

After Brussels Attacks, Christian Persecution 'New Reality'

Belgian authorities continue their search for additional accomplices in last week's terror attacks. Given the scope of the threat, many believe the next attack is not a question of if, but when.

It's become an all too familiar ritual. Just like the Parisians following last year's terror attacks, Belgians set up their own memorial.

The Belgian people and others from around the world gathered at Place de la Bourse to honor the victims of the terror attacks. Surrounded by flowers, candles and flags, they came to reflect and remember. Even days after the attacks, many are still in shock.

"I think even if we knew something was going to happen, everybody's always in shock," Patricia Teitelbaum told *CBN News*. "A terrorist attack is based on terror. They want to have people be in terror, and I think this they gain."

Counter-terrorism expert Claude Moniquet said Belgians hadn't faced these kinds of threats for decades.

"Personally I think that it is the most important threat, the worst situation since '45, since the end of the Second World War," Moniquet, who has spent nearly 40 years in counter-intelligence, told *CBN News*. "We never faced such a threat."

Moniquet says he's never seen anything like this in his professional career.

"What we see today is a war in the streets of Europe," he explained. "What we have seen in Brussels since Nov. 13,

especially since March 22, is a war situation. Something you are used to see on the TV screen on the evening news happening in Baghdad, in Istanbul, sometimes in Damascus, but not in Europe, ... and it's just the beginning."

It leads many to wonder if Belgium and other European powers can meet this threat.

"There are now somewhere in the neighborhood of 5,000 European Muslims who have joined ISIS. Hundreds more have already returned," said Sam Schwammenthal, director of the American Jewish Committee's Transatlantic Institute. "This is an unprecedented threat level and many countries, including this one, are not really prepared in terms of counter-terrorism, policing."

According to officials, Belgium has more Islamic terrorists per capita than any other European nation. But Teitelbaum says the politicians still refuse to name the problem.

"They will never say that the terrorists are radical Muslims," she said, asking "Why?"

Despite the failure of politicians or police, many Belgian churches continue to battle in prayer.

During Easter Sunday service at an Assemblies of God church, Pastor Joe Szabo prayed for a member nearly killed at the airport, thanking God he could be with them.

"We thank You for sparing his life. We thank You, Lord, for allowing him to be here this morning," Szabo prayed. "And Lord, we ask over the city of Brussels and the surrounding communities Your divine protection."

CBN News learned that intelligence experts believe Tuesday's bombings were originally planned for Easter Sunday. They say when police captured Salah Abdeslam, mastermind of last year's

attacks in Paris, the terrorists decided to act.

Szabo believes the church needs to be prepared for a new reality.

"We know that what is happening in Brussels is not unique. We live in a new day. We live in a new age," he warned.

"And our Lord and Savior told us there would be tribulation in the last days, so we accept that. We understand that," he continued. "But we also know that we have a mission. We have a job to do and that's to preach the gospel, and we're going to keep doing that."