



(U//FOUO) VEHICLE ATTACKS: RAMMING INCREASING, VBIEDS RARE

(U//FOUO) Use of vehicles by violent extremists for ramming attacks has increased steadily, while use of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) remains rare outside the Middle East. Given the ease with which ramming attacks can be accomplished, it is likely use of this tactic will continue to rise. Unlike VBIEDs, ramming attacks require little specialized training or skill, present minimal risk of detection when acquiring the weapon, and offer flexibility with regard to preparation, timing, and target. Foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) have pointedly encouraged use of vehicle ramming attacks, offering explicit tactical advice on vehicle selection, driving tips to maximize fatalities, and targeting suggestions that include parades, festivals, street fairs, outdoor markets or conventions, political rallies, and other crowded targets of opportunity.

(U//FOUO) VBIED trends have moved toward simpler bombs built with grouped, pressurized gas cylinders; materials are readily available and raise little suspicion at purchase, and instructions for building the bombs have been published in English-language extremist magazines. VBIEDs remain attractive weapons because successful deployment generates significant damage, can produce high death tolls, and garners high-profile media coverage. Sophisticated VBIEDs constructed with fuels, fertilizers, and other chemicals are infrequently used, reflecting increased barriers to material acquisition, lack of specialized training and knowledge to construct the weapon, and high risk of detection and interdiction during these phases of the attack.

(U) Recent Extremist Messaging Encourages Vehicle Ramming Attacks

(U//FOUO) In 2016, FTOs actively encouraged vehicle ramming attacks in simple, clear terms in English-language extremist magazines. In a September 2014 speech, Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Shams (ISIS) spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani told listeners to “run over [infidels] with your car,” adding “It is immaterial if the infidel is a combatant or a civilian. They are both enemies. The blood of both is permitted.”

(U//FOUO) Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS have both published explicit tactical advice/direction for vehicular attacks. Instructions for selecting a suitable vehicle, driving to increase lethality, potential targets, and ways to claim attacks in the name of a given FTO are among the tactics explained in detail. Some advice (attaching blades to the wheel of a car to “mow” down victims) seems fanciful; instructions for building gas cylinder bombs may be riskier and harder to accomplish than they appear on the page.

(U) Vehicle attack advice offered in English-language extremist magazines consists of:

- (U) 2016 | ISIS, *Rumiyah 3: Just Terror Tactics: Vehicle Attacks*; advice to improve lethality
- (U) 2016 | AQAP, *Inspire Guide 2: Nice Operation, France*; examines truck ramming attack
- (U) 2014 | AQAP, *Inspire 12: Car Bombs in America*; gas cylinder vehicle bomb instructions
- (U) 2010 | AQAP, *Inspire 2: The Ultimate Mowing Machine*, car fitted with blades

(U) Vehicle Attack Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

(U//FOUO) Vehicle ramming attacks may appeal to individuals with limited or no access to explosives or weapons. VBIEDs, though difficult to construct, are still a desirable weapon. Possible indicators of preparation for vehicle attacks may include:

- (U//FOUO) Purchase, rental, or theft of large or heavy-duty vehicles or equipment, accompanied by other indicators such as undue nervousness, cash payments, multiple licenses, or lack of appropriate licenses or class endorsements;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual modification to commercial motor vehicles, heavy equipment, passenger cars, and sport-utility vehicles (SUVs), such as homemade attempts to reinforce the front of the vehicle with metal plates;
- (U//FOUO) Commercial motor vehicles or heavy equipment being operated erratically, at unusual times, or in unusual locations, particularly in heavy pedestrian areas;
- (U//FOUO) Vehicle operator’s apparent unfamiliarity with commercial motor vehicle or heavy equipment operation (unable to back up, trouble with shifting, poor lane tracking, and so forth);
- (U//FOUO) Acquisition of suspicious quantities of weapons, ammunition, or materials that could be used to produce explosives, such as hydrogen peroxide, acetone, gasoline, propane, or fertilizer;
- (U//FOUO) Loitering, parking, or standing in the same area over multiple days with no reasonable explanation; and
- (U//FOUO) Attempts to infiltrate closed areas where traffic usually moves, but where crowds are gathered, such as street festivals or farmers’ markets.

(U) Potential Mitigation Measures

(U//FOUO) Preoperational vehicle attack indicators are difficult to detect and interdict. Lone offenders or small groups may act quickly and independently, with minimal or no guidance from FTOs. Prevention requires a layered approach, including outreach/education/training efforts, suspicious activity reporting, public-private sector information sharing, and hardening of potential physical targets.

- (U//FOUO) Encourage public reporting through community training. Potential offenders may display an observable range of activities; friends, family, and community members may be aware of and best-positioned to identify at-risk individuals. Maintain ongoing, open dialog between the private sector, public safety agencies, fusion centers, and Joint Terrorism Task Forces to encourage suspicious activity reporting and ensure information is shared in a timely manner. Ensure personnel receive training and briefings on active shooter preparedness, improvised explosive device (IED) and VBIED awareness and recognition, TripWires, and suspicious activity reporting procedures.



(U) “Car Intifada – Da’esh” refers to the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Shams by its Arabic acronym, and encourages car ramming attacks as part of the new Intifada (uprising) in Jerusalem; posted on Facebook^{USBUS} 26 April 2015. Image: MEMRI

MAJOR VEHICLE ATTACKS, 1995-PRESENT (U//FOUO)

RAMMING 2017 JAN 08 Jerusalem, Israel 4 killed, 12 injured Vehicle: truck; Place: bus stop; Target: soldiers	Palestinian
VBIED, DISRUPTED 2017 JAN 02 Saarbrücken, Germany Unknown vehicle, place, target	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING 2016 DEC 19 Berlin, Germany 12 killed, 56 injured Cargo truck, Christmas market, civilians	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING + STABBING 2016 NOV 28 Columbus, Ohio 0 killed, 11 injured Car + knife, university, civilians	ISIS-inspired
VBIED, FAILED 2016 NOV 03 Paris, France 0 killed, 0 injured Car, street near cathedral, civilians	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING 2016 JUL 14 Nice, France 85 killed, 308 injured Cargo truck, Bastille Day event, civilians	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING 2015 JUN 15 St. Quentin Fallavier, France 0 killed, 2 injured Van, street, civilians	ISIS-inspired
RAM + STAB, DISRUPTED 2015 APR 17 Melbourne, Australia 0 killed, 2 injured Car + knife, Anzac Day parade, police officer	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING 2014 DEC 22 Nantes, France 1 killed, 0 injured Car, Christmas market, civilians	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING 2014 DEC 21 Dijon, France 0 killed, 2 wounded Car, Christmas market, civilians	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING 2014 NOV 05 Jerusalem, Israel 1 killed, 14 wounded Car, transit station, police + civilians	Palestinian
RAMMING 2014 OCT 22 Jerusalem, Israel 2 killed, 7 injured Car, transit station, civilians	Palestinian
RAMMING 2014 OCT 20 Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Canada 2 killed, 7 injured Car, transit station, civilians	ISIS-inspired
VBIED, DISRUPTED 2013 DEC 13 Wichita, Kansas Van, airport/airplanes, civilians	ISIS-inspired
RAMMING 2013 MAY 22 Woolwich, England 1 killed, 0 injured Car + knife, military facility, soldier	ISIS-inspired
VBIED, DISRUPTED 2013 FEB 08 Oakland, California Car, bank, civilians	Taliban-inspired
VBIED, DISRUPTED 2010 NOV 26 Seattle, Washington Car, Christmas tree lighting ceremony, civilians	Al-Qa’ida-inspired
VBIED, FAILED 2010 MAY 01 New York City, New York 0 killed, 0 injured Car, tourist location, civilians	Taliban-linked
RAMMING 2008 JUL 02 Jerusalem, Israel 3 killed, 30+ injured Bulldozer, street, civilians	Palestinian
RAMMING + VBIED, FAILED 2007 JUN 30 Glasgow, Scotland 0 killed, 5 injured Car, airport terminal entrance, civilians	Al-Qa’ida-linked
VBIED, FAILED 2007 JUN 29 London, England 0 killed, 0 injured Car, nightclub, civilians	Al-Qa’ida-linked
RAMMING 2006 MAR 03 Chapel Hill, North Carolina 0 killed, 9 wounded Car, pedestrian area, civilians	Jihad-inspired
VBIED 1995 APR 19 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 168 killed, 680 injured	Anti-government