Louvre Knife Attack: Soldier Shoots Assailant Near Paris Museum

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By [Laura Smith-Spark](http://edition.cnn.com/profiles/laura-smith-spark) and Laura Goehler

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<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/03/europe/france-paris-louvre-incident/>

French authorities have opened a terror investigation after a soldier shot a man wielding a machete near the Louvre museum in Paris.

The man had rushed toward a group of soldiers and guards in the Carrousel du Louvre, the underground plaza adjoining the museum, according to Paris Police Chief Michel Cadot. Wielding the weapon, the man shouted "Allahu akbar," Cadot said. The Arabic phrase translates to "God is greatest."

The soldier fired five shots in response.

The attacker was wearing two backpacks and may have had a second weapon, Cadot said. He was seriously injured by a bullet to the stomach. One soldier was slightly injured on the scalp.

No explosives were found in the two backpacks of the man, who was conscious when he was taken into custody, Cadot said.

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The attacker has been taken to a Paris hospital for treatment, CNN's French affiliate BFM-TV reported. He was not carrying identity documents and was not in a fit state to be questioned, it said.

Another person was also arrested, the French Interior Ministry said, although it was not immediately clear whether he or she was connected to the attack.

Terror investigation

French Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve described the attack as "terrorist in nature." The Paris prosecutor announced a terror investigation

About 250 visitors who were in the Louvre museum at the time were taken to a secure area and were being evacuated in small groups after checks were carried out.

A security cordon was set up after the incident, which began at 10 a.m. (4 a.m. ET.)

French President Francois Hollande praised the response to the attack, tweeting: "I salute the courage and determination showed by the military this morning at the Carrousel du Louvre."

French Interior Minister Bruno Le Roux also hailed the police and military for their calm and professionalism in subduing the attacker -- and said the incident was a reminder of the current threat.

The mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, added: "In this context of terrorist threat that concerns every big city in the world, we saw how efficient and relevant Paris security features were."

In response to the attack, US President Donald Trump tweeted: "A new radical Islamic terrorist has just attacked in Louvre Museum in Paris. Tourists were locked down. France on edge again. GET SMART U.S."

As the incident unfolded, a music producer from Florida tweeted that "something is going down" at the Louvre, adding that he saw "30 National Police vehicles with guns drawn."

State of emergency

The Louvre, voted the most popular museum in the world in 2016, is home to the Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo and the Code of Hammurabi, among other famous works.

But since a series of terror attacks have plagued France, [the number of visitors touring the Parisian institution has fallen](http://money.cnn.com/2017/02/03/news/paris-louvre-travel-shooting-france/index.html).

Last year, 7.3 million people visited the museum, a 15% drop from 2015, according to French news agency AFP.

A state of emergency has been in place across France since the [Paris terror attacks in November 2015](http://www.cnn.com/specials/paris-terror-attacks), in which 130 people were killed and hundreds injured. In January that year, 17 people were killed in attacks in Paris on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and at a kosher grocery store, and in the Paris suburb of Montrouge.

Last July, a radicalized Tunisian plowed a 20-ton truck into crowds on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice during a Bastille Day celebration, killing 86 people and injuring 200 others.

Authorities continue to monitor thousands of suspected Islamist radicals.