

Paris shooting suspect has a pathological hatred of foreigners

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Protesters clash with police during a demonstration in Paris [File: Sarah Meyssonier/Reuters]

Paris, December 26 (RHC)-- The suspected attacker thought to have fatally shot three Kurds in Paris has admitted to a "hatred of foreigners that has become pathological", French officials have said. Ever since a

burglary at his home six years ago, the 69-year-old man had “always wanted to kill migrants or foreigners,” the Paris public prosecutor’s office said on Sunday.

According to police sources, the attacker set out on Friday morning aiming to kill migrants or foreigners and then himself, prosecutors added. He killed three people outside a Kurdish cultural center and wounded three others, before being disarmed and subdued by one of the injured victims.

The suspect, reportedly a former train driver, was arrested at the scene and transferred to psychiatric care on Saturday. His name has not yet been released. If he is released from psychiatric care, he faces potential charges of racially motivated murder, attempted murder and arms violations.

The shooting in a bustling Parisian neighbourhood shook and angered the Kurdish community, stirring up concerns about hate crimes at a time when far-right voices have gained prominence in France and around Europe.

On the morning of the shooting, the suspect took his weapon first to the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis – home to a large population of migrants – with the aim of killing foreigners, but changed his mind, prosecutors said he told them. He abandoned his plan as only a few people were there and went to a Kurdish centre near his parents’ home in the city’s 10th district.

He opened fire on one woman and two men there, before entering a Kurdish-run hair salon across the street and shooting at three men. One of the wounded men in the hair salon managed to stop him and hold him until police arrived, the prosecutor’s statement said.

Many in the Kurdish community have expressed anger at the French security services, saying they had done too little to prevent the shooting. The suspect, reportedly a gun enthusiast with a history of weapons offences who had been released on bail earlier this month, told investigators he did not know his victims and described all “non-European foreigners” as his enemies.

He was arrested with his gun, four magazines with a total of 14 rounds, and a box with a further 25 rounds of ammunition. The attacker told police he wanted to use all the ammunition and kill himself with the last shot.

Over the weekend, members of France’s Kurdish community and anti-racism activists joined together in a demonstration of mourning and anger.

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