

Crime



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JAN
11:14 UTC

Tunisia Alert (UPDATE): Individual self-immolates near synagogue in Tunis in alleged attempted attack on January 24; likely stemming from pro-Palestinian sentiment

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Current Situation:

- The Tunisian Ministry of Interior (MoI) reported that an individual set himself on fire and then “headed directly towards a security officer” in Tunis’ Lafayette area during the night hours of January 24.
- The MoI stated that the individual was neutralized by security personnel. One security officer and a civilian sustained wounds during the incident. The MoI also stated that the perpetrator had been identified and that he suffered from “psychological disorders”.
- Reports indicate that the incident took place outside the Grand Synagogue in Tunis.



Source: [Tunisian Ministry of Interior](#)

Assessments & Forecast:

1. Synagogues have occasionally been targeted or vandalized in Tunisia in recent years, and especially since the onset of the Israel-Hamas conflict in October 2023. For instance, in February 2024 a man was reportedly detained for setting a fire in the courtyard of a synagogue in Sfax while in October 2023 residents set fire to a defunct synagogue in Gabes Governorate's al-Hamma. Prior to the commencement of the conflict, in [May 2023](#) a shooting attack was recorded in Djerba during the Jewish festival of Lag BaOmer killing at least five people, while in [June 2022](#) a stabbing attack against police personnel was reported near the Grand Synagogue in Tunis.
2. Given this context, and the extent of pro-Palestinian sentiment in Tunisia, it is likely that the individual was motivated by anti-Israel sentiment and thus chose to target security personnel outside the Grand Synagogue. That said, the individual's decision to self-immolate rather than utilize a more effective modus operandi involving bladed weapons or explosives points to the reduced likelihood of this incident having been orchestrated and planned by a jihadist terrorist group. Thus, it is more likely that the individual acted alone out of his opposition to Israel. Regardless, this incident highlights the risks posed by extremist anti-Israel elements in the capital especially given that two individuals sustained wounds in the attempted attack.
3. **FORECAST:** Considering that Jewish symbols have become synonymous with Israeli ones, the Tunisian authorities are likely to increase their presence outside synagogues and other Jewish institutions in the country to deter further attacks. However, given the heightened pro-Palestinian sentiment in Tunisia, it is possible that further attempts will be made to vandalize or conduct arson attacks against synagogues in the coming weeks.

Recommendations:

1. Travel to Tunis may continue while adhering to all security precautions regarding militancy and civil unrest. Remain cognizant when traveling in the vicinity of foreign embassies, Habib Bourguiba Avenue, government buildings, and tourist areas as these serve as focal points for protests and

attractive targets for acts of militancy. **Contact us at Operations@max-security.com or +44 20-3540-0434 for itinerary and contingency support options.**

2. Israeli or Jewish travelers are advised to maintain a low profile during their travel in Tunisia. Avoid contact with strangers and be suspicious of suggestions or inquiries from unknown parties, including local service providers.
3. Avoid all nonessential travel to Jewish places of worship due to the elevated risk of attacks by locals aggrieved by the Israel-Hamas conflict.