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Panic in Sweden as 31 bombings rock country with one city 'as dangerous as Baghdad'

EXCLUSIVE: The Scandinavian nation has 'sleepwalked' into a crime nightmare where bombings have become commonplace.

By **ZAK GARNER-PURKIS**, Investigations Editor

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Explosions in Stockholm have become so frequent the city's estate agents are listing 'no bombings' in their 'pro' columns when advertising properties for neighbourhood buyers might be unfamiliar with.

Already this month there have been more than 30 bomb attacks including a blast in which an elderly man lost his leg. Last year, a 20-year-old recently graduated teacher was killed in an explosion.

As the property adverts demonstrate, the horror has started to blend into the background. It has become so normal for Swedes to learn that an apartment complex or shopfront has been blown to bits that some attacks barely make the news.

"People get tired of it," Swedish academic and researcher Goran Adamson told the Express. "You cannot take it in because if you did, you would go crazy. [But] the situation is much worse than people seem to realise."

To the average Brit, the idea that Sweden, a country associated with happiness, healthcare, Abba and IKEA, might be ravaged by daily acts of brutal violence on the streets is unthinkable.

But since the turn of the century, the government's own reports tell a story of a nation with skyrocketing homicides primarily driven by gun violence and an influx of international criminals sweeping into disadvantaged areas.

Only Albania and Montenegro are ahead of Sweden in the rankings of gun deaths per capita within Europe and the city of Malmö is now classed as more dangerous than Baghdad.

On Wednesday, Salwan Momika, 38, known for repeatedly burning the Koran, was gunned down in his Stockholm apartment. In a press conference following the killing Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson told the media it was “obvious that we have no control over the wave of violence”.

He’s not wrong. According to criminologist Ardavan Khoshnood associate professor at Lund University, the situation has got so bad murderers in modern Sweden brazenly kill people in public.

He highlighted a grizzly case from 2023 when a 15-year-old boy walked into the Emporia shopping centre in the southern city of Malmo and started shooting, killing a gang leader and seriously injuring an innocent bystander.

“Before when [someone shot] a gun they tended to run away,” Khoshnood said, “[But the Emporia killer] didn't try to do anything. It just put the gun back in his pants, took out his phone, ordered a cab and waited for it to come and get him.”

Part of the reason for being so calm, Khoshnood suggested, was that he knew because of his age prison time - even for such a brutal offence - would be limited.

The killer convicted and sentenced to four and half years in a young offenders institution which was the maximum term he was eligible to receive. Under the current laws, which the government is seeking to change, anyone under the age of 21 cannot be serve longer.

This, Khoshnood said, has created a situation where innocent civilians are killed and maimed by reckless acts of violence orchestrated by criminal leaders based overseas and carried out by minors.

“Most of [the leaders] do not even live in Sweden,” Khoshnood added. “They live in Turkey or Iraq but were born in Sweden or came there at a very young age. But since the Swedish police are after them they have decided to be based in Iraq, for example. The individuals being arrested by the police are the footsoldiers and are from 14-19 years of age.”

Khoshnood said that, while drug trafficking and turf wars account for a large proportion of the violence that has transformed Sweden, it was also the case that criminal ‘honour’ or respect was a driving force in bloody conflicts

“In the city of Gothenburg has witnessed one of the bloodiest wars between two criminal networks in the same area that all started with the girlfriend of one leader who went to the other.

“[Afterwards] all hell broke loose and 15 years later we are still witnessing a war between these two gangs. The leaders who started it are both dead, but the conflict goes on.”

According to Goran Adamson, the reason Sweden has become a murder hotspot with brazen teen killers and bombings over gang territory is because it has naively let itself become a playground for criminals from around the world.

“This has been escalating and it has been allowed to escalate because Sweden has been a magnet for criminals from the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe,” he said.

“I think Sweden's problem is a welfare state and the set up of prisons. It is hugely attractive for people who are not law-abiding citizens because in worst case scenario [where] you end up in prison for like two years for a serious crime and that's not painful.”

Regardless of how light the sentences might be, Sweden's jails are filling up. A government-appointed commission recently ruled that criminals could serve their sentences in prisons abroad to help manage the influx of offenders.

He believes that Sweden's positive, happy culture, which the country was known for, contained a naivety that has proved the nation's undoing as immigration has skyrocketed over the past two and a half decades.

“Looking at Sweden [people thought it was] like a safe haven and a wonderful place [but] we had a fair amount of mainstream and unawareness about what's going on in the world,” he said.

“And when the world came flowing into Sweden, we were completely unprepared. We had no idea what was going on. We had been living in this immensely peaceful, wonderful society where we were like it was like one big family. So we were completely unprepared for what was going on.

“The sad irony is that Sweden is now gaining attention and we are the eyes of the world, but for all the wrong reasons.”