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REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN MACEDONIA

North Macedonia: Po of terrorism

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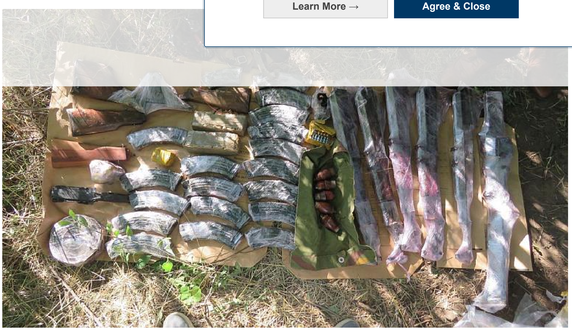
By Euronews with AP, AFP • last updated: 01/09/2020 - 2



Five automatic rifles, a machine gun and five grenade launchers were among the weapns recovered by authorities. - Copyright Handout - Police of North Macedonia

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Police in North Macedonia have arrested three men on suspicion of planning terrorist attacks in the country

The suspects - all aged in their twenties - had previously been convicted of participation in the Islamic State militant group.

They were arrested on suspicion of creating and participating in a "criminal cell" and planning a terrorist act in North Macedonia, according to an Interior Ministry statement.

The group members allegedly provided financial means and procured weapons, ammunition, and military equipment, which they hid near a road in the village of Biljanovce.

Authorities also seized a large number of weapons in raids in five different locations, including five automatic rifles, a machine gun and 18 ammunition belts.

Five grenade launchers with fuses, camouflage clothing and tactical vests were also recovered from an address in the capital, Skopje.

More raids in the northern town of Kumanovo and Skopje led to the seizure of two handmade belts filled with explosives, metal ball bearings, knives and explosive fuses, among other items.

The operation was carried out by the Interior Ministry in co-operation with the National Security Agency of North Macedonia and the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Police say that all three suspects had served jail sentences on their return from the Middle East.

In 2016, authorities estimated that some 150 Macedonian nationals had travelled to fight alongside Islamic insurgents in Iraq and Syria.

Most were from the country's mainly Muslim ethnic Albanian minority, which represents about one-fourth of North Macedonia's total population.

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