

Sweden: Hand grenade attacks have more than doubled in 2024

Criminals in Sweden are increasingly using hand grenades in attacks, with customs officers also reporting a surge in grenade seizures, raising concerns over escalating migrant gang violence



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Sweden is witnessing an alarming rise in the use of hand grenades by criminal gangs, with the number of explosions more than doubling in 2024 compared to last year. By mid-October, there had been 22 recorded grenade attacks, up from nine in 2023, according to figures from the Police National Bomb Data Centre.

The Swedish Customs Administration has also reported a spike in the number of hand grenades seized at the border – 30 so far this year, compared to zero last year. Officials say gangs have turned to grenades as an alternative to stolen commercial explosives, which have become harder to obtain.

“A hand grenade is already ready in its construction. It does not need to be manufactured but comes complete,” explained Malin Nygren, head of the National Bomb Data Centre, highlighting the ease of use for criminals seeking to cause explosions.

Customs authorities are seeing hand grenades become a significant contraband item, a shift from previous years. “In the past, hand grenades have been a completely non-existent contraband item from our perspective,” said Stefan Granath, deputy head of control at the Swedish Customs Administration.

This uptick in grenade use reflects broader concerns about rising gang violence across Sweden. Violence involving explosives, once rare, has become an increasing threat, with attacks regularly targeting residential areas and public spaces as migrant gangs conduct turf wars in the suburbs of the Scandinavian country's major cities.

Hand grenades have been used by criminal networks to settle disputes, intimidate rivals, or retaliate against authorities. Earlier this year, in one of the most notable incidents, a hand grenade exploded outside a residential building in Uppsala, damaging cars and windows. Fortunately, no one was injured, but the incident raised concerns about public safety.

Authorities are now focused on preventing these weapons from entering the country. While efforts to crack down on explosive materials like dynamite have been effective, criminals have turned to simpler and more accessible weapons like hand grenades, often smuggled in from the Balkans, where they are more readily available.

Last year, Ardavan Khoshnood, a guest lecturer at Malmö University and senior fellow at Lund University, **warned that Sweden had become the bombing capital of Europe** and was second only to Mexico as the top country in the world not currently at war to experience the most bombings on its territory.

Earlier this month, **a teenager was arrested in Sweden accused of shooting dead a man in his 50s in Malmö** in what police believed to be a case of mistaken identity amid escalating gang warfare. Several hand grenades were also found at the scene and the suspect's residence.