

RTV Trend Report 2019

Right Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe, 1990 - 2018

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Preface

C-REX would like to thank all the research assistants involved in the present update of the RTV dataset: Emilie Silkoset, Sofia Lygren, Lars Wibe Hagen, Eli Marie Hindahl, and Eirin Høiseth. In addition, we would like to thank all international experts who have contributed with reporting and data. For an overview of the international RTV expert network, please see: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/topics/online-resources/rtv-dataset/expert-network.html>

Key point summary

- The RTV dataset now includes 757 events
- 205 events had a fatal outcome, and 326 people have been killed through right-wing terrorism and violence between 1990 and 2018 in Western Europe
- The 2016-2018 period continues several existing trends
- Despite a surge in fatal incidents in 2016, the general tendency is still declining levels of fatal right-wing violence
- Countries with the highest level of severe right-wing violence from 1990-2015 continue to rank high in 2016-2018
- Unorganized and gang-related violence continue to decrease, while the number of attacks by lone actors are stable
- In relative terms, but not in absolute numbers, foreigners have become a more common target group.
- Attacks on Muslims have become more common, while attacks on Jews have become less common.

Introduction

The Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence (RTV) dataset was built following the 22 July 2011 terrorist attacks in Norway and the discovery of the German terrorist cell *Nationalsozialistischer Underground* the same year. These events uncovered a gap in our knowledge about recent trends in right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe.¹ Some existing datasets developed by scholars, such as the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data (TWEED), do cover right-wing terrorist events. Similarly, some hate crime statistics and reports from anti-racist organizations also cover right-wing violence. However, existing data collected by scholars and organizations commonly suffer from one or several methodological pitfalls, including problems of availability, representativeness, measurement validity, replicability, and comparability.²

To narrow the existing knowledge gap, as well as address some of the methodological limitations of other datasets, the RTV dataset offers a systematic assessment of *the most severe* forms of violent attacks and plots in 18 West European countries since 1990 whose *target selection* is based on *right-wing beliefs*.

By ‘most severe forms of violent attacks and plots’, we mean cases in which the perpetrator(s) appear determined or willing to inflict deadly or severely disabling physical injury on the victim(s), as opposed to lesser forms of violence of a more symbolic or demonstrative nature. More specifically, the dataset includes (1) all events with fatal or near fatal outcomes; (2) events in which potentially lethal weapons have been used offensively, such as knives, guns, or bombs; (3) severe beatings leading to hospitalisation, coma, unconsciousness, or other severe injuries; (4) terrorist attack plots; and (5) discoveries of large weapons caches belonging to right-wing extremists.

The reason for only including the most severe types of events in the RTV dataset is that lower-scale events motivated by right-wing beliefs are too many to be covered systematically and exhaustively. Furthermore, the availability and reliability of source material varies considerably

¹ For a more detailed introduction to the RTV dataset, see Jacob Aasland Ravndal, “Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Introducing the RTV Dataset”, *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (2016).

² Jacob Aasland Ravndal and Anders Ravik Jupskås, “Methods for Mapping Far Right Violence”, in *Researching the Far Right: Theory, Method and Practice*, ed. Stephen Ashe et al. (Oxon: Routledge, 2019).

between countries, thereby resulting in a skewed representation of events at the cross-national level. Thus, by focusing on the most severe types of events only, the risk of missing out important cases is reduced. For example, we can be fairly certain that the entire universe of fatal events is covered. These events can therefore be used to analyse variation over time and between countries. By comparison, the distribution of non-fatal events included in the dataset should not be seen as representative, and must be analysed with more caution.

By ‘right-wing’, we mean those who regard social inequality as inevitable, natural, or even desirable, as opposed to those on the left, who support policies designed to reduce social inequality.³ Furthermore, most perpetrators of right-wing violence, or terrorism are situated at the far end of the political spectrum, thereby adhering to a far-right mix of anti-egalitarianism, nativism, and authoritarianism.⁴ These ideological constructs – and beliefs that are strongly associated with them, such as racism and conspiratorial thinking – produce a set of political and social groups considered as enemies and legitimate targets. Most notably, but not exclusively, these include foreigners, leftists, religious minorities, sexual minorities, and state institutions. The justification for a rather *broad* definition of ‘right wing’ – in which we include not only acts motivated by coherent far right ideology, but also those committed due to for example racist beliefs – is simply the major challenge of distinguishing the two in practice. In most cases, it would be very difficult to determine whether the perpetrator subscribed to a coherent ideology.

The RTV dataset is based exclusively on open sources, including but not limited to media coverage, openly available information from non-governmental organizations, antifascist groups, and other organizations. To ensure full coverage of the most important cases, national experts in most countries have been consulted in order to identify relevant candidate events and source material.

There is reason to believe that the last update, which covered events from 2016-2018, covers the universe of non-fatal events more extensively than the 1990-2015 version. This is due to better access to source information online and even more extensive consultation with national experts. As such, we argue that the 2016-2018 period in the dataset accurately reflects the

³ Norberto Bobbio, *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction*, trans. Allan Cameron (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁴ Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today*, (Oxford: Polity, 2019).

characteristics of perpetrator types, target groups, and the types of weapons used in the most severe types of attack during this period, although some attacks may be missing due to missing information.

Although the RTV dataset is far from covering all kinds of right-wing violence, there are good reasons to believe that the dataset is a representative ‘tip’ of a larger iceberg.⁵ However, there may well be qualitative differences in the distribution and characteristics of lower-scale events found beneath the surface. One should therefore be careful in drawing conclusions about right-wing violence in general based exclusively on the RTV dataset, and always analyse fatal attacks only when trying to assess variation over time or between places.

Key findings

This trend report presents the most recent developments within the RTV universe. More specifically, the report covers developments over time and between countries, perpetrator and incident types, target groups and country reports on France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Last, the report covers two thematic topics: vehicular attacks and the disappearing skinhead scene. In total, the updated version includes 179 new events. Of these, 162 events occurred between 2016 and 2018, while 17 (non-fatal) events have been added to the period (1990-2015) covered in the original version of the dataset. The dataset now includes 757 events in total. 205 events had a fatal outcome, and 326 people have been killed through right-wing terrorism and violence between 1990 and 2018 in Western Europe. The attack on 22 July 2011 in Norway is by far the most deadly attack, with a total of 77 people killed.

Developments over time and between countries

Fatal RTV attacks have decreased significantly since the 1990s (Figure 1). The period between 2016 and 2018, despite an uptick in 2016 (most likely inflated by the ‘refugee crisis’), shows a continuation of this trend. While 2016 resulted in nine fatal events, the numbers for 2017 and 2018 were three and two, respectively – among the lowest on record.

⁵ Political and racist murders rarely occur in complete isolation from less severe forms of violence. Moreover, several annual country reports on right-wing violence over the past 10-15 years in countries like Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Austria, and Switzerland, show similar trends as the RTV dataset. Cf. Ravndal, “Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Introducing the RTV Dataset.”

The 2017 attacks were the Finsbury Mosque attack, an African American tourist killed in Zakynthos, Greece, and an immigrant woman shot by her neighbour who was known to have far-right beliefs. The two attacks in 2018 were an Albanian victim stabbed by an affiliate of Golden Dawn in Greece and a homosexual man killed in Aue, Germany, by his friends.

Most of the attacks between 2016 and 2018 claimed only one victim, but the number of dead in 2016 was further inflated by the Breivik-inspired shooting in Munich on 22 July 2016 (exactly five years after the Oslo/Utøya attacks). Nine people were killed in this attack, in addition to 27 injured. This single attack contributes to making 2016 the second deadliest year since 2000 (Figure 2).

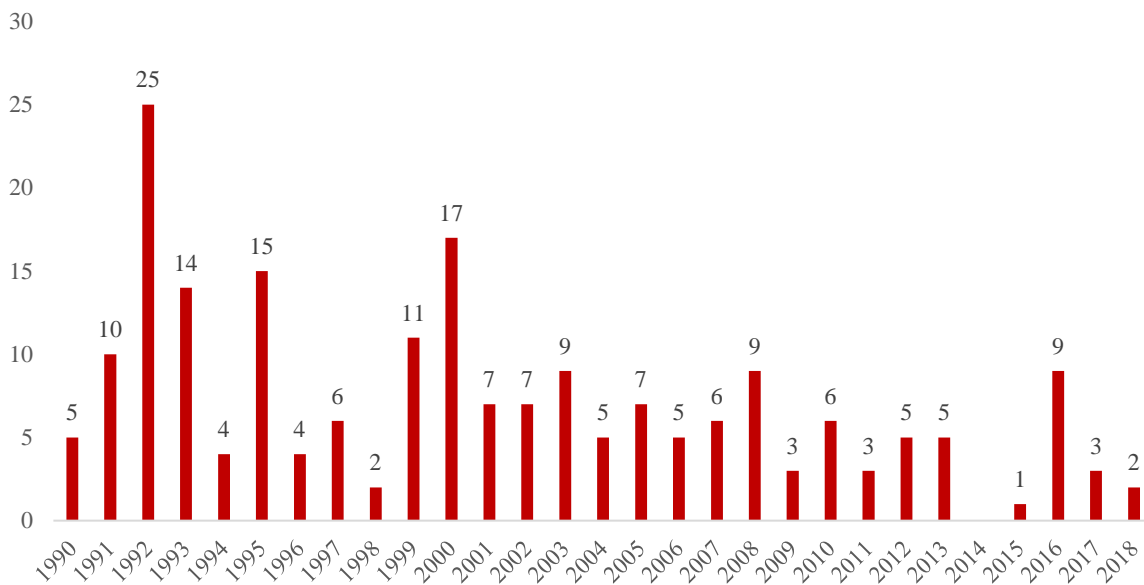


Figure 1: Number of cases with fatal outcomes, 1990-2018

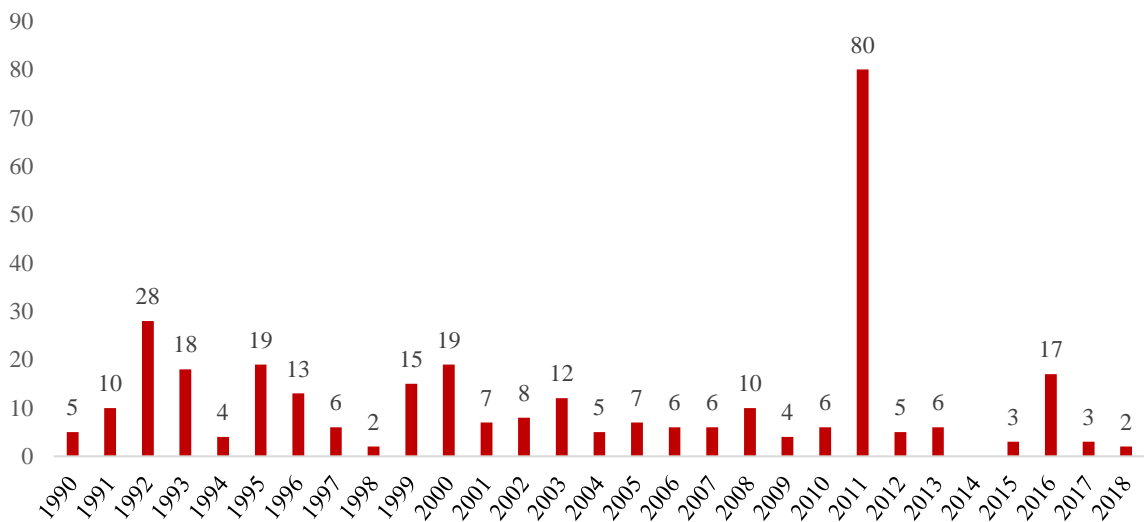


Figure 2: Number of dead in RTV violence per year, 1990-2018

When looking at the combination of both fatal and non-fatal events in the first RTV dataset (1990-2015), six countries stand out as having experienced considerably more RTV than others: Sweden, Germany, Italy, the UK, Greece and Spain.⁶ Figures for 2016-2018 show that the same countries are still among those with the highest records of both fatal and non-fatal events. The only exception is Finland, which had few non-fatal events, but is among the countries with one fatal event (Figures 3 and 4).

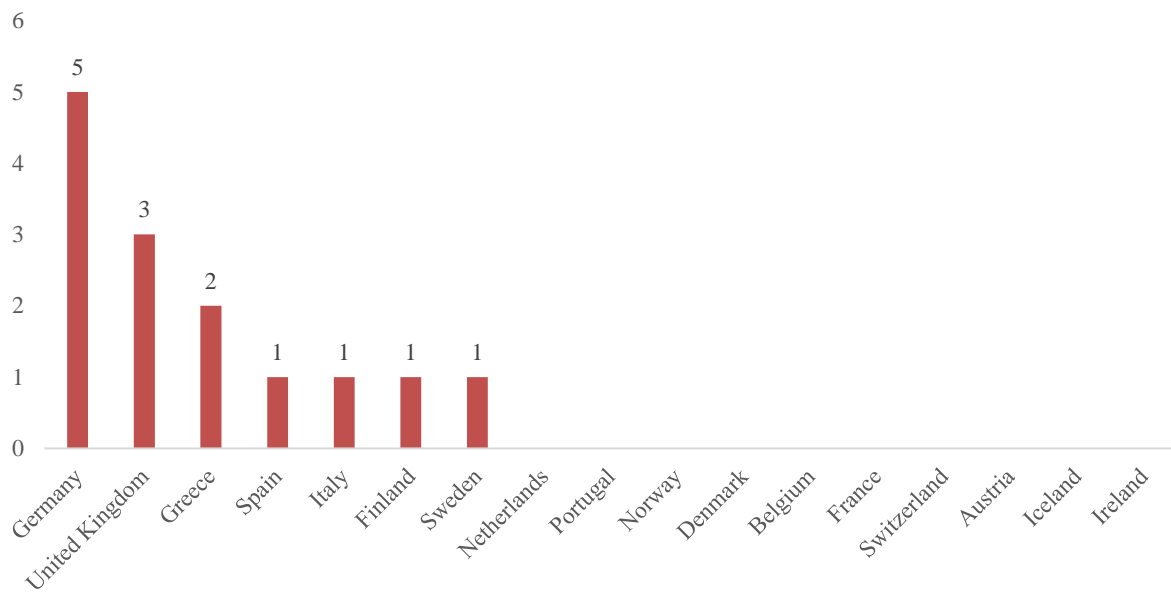


Figure 3: All fatal cases, 2016-2018, by country

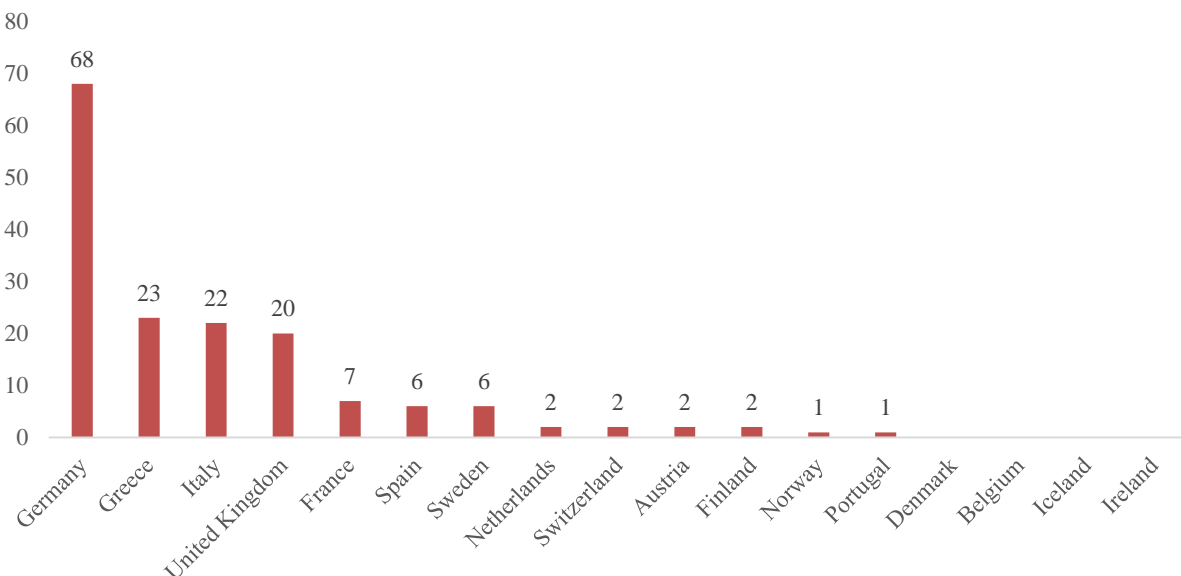


Figure 4: All cases, 2016-2018, by country

⁶ Jacob Aasland Ravndal, “Explaining Right-wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Grievances, Opportunities and Polarisation”, *European Journal of Political Research* 57, no. 4 (2018): 845–66.

Perpetrator types

What characterizes perpetrators of right-wing violence in terms of organizational configurations? The RTV dataset distinguishes between seven perpetrator types:

- *Organized groups* – known entities with five or more members whose association primarily relies on a strong commitment to right-wing politics
- *Affiliated members* – two or more members of organized groups acting on their own
- *Autonomous cells* – clandestine entity of two to four members whose association primarily relies on a strong commitment to right-wing politics
- *Gangs* – informal constellations of three or more acquaintances with a general right-wing commitment, but whose association primarily relies on social bonds
- *Unorganized* – two or more perpetrators with no known association to any specific right-wing group, cell, or gang
- *Lone actor* – single perpetrators who prepare and sometimes also carry out attacks on their own initiative
- *Shadow groups* – unresolved attacks claimed by formerly unknown groups

If we look at the distribution of perpetrator types over time, the most notable trend is that (skinhead) gangs and unorganized perpetrators are decreasing, both in number and relative to other perpetrator types (Figure 5). Autonomous cells are also decreasing, but they never constituted a significant perpetrator type within the (fatal) RTV universe. RTV by organised groups (including affiliated members) continue to be marginal. Finally, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the number of lone actor attacks has remained quite stable, and it is rather the proportion of lone actor attacks that increases, due to the decrease in attacks by the other perpetrator types.

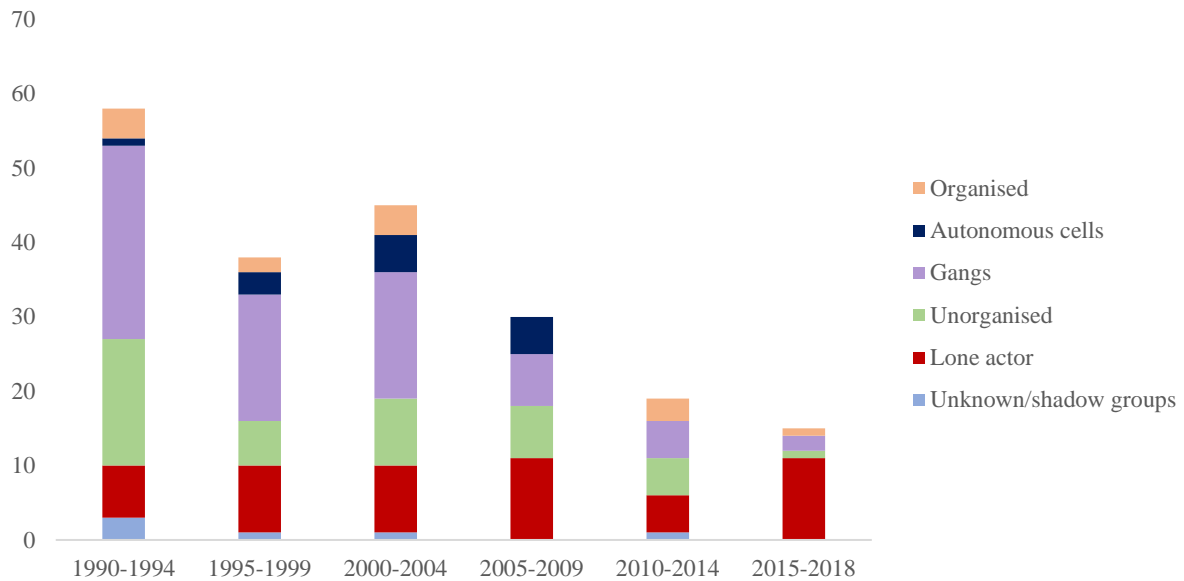


Figure 5: Perpetrator type of fatal events, 1990-2018. Note that the categories ‘organized’ and ‘affiliated members’ are merged in this figure.

Incident and perpetrator type

Do different perpetrator types commit different types of violence? The RTV events are categorized according to four incident types:

- *Premeditated attacks* are events where perpetrators have actively pursued a predefined person or target group.
- *Spontaneous attacks* are triggered by random confrontations between perpetrator(s) and victim(s), associated with some predefined target group.
- *Plots* are planned attacks by an identifiable group or individual involving deadly weapons that have been intercepted by the police before the attack was carried out.
- *Preparations* for armed struggle are discoveries of bomb-making materials or major arms repositories belonging to right-wing activists, usually without a clear plot to point to.

Table 1 shows all RTV events from 2016-2018, categorized according to perpetrator and incident type. When including non-fatal events, lone actors are still the main perpetrator type behind RTV, with 50 events. Unknown perpetrators are responsible for 44 attacks, while organized groups are responsible for 39 attacks. Attacks committed by unknown perpetrators often involve bomb throwing and arson – predominately against refugee accommodation.

Consequentially, the perpetrators are seldom identified, and these attacks are subsequently coded as ‘unknown’.

Zooming in on fatal events, lone actors are responsible for more than two thirds of all deadly outcomes, with 10 of 13 deadly events. Furthermore, only one fatal event is associated with an organized group (the Nordic Resistance Movement in Finland), with the remainder of the attacks perpetrated by organized groups or their affiliates often being of a lower scale.

● Red dots indicate fatal attacks

Perpetrator type	Premeditated	Spontaneous	Attack plot	Preparation for armed struggle	Total
Lone actors	●●●●●●●● 24	●●●●●●●● 13	11	● 2	50
Gangs	●● 6	8			14
Organized groups	19	● 9	4	7	39
Unknown	33	9		2	44
Unorganized	3	● 4			7
Autonomous cells	6		2		8
Total	91	43	17	11	162

Table 1: All events 2016-2018, perpetrator type and incident type. Note that the categories ‘organized groups’ and ‘affiliated members’ are merged in this table.

91 of 162 attacks are premeditated while 43 are spontaneous. 2017 (11 cases) and 2018 (12 cases) mark a striking high point for cases of ‘plots’ and ‘preparation for armed struggle’, compared to previous years. As seen in Table 1, one preparation for armed struggle incident resulted in a fatal outcome. This case involved an affiliate of the *Reichbürger* movement, a loosely organized movement rejecting the legitimacy of the German state (see section on Germany below). The perpetrator shot at police attempting to raid his home as the perpetrator, a sport shooter, was deemed ‘no longer fit to possess weapons’, killing one officer and wounding three.

Increased activity is a potential explanation for this high point in plots and preparation for armed struggle, but changes in police mandates by way of new anti-terrorism legislation might also be a reason for why we are seeing a more general increase in such cases over the last years. This highlights both the theoretical commitment of certain far-right actors towards violence on a scale we rarely see carried out in practice, as well as the difficulty faced in bringing such schemes to fruition without attracting police attention.

Target groups

Who are targeted by right-wing violence? While it seems reasonable to suspect the 2015 stream of refugees arriving in Europe as a potential triggering event for the large number of cases in 2016, the year includes attacks on a number of other target groups as well, including LGBT and government targets. Although four out of the nine fatal attacks this year targeted immigrants and foreigners, and one attack targeted Muslims, this is not an unusual proportion of events for recent years. Since 2005, this group has rarely been the target of less than half of all fatal attacks.

Figure 6 shows the different target groups clustered into two categories: ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ enemies. Inner enemies (grey) include political opponents (left-wing, pro-immigration activists, the media and separatists), homeless and disabled people, members of the LGBT community, state institutions (the government and police), and internal traitors and deserters. Outer enemies (red) include immigrants, people of colour, ethnic minorities, and religious minorities (Jews and Muslims). Both ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ groups are targeted throughout the entire period, but the latter is usually somewhat more frequently targeted compared to the former. This is also the case in recent years, particularly in 2017 when all three of the deadly attacks outer enemies. In 2018, there was one fatal attack was against an outer enemy and one against an inner enemy.

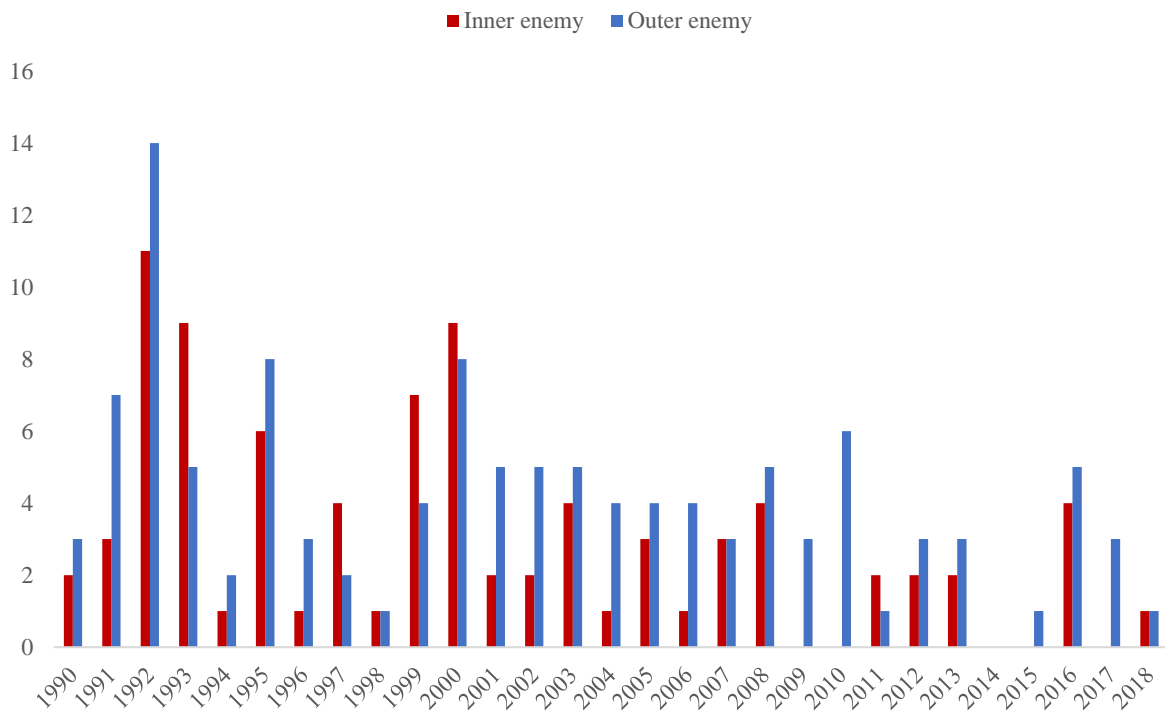


Figure 6: Fatal attacks, indicating those targeting outer enemies (red) and inner enemies (blue). Note that two fatal cases from 1994 and 1995 are not included, as the source information is scarce concerning which target group the victims belonged to.

While attacks involving LGBT victims are a small but relatively steady feature in the dataset, two cases in 2016-2018 are the first since 2005 to result in a fatal outcome. In addition to the case already mentioned in Germany in 2018, a transgender woman was the victim of a premeditated murder by her supposed friends in Sweden in 2016. Moreover, the brutality of both cases leaves little doubt that the fatal outcomes were intended.

In the pie charts below (Figures 7-9), we have separated victim types according to six categories, applying the labels far-right activists use in their enemy images: the ‘Other’, the ‘State’, the ‘Weak’, the ‘Deviant’, political enemies and other/unknown.⁷ The ‘Other’, including foreigners, ethnic minorities, and religious groups, has consistently been the main target group, with 51 per cent, 61 per cent, and 67 per cent of all fatal attacks in the three decades respectively, increasing in share in each decade.

Zooming in on ‘the Other’ category (figures to the right), fatal attacks explicitly targeting Muslims have gone from none in the 1990s to 19 per cent in the 2010s. While Jews were victims of three fatal attacks in the 1990s, no fatal attacks explicitly targeting Jews have been recorded for the 2000s. The second most frequent target is ‘Political enemies’, which include left-wing activists, pro-immigration activists, the media, and separatists. This target group shows a consistent pattern in the last three decades, being the victims of 13 to 15 per cent of all fatal attacks. While the ‘Weak’, including the homeless and physically and mentally disabled people, were the victims of 9 per cent and 5 per cent of fatal attacks in the 1990s and the 2000s respectively, there has not been any fatal attack recorded that targeted this group in the 2010s. Fatal attacks against the ‘Deviant’, meaning LGBT victims, are a recurring feature for all three decades. The ‘Deviant’ were victims of 8 per cent of the total share of attacks in the 1990s, decreasing to 3 per cent in the 2000s, and subsequently increasing to 6 per cent in the 2010s. The ‘State’ is a minor, yet a recurring, target group, constituting between 3 and 6 per cent of all fatal attacks. Sometimes, people not belonging to conventional target groups end up as victims of right-wing violence. These include people who are attacked as a result of quarrels over political issues, or become random victims of brutal extreme-right subcultures. This ‘Other/Unknown’ category has gradually disappeared from the (fatal) RTV universe – from 9 per cent of all attacks in the 1990s to zero per cent in 2010s.

⁷ There is only one case where the target characteristics are unknown due to lack of information.

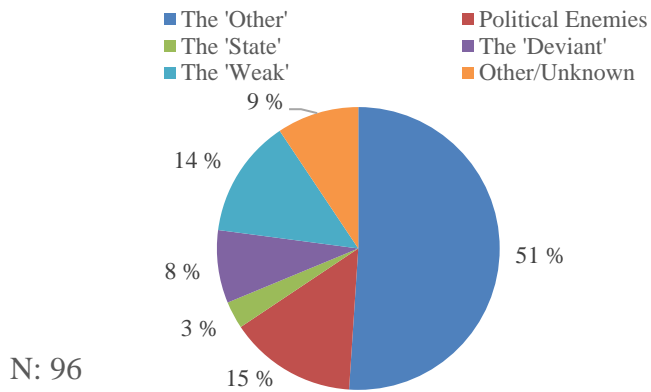
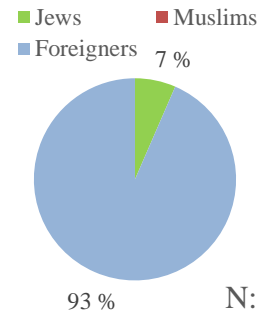


Figure 7: Target groups, fatal cases, 1990-1999



Target groups within the 'Other', 1990-1999

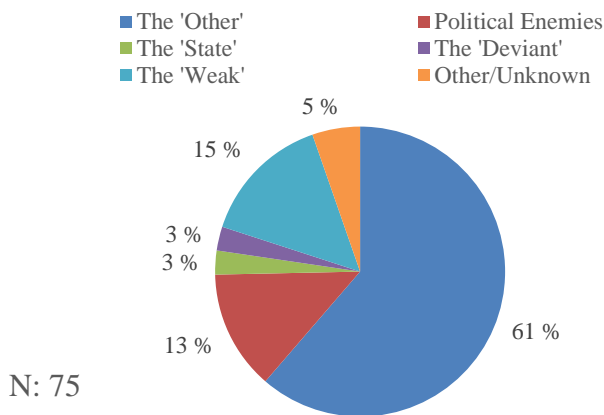
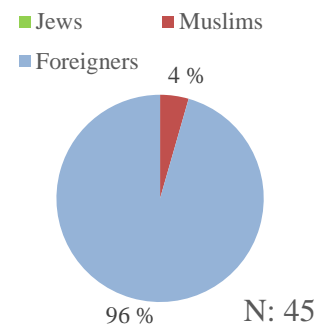


Figure 8: Target groups, fatal cases, 2000-2009



Target groups within the 'Other', 2000-2009

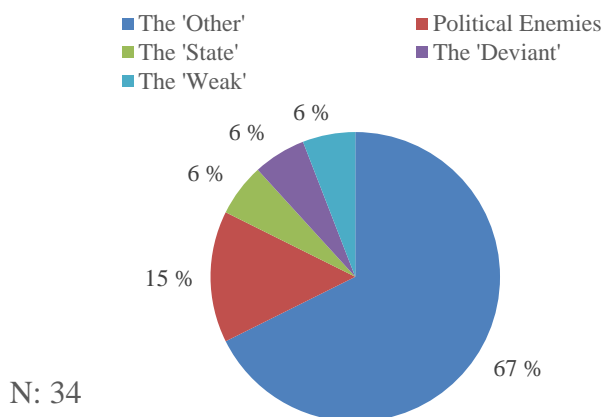
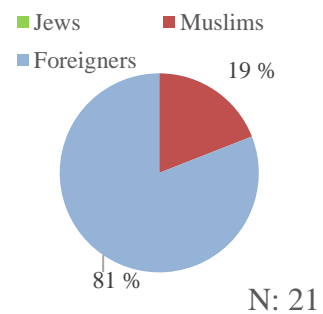


Figure 9: Target groups, fatal cases, 2010-2018



Target groups within the 'Other', 2010-2018

Country reports

The next section comments on a selection of countries with noticeable trends or developments in the last three years.

France

Despite a peak in registered activity overall in 2017 (five cases in one year is the most recorded), France did not appear to have any fatal cases for the period 2016-2018. This is in line with the low number of such events in France historically. The uptick is instead partly due to a number of attack plots that were uncovered. Several plots involving larger numbers (four and up) of conspirators have reportedly been intercepted by French police since the summer of 2017 (two in 2017 and two in 2018; one case is also registered for 2019). The timing and would-be targets in these cases could be taken to suggest that the May 2017 presidential elections served as a triggering event. Three of the five plots had President Macron or government figures among their potential targets, and two of these were intercepted in the fall of 2017.

One should also keep in mind the expanded powers granted to French police by the November 2015 declaration of a state of emergency, and by new anti-terrorism legislation in November 2017. All other things being equal, it stands to reason that these expanded powers will result in more cases of intercepted plots, but it is not currently known whether the newly recorded cases constitute examples of this.

Germany

Germany continues to have high activity of right-wing violence, with a slight increase in cases with a fatal outcome in the 2010s, numbering five in total (Figure 10). We can mainly attribute the upsurge in cases to a considerable increase in attacks against immigrants/foreigners. Three of the five fatal cases in 2016-2018 targeted this group.

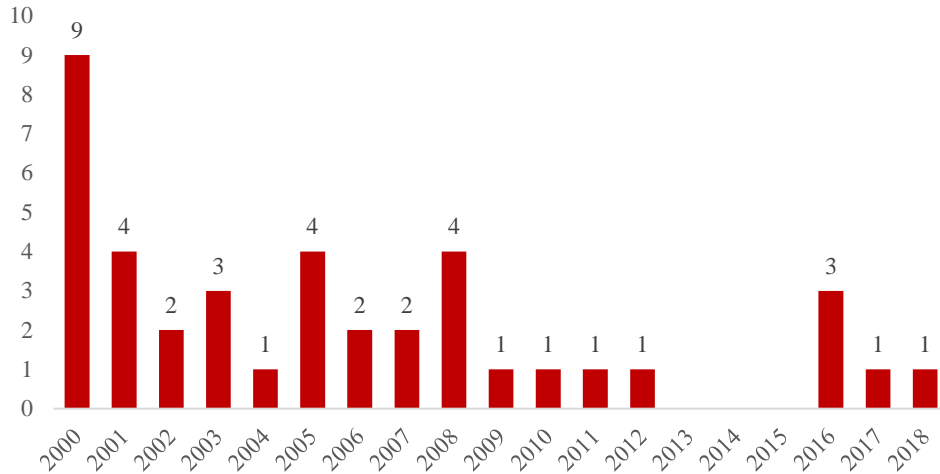


Figure 10: Number of deadly events in Germany, 2000-2018

In recent years, several events can be ascribed to the *Reichsbürger* (Reich citizens) movement. They are a loosely organized movement, unified behind a rejection of the legitimacy of the current German state and its laws. While such views are not always associated with far-right ideology per se, a notable number seek a restoration of the German *Reich* as it existed under Adolf Hitler. As such, it is not surprising that police have been among the targets of this group. A notable feature of the movement is a preoccupation with guns, and adherents often possess both legal (e.g. for hunting) and illegal firearms.⁸

Italy

Most of the Italian cases can be attributed to gangs and groups with no known affiliation, as well as lone actors. Organizations such as *CasaPound* and *Forza Nuova* remain active, however, connected to seven and three attacks respectively, out of a total of 31 attacks. 2018 is notable for the parliamentary election resulting in the Five Star/Lega coalition government, with Lega and its party leader Matteo Salvini in particular putting anti-immigration sentiments front and centre of its rhetoric.

⁸ Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat, “Verfassungsschutzbericht 2018”, 2019, 49, <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/download/vsbericht-2018.pdf>.

In this context, it is interesting to note that, while leftists were once the primary targets of right-wing violence in Italy, attacks against immigrants and foreigners are becoming an increasingly prevalent feature (Figure 11). Italy received record numbers of refugees during the so-called refugee crisis, and a number of attacks against immigrants can be linked to this development. In 2016, all four cases (non-fatal) targeted immigrants, as did five out of the six attacks in 2017. In 2018, the share of attacks against left-wing activists and immigrants evened out slightly, with six attacks against immigrants and four attacks against left-wing activists.

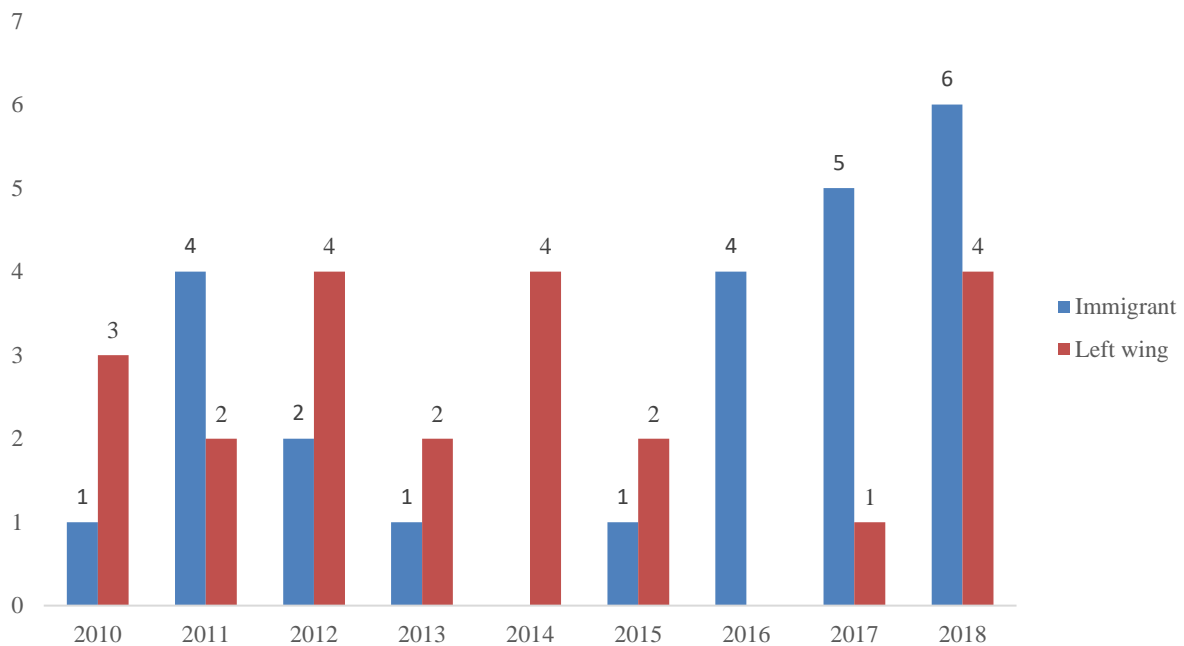


Figure 11: All incidents for Italy, 2013-2018, targeting immigrants/foreigners (blue), leftists (red)

Sweden and the Nordic Resistance Movement

Sweden continues to rank highest of the Nordic countries in terms of RTV activity, with five cases in 2016-2018 (one with a fatal outcome). In 2016, a transgender woman was murdered by affiliates of the Nordic Resistance Movement, a National Socialist organisation with an increasing presence in Sweden in the last few years.⁹ The 2016 case also reinforces a tendency in which Sweden is overrepresented on attacks on LGBT persons, both fatal and non-fatal. Out of the 12 fatal attacks targeting LGBT persons registered in the RTV dataset since 1990, five were in Sweden.

⁹ For more information, see also: Jacob Ravndal, “Transnational Militancy in the Making: A Primer on the Nordic Resistance Movement and Generation Identity”, Working Paper (C-REX Working paper series, 2019), 1–42.

In addition to the LGBT case, former affiliates of the Nordic Resistance Movement who had formed an autonomous cell were behind three more RTV cases in the updated version of the dataset. Between November 2016 and January 2017, there were two bombings at refugee accommodation and one at a venue belonging to a left-wing group – all carried out by the same autonomous cell. Additionally, a member of the Finnish branch of the Nordic Resistance Movement was responsible for one case with a fatal outcome in Finland in 2016. The Finnish government banned the organisation as a consequence of this attack, marking the first time a Finnish group had been banned since 1970. The organization is also gaining momentum in Norway, but there have as yet been no cases serious enough to qualify for the dataset, and their activity and violence potential remains significantly higher in Sweden than in the other Nordic countries.

United Kingdom

With three fatal cases between 2016 and 2018, the United Kingdom ranks second in fatal outcomes after Germany. Two of the fatal cases occurred in 2016, one in 2017 and none in 2018. All victims of the fatal cases were immigrants or related to immigration issues. This is, however, not a novelty for Britain, as 32 of the 34 fatal cases from 1990 to 2018 were immigrant related. As with France, there has been a recent uptick in plots in Britain, reaching an all-time high with five plots in 2017, followed by four plots (and one preparation for armed struggle) in 2018 (Figure 12). This uptick in plots may be related to a more pro-active approach against far-right actors by the British police in recent years, and earlier intervention against potential perpetrators (most of the plots in British are quite vague, often without a clear motive).

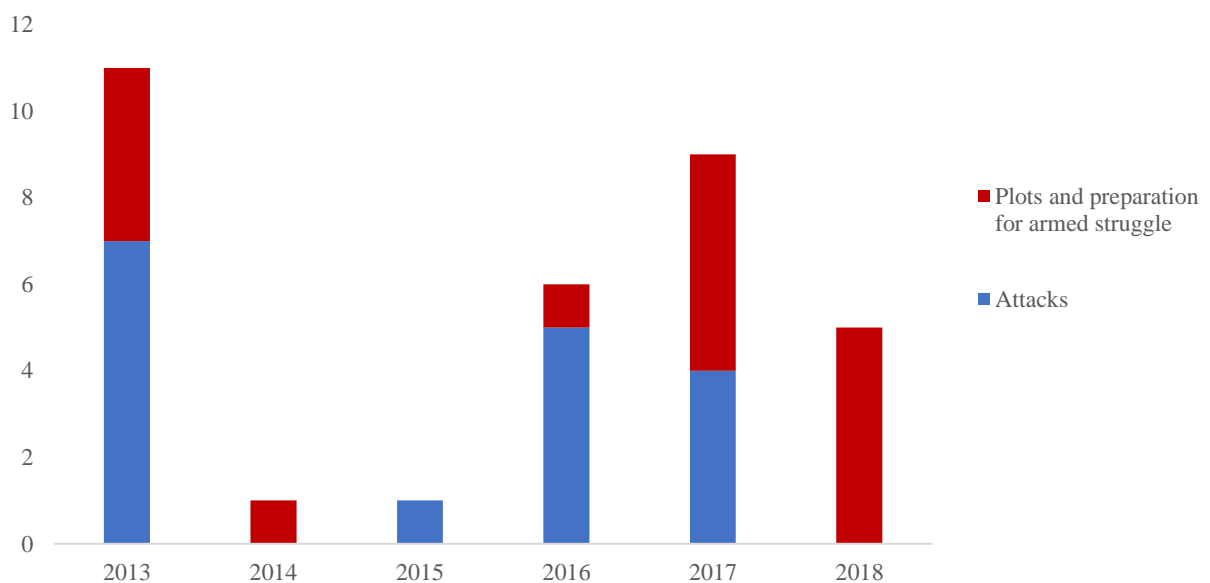


Figure 12: Plots and attacks in Britain, 2013-2018

Selected topics

Vehicular attacks

A change within the updated dataset is the introduction of the ‘vehicle’ category for weapons, in response to a considerable number of attacks employing vehicles. Prior to 2016, only two cases in the RTV dataset involved vehicles as a weapon. Five new cases are coded as vehicle attacks: three in Britain, one in Germany, and one in Sweden. One incident, the Finsbury Park Mosque attack, resulted in a fatal outcome.

Recently, vehicle attacks in Western Europe have been most commonly used by militant Islamists, such as in the 2016 Bastille Day attack in Nice, the Westminster attack in March 2017 and the London Bridge attack in June 2017. Furthermore, immigrants or Muslims were targets in four of the five RTV attacks, indicating that this new approach may be confined to the anti-immigration branch of RTV actors, imitating tactics employed by radical Islamists.

The disappearing skinhead scene

The violent skinhead sub-culture that gained notoriety in the 1980s and 1990s has since been disappearing. In recent years, organizational affiliations have been mainly tied to violent flanks of radical right parties, or more organized and hierarchical extreme-right organizations such as National Action in Britain and the Nordic Resistance Movement. There are, however, regional disparities, and there are still active skinhead groups in Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Finland, albeit with a declining presence and no fatal outcomes since 2003.

A recent example of the decline of the skinhead movement can be found in Portugal. In 2017, authorities cracked down on the Portuguese branch of the Hammerskins – a major actor on the far-right scene in the country. As many as 20 members were arrested for activities between 2013 and 2015; three of these cases are included in this dataset. During the arrests, police discovered arms repositories and Nazi propaganda. Subsequently, no RTV activity has been recorded in Portugal.

Conclusion

The 2016-2018 period continues several existing trends. First, we see that the countries with the highest level of fatal and non-fatal events from 1990-2015 (Sweden, Germany, the UK, Italy, Greece and Spain) continue to rank high in 2016-2018. Second, despite a surge in fatal incidents in 2016, the general tendency appears to be relatively low levels of activity in relation to the most severe events. Third, unorganized and gang-related violence continue to decrease, while the number of attacks by lone actors are stable, which means they have become the most significant perpetrator type. This holds true even for non-fatal attacks. Violence by organized groups is rare throughout entire period. Fourth, RTV continues to target both ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ enemies. In relative terms, but not in absolute numbers, foreigners have become a more common target group. Furthermore, within this broad target group, attacks on Muslims have become more common, while attacks on Jews have become less common.

Finally, although not covered by this trend report, there has been an upsurge of Chan-inspired attacks by lone actors with the ambition of mass killings in 2019. Inspired by the Christchurch shooter in New Zealand, two attacks have been executed in Western Europe – one in Germany and one in Norway. Additionally, a similar plot was intercepted by UK police before it was carried out. It remains to be seen whether this new modus operandi will become an enduring characteristic of the RTV universe in Western Europe, or whether it fades out. In any event, lone actors have become the most common perpetrator type of severe right-wing violence, and, in terms of the likelihood of future attacks, those perpetrated by lone actors is likely to pose the main RTV threat for the nearby future.

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