

News Report 1st January - 15th January 2017

Istanbul: Terror at midnight

Just past midnight on January 1st 2017, gunman Abdulgadir Masharipov entered Reina nightclub, [killing 39 people people and injuring a further 70](#); an attack that mirrored the shooting at Pulse nightclub in June 2016. Despite the extent of the attack and firing more than 180 rounds, the assailant changed his clothes and managed to escape by blending in with terrified clubbers. Masharipov was identified as the perpetrator and [arrested on January 16th](#), despite large scale searches and multiple false arrests.

ISIS claimed immediate responsibility for the attack. In response the [Turkish military initiated attacks on the Syrian town of al-bab](#), where there were 22 reported casualties. The emotive nature of these bombings furthers the sentiment felt in Russia and across Europe, that Turkey cannot be trusted to deal with problems caused by neighbouring states. The incident is another in the long list of ISIS attacks on Istanbul, contributing to the instability within Turkey that has threatened President Erdogan's position. Turkey must strengthen its defence and security, before it can prove to the European Union that it is a suitable candidate for accession.

Nigeria: Are Boko Haram finished?

A military offensive in the Sambisa forest led to the Nigerian government capturing the last Boko Haram camp. The Nigerian President declared that "the terrorists are on the run and no longer have a place to hide" and that it represented the "final crushing" of the terrorist group. This should give the Nigerian people living in the Northeastern region hope, after the activities of Boko Haram have [killed 15,000 and displaced 2,000,000 over the last 7 years](#).

Without a base it is unknown where the Boko Haram militants will go. Many will flee across

Africa and attempt to join Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, whilst others may flee and regroup in neighbouring Cameroon and Chad. It is unlikely though that the group will be unable to rejuvenate itself to the level that earned it recognition as [the world's most dangerous terror group in 2015](#). In the coming months Nigerian citizens should remain vigilant of 'lone-wolf' insurgencies and attempts to indoctrinate potential new members, as although the group is homeless, the ideology will continue to live on.

Dylann Roof: Killer faces death penalty

A self-declared white supremacist, who in 2015 massacred 9 members of an African-American church community faces death. After being convicted of 9 counts of the Hate Crime Act and 9 counts of Use of Firearm to Commit Murder by the United States federal courts, Roof was handed the death penalty. Roof's actions manifested clear prejudice against people for the colour of their skin, and his actions were accompanied by the [intention of initiating a 'race war'](#).

This violence is a microcosm for the entrenched racial prejudice present in current day

USA. Unlike many mass murders (particularly of African-American or Arabic heritage), Roof was apprehended unharmed and given a fair, thorough trial. It was strongly argued he was treated too kindly by the South Carolina police force, with many citing incidents such as Trayvon Martin and Sandra Bland as evidence of these double-standards. However, this court decision represents justice that will not heal the wounds inflicted by Roof, but give hope to those who had lost faith in the United States justice system.

USA: Florida Airport rocked by terror attack

On January 6th 2017 5 people were killed inside Fort Lauderdale airport when a gunman opened fire after Esteban Santiago-Ruiz pulled [a loaded Walther PPS 9mm semi-automatic pistol from his hold luggage](#). The attack was found to be premeditated, given the suspect had a one-way ticket and authorities offered no valid reason for him to be flying from Alaska to Florida. Santiago-Ruiz admitted that his political views had been inspired by online ISIS webpages and chat rooms.

The attack raises questions about the United States counter-terrorism initiatives, something incoming President Trump has proposed to increase funding to. However, the attack was not committed by a refugee or illegal Mexican immigrant, which Trump's discourses had presented as the greatest threats to US security. [Santiago-Ruiz had been born in New Jersey and had American citizenship](#). Thus, the consequences of this incident are that it will reinstall the fear of a 'lone-wolf' style attack, allowing President Trump to initiate widespread surveillance and intelligence programmes in order to uncover potential threats.

Israel: Palestinian ploughs truck into IDF soldiers.

4 Israeli citizens were mowed down and killed by a truck attack in East Jerusalem. A swift reminder to the international community that this could be the new form of terror with the incident echoing the attacks in Berlin and Nice. Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu accused ISIS, however, the responsibility was claimed by a lesser known Palestinian group called ["The Martyr of Baha Alyan Collective"](#). The motives were clearly political, with soldiers the target. It was reported that the attack could be in response to the conviction of Sgt. Elor Azaria, who was convicted of manslaughter for shooting an incapacitated Palestinian.

Israel's cabinet responded by declaring any person showing support for Islamic State will be detained and their family house will be demolished. Hamas spokesman [Abdul-Latif Qanou described the attack as "heroic"](#), encouraging other citizens to take similar action in order to "escalate resistance". This attack demonstrates that tensions between Israel and Palestine are still escalating, especially given "terrorist group" Hamas maintain parliamentary seats in the Palestinian parliament. Whilst both sides of the conflict continue to act with aggression and without compassion, it seems unlikely that any form of truce will have long term successes.