



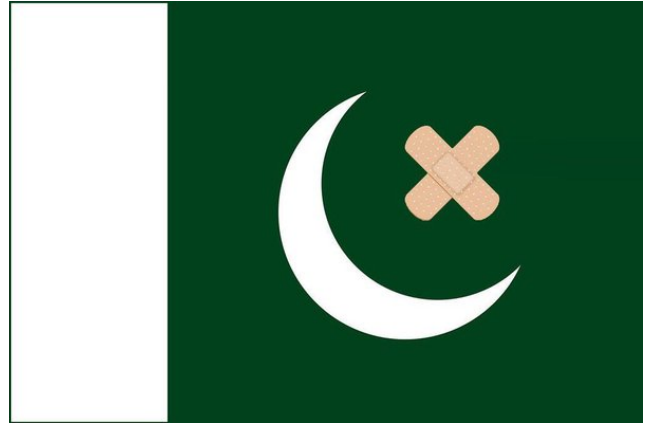
Terrorism and Political Violence Association  
Student Research Network

## News Report 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> March 2016

By Sofia Majorova 28/3/16



(Image source: Trend247.net)



(Image source: Telegraph.co.uk)

On Tuesday 22nd March, twin blasts rocked the Brussels Zaventem Airport, followed by another blast at the Maelbeek metro station near the EU institutions. The Islamic State group claimed the attack. The currently identified attackers are Brahim al-Bakraoui and Najim Laachraoui, who carried out the airport attack, and Khalid al-Bakraoui, responsible for the metro blast. Two attackers still remain unidentified. The total number of victims is 28. The events were followed by raids by the Belgian counter-terrorism units. The links to the perpetrators of the Paris attacks are still under investigation, but certain connections have already emerged. The [link](#) emerges through Najim Laachraoui, who made bombs used in both attacks, after his DNA was found in the Stade de France in Paris and a flat in Brussels. In addition, the finger prints of Salah Abdeslam, the mastermind of the November Paris attacks, were also found in the mentioned flat rented by Laachraoui and Khalid al-Bakraoui in the Brussels suburb Schaerbeek. What is being evaluated at the moment, is whether the attacks came as a response to the arrest of Abdeslam on Friday 19th March. Why Brussels this time though? The opinions go as far as referring to Belgium as a „[failed state](#)“ which explains its jihadi problem due to the internal divisions and the difficulty in governing the country. An important reason cited is the [social disparity](#) which drives radicalisation among the less fortunate. What shouldn't be overlooked is also the impact these attacks will have on the EU and the

functioning of the Schengen area alongside the decisions surrounding the ongoing refugee crisis. The incident has already triggered a response from [far-right](#) groups which disturbed a peaceful march for the victims on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March at the Place de la Bourse in Brussels, resulting in [clashes](#) with the Belgian police.

#### Pakistan - Lahore Attack and Mumtaz Qadri's execution

More than 70 people (the majority of which were women and children) have died and over 300 are injured following a suicide attack in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal amusement park in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. The Jamaat-ul Ahrar, the Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan) splinter group, has [claimed](#) responsibility for the attack, stating that it was targeting Christians celebrating Easter. Christians make up [1.6%](#) of Pakistan's population and have been subjected to attacks in the past. The Pakistani government has been [criticised](#) for not doing enough for their security. Ehsanullah Ehsan, the splinter group's leader, has reportedly used this attack as a warning to the PM Nawaz Sharif to show that the group is now active in Lahore, which has until now been by-passed by insurgent activity. In addition, it has been suggested that attacks tend to increase when the PM seems to be strengthening links with the [West](#). Sharif has since declared 3 days of [mourning](#). What these events open up, is further debate surrounding the status of minorities and the sectarian violence against them, which links to the controversial blasphemy laws as well as Pakistan's failure to contain internal insurgency. The attack comes amid [protests](#) against the sentencing of Mumtaz Qadri, guilty of killing Salman Taseer in 2011. Taseer, Punjab's governor was a vocal opponent of the existing blasphemy laws in Pakistan. Often used to settle arguments, they are criticised to [target minorities](#) such as [Ahmadi Muslims](#) and remain a sensitive issue in Pakistan. The protesters sitting in front of the Pakistan's Parliament have proposed a list of [demands](#), including the recognition of Qadri as a [martyr](#) and the immediate execution of [Asia Bibi](#), who's death sentence has been suspended in 2015. On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March, an estimated 25,000 people [clashed](#) with the police, who fired tear gas at the protestors.