issues".

At the time of writing the motive for the attack is unconfirmed; however, Norwegian police have announced that the incident appears to be motivated by terrorism. They have previously stated that they had been in contact with the suspect in the past over fears of radicalisation after he was reported to have converted to Islam.

Norway's terrorism threat level has not raised in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Despite this, public services, hospitals and the Justice Ministry have been put on alert. Additionally, Norway's police directorate has ordered all officers nationwide to carry firearms as an extra precaution.

All political parties in the country have reacted in solidarity to the incident. Outgoing Prime Minister Erna Solberg of the Conservative Party described the attack as "gruesome"; a sentiment echoed by Prime Minister-designate Jonas Støre of the Labour Party, who condemned the attack as a "cruel and brutal act".

SOLACE GLOBAL COMMENT

With a death toll of five, the Kongsberg attack represents the deadliest mass-casualty event in Norway since the July 2011 attack perpetrated by far-right terrorist Anders Behring Breivik. The most recent fatal terrorist incident before last night's incident was a far-right attack on the Al-Noor Islamic Center mosque in Bærum in August 2019.

At the time of writing, police have announced that the attack appears to be an act of terror. Given the police had previously been in contact with the suspect over fears of radicalisation, the announcement of a terrorist motive is not a surprise.

Any investigation into the Kongsberg attack is likely to focus on these fears of radicalisation. It is also likely that questions will be raised regarding police intelligence prior to the attack. Additionally, the perpetrator's use of a bow and arrow as his weapon is unconventional and likely to attract attention from the Norwegian and international media.

In Norway, the main terrorist threat comes from far-right actors, such as in the 2011 Breivik attack and the Bærum mosque shooting, and from Islamic extremism. However, there has only been two successful attacks in the past decade before last night. Additionally, Norwegian police have been successful in foiling many past incidents, including a planned attack using poison in February 2021.

As a result of this rarity in attacks, and despite last night's incident, the terrorism threat in Norway remains low. However, the seemingly indiscriminate nature of the attack reinforces the need to maintain situational awareness, even when travelling or working in a low-risk destination. Past incidents have occurred in the country, and in the wider region, including the 2017 Stockholm truck attack and the 2015 Copenhagen shootings.

Attacks of a terrorist nature can occur with little to no warning and being aware of one's surroundings is often the best way to avoid danger.

SOLACE GLOBAL ADVICE

In-Country Travellers/Staff

- Monitor local media outlets for any developments to the situation.
- Avoid the crime scene(s) due to the ongoing police investigation.
- Anticipate localised/residual disruptions in the coming hours as a result of ongoing investigation.
- Adhere to any instructions issued by authorities, including shelter-in-place orders.
- Notify a trusted person of your current location and situation, particularly if in the vicinity of the attack.

General Advice

- Maintain situational awareness at all times regardless of your locations risk level.
- Notify the police of any suspicious activity as soon as it is safe to do so.
- If in the vicinity of an attack, adopt the RUN, HIDE, TELL advice. I.e. Run to a place of safety, hide in a place of safety, and tell the local police service.
- If in the vicinity of an active attack, leave the area immediately if safe to do so. If unable to leave the area, seek secure shelter, preferably somewhere that provides cover from fire with a lockable door.



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