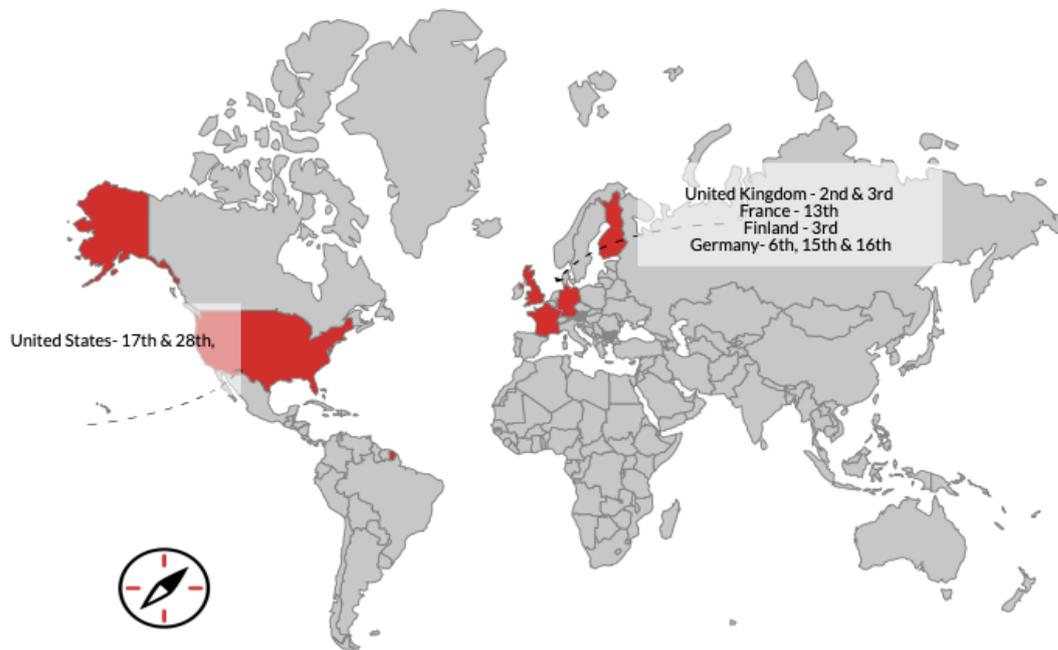


Countries affected by extreme-right terrorism or violence in December 2021

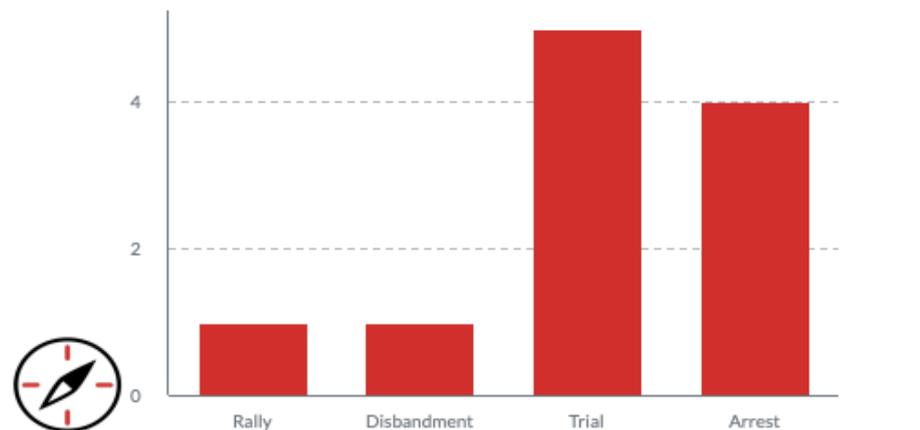


Source: OIET

Key events:

- ✓ Five people were arrested for planning a terrorist attack in Finland.
- ✓ Anti-Covid protests in Germany.
- ✓ The co-founder of National Action is sentenced to jail.
- ✓ The Poway shooter is sentenced to life in prison.

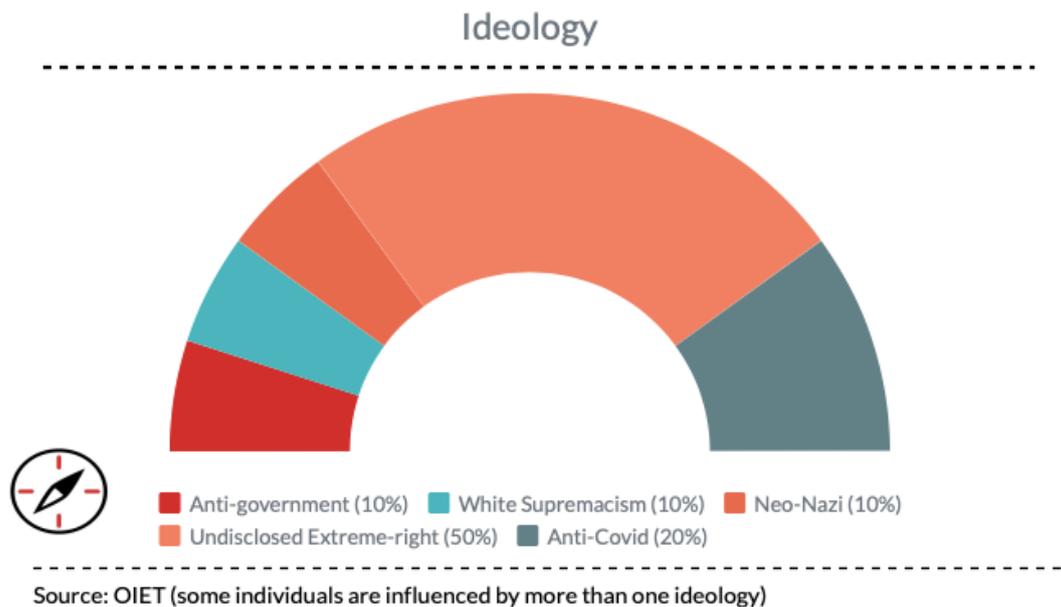
Type of incident linked to the extreme right in December 2021



Source: OIET

1. Introduction

The analysis of extreme right incidents throughout December 2021 shows 13 events reported, with a total number of five sentences and 13 detentions against extremists. The most relevant event of the month is the sentence of the 2019 Poway shooter, which will be further explained in the following section. Additionally, the situation in Germany and France regarding the extreme right worsens as violence and political polarization increases. For its part, the efforts of some States to fight right-wing extremism can be drawn, especially in conducting trials. In this sense the efforts to fight right-wing extremism in the United Kingdom has proved efficient, as two men were arrested and three sentences were carried out. This month there was no prevalent ideology, as there was a variety in ideologies, although it can be appreciated an increase on Anti-covid demonstrations.



2. Europe

In Europe, nine incidents are presented, with 13 detentions and the disbandment of an extremist group in France. The most relevant event was the arrest towards five individuals accused of planning a terrorist attack in Finland. On the other hand, anti-covid marches have become more violent, particularly in Germany, where the situation has been addressed as critical.

2.1 United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, five events are exposed, resulting in three sentences and two arrests. The first sentence is resulted in the [conviction](#) of an extremist for two terrorism charges for seven-and-a-half years. The 24 years old Sam Imrie was accused of posting online comments which suggested he was planning to commit a terrorist attack, glorifying right-wing terrorists. The profiling of the suspect shows that he was isolated from society in general, an element widely shared among some of the right-wing extremists, where they mostly socialize on online extremist forums that allow them a sense of belonging to a larger community. On the other hand, the co-founder of the British neo-Nazi group National Action Ben Raymond was [given](#) an 8-year sentence after being found guilty of remaining a member of the proscribed group and on two counts of possessing terrorist documents. The investigation exposed that he was one of the main radicalization agents and was in charge of the group's propaganda. In the third case,

a streamer who [shared](#) antisemitic content was jailed for seven counts of inciting racial hatred. Richard Hesketh was one of the most prolific extreme-right streamers in the country. In his videos, the 36 years-old extremist claimed extreme-right terrorism and showed support for violence against minorities, most notably the Jewish community. The videos had an approximate of around two million views, which were uploaded from 2018 to 2020.

In another set of ideas, two similar arrests took place in Harwich and Stansted airports, as two extremists tried to escape on unrelated and different occasions. In the Harwich airport scenario, a man of 37 years [suspected](#) of preparing a terrorist attack tried to flee the country, being detained before he could escape. At the Stansted airport, a 26-years-old man got arrested while trying to [escape](#) for similar reasons.

2.2 Finland

In Finland, five members of a neo-Nazi extremist group, aged between 23 and 26, got [arrested](#) for planning a terrorist attack. After being under surveillance for over two years due to past crimes, the investigation showed that extremists had an accelerationist ideology, aimed at collapsing the State and society by conducting violent attacks. This arrest in particular constitutes the first case of suspected right-wing terrorism in Finland, proving the spread of the extreme right ideology to non-traditional spaces of influence.

2.3 France

In the wake of the violent events on the rally of the presidential candidate Éric Zemmour, the French ministry of interior began the process of [disbandment](#) of the extreme-right group responsible for the violence occurred during the campaign. At the political meeting, the presidential candidate [used](#) extremist rhetoric and his narrative focused on a "reconquest" of France against the "Muslim invasion". This narrative alludes to the Spanish period known as "*la Reconquista*" whereby Christian kingdoms gained territory from the Iberian Califates. This narrative has become a standard narrative on extremist groups in Europe, where violence is repeatedly manifested. In fact, Zemmour himself got injured while moving through the crowds during the campaign rally on 5th December.

The main reason behind the procedure of disbandment took place during Zemour's rally, where several individuals countering the protests were allegedly [attacked](#) by members of the gathering, with the "[Zouaves](#)" group as the principal instigators of the attack. This group has been previously [accused](#) of committing violent attacks against the government, particularly during the Yellow Vest [protests](#) in 2018. This movement, considered to be highly violent, was founded in 2017 as a result of the unification of former members of the Union Defense Group (Social Bastion and Identity Generation, both [dissolved](#)), and is mainly composed by men between their 20's and 30's.

2.4 Germany

Germany reported two incidents related to the extreme-right extremism during December 2021. The first case occurred in Cologne, where police officers [raided](#) several apartments targeting right-wing extremists under suspicions of bomb-planning. They seized basic materials to build a bomb, together with a small number of narcotics. As a result, four people got [arrested](#).

In the second operation, German police authorities thwarted a plan to assassinate the Prime Minister of Saxony by COVID-19 deniers. Six individuals accused of coordinating the attack via Telegram have been arrested: five men and one woman between 32 to 64. The group "*Dresden Offlinevernetzung*" (Dresden offline networking) attracted the attention of the authorities after an investigation by the broadcaster ZDF [exposed](#) their plan to [assassinate](#) the minister. It becomes insightful to mention that the region of Saxony has the second-highest rate of COVID-19 infections and holds the lowest vaccination rate in the entire country. Likewise, several anti-covid marches against governmental new rules have taken place. In early December, there was a torchlight rally against the new measure with approximately 30 people [gathering](#) outside the house of the health minister. The event was attributed to the Free Saxons, a right-wing extremist group associated with the National Democratic Party and Alternative for Germany, who have been recurrently active in Saxony region organizing anti-covid rallies.

The overall situation in Germany regarding the extreme right is worsening, as it has been [coined](#) as the greatest threat to German democracy at the present time.

3. United States

In contrast with the European situation of arrests to extremists, the two events reported in the United States for the second time in a row are related to sentences towards right-wing individuals. The sentence towards the 2019 Poway terrorist attack remains as the most relevant, as the terrorist has been [sentenced](#) to life for Federal Hate Crimes. On April 27th [2019](#), 19-years-old John T. Earnest entered the Chabad of Poway synagogue, killing one woman and injuring three others. The investigation exposed that he had [planned](#) his attack and posted a manifesto where he showed his anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim views. During the trial, he justified the attacks alleging that he was defending his nation against the Jewish people. This narrative is in concordance with the [Great Replacement/White Genocide](#) conspiracy theory.¹

The last sentence goes to the Capitol rioter who [attacked](#) a police officer with a fire extinguisher. The attacker has been convicted to five years of prison and constitutes the longest verdict against a Capitol rioter from the time being. In addition, this sentence could set a precedent for more than 140 people accused of similar charges. The overall number of people charged for the Capitol riots has [risen](#) to 738, although only 171 have [entered](#) guilty pleas. The number of people charged in this incident is expected to grow as federal authorities continue their investigation and review new footages.

Rogelio Castro

Email: r@observatorioterrorismo.com

Twitter: [@rogeliocasmar](https://twitter.com/rogeliocasmar)

¹ In general terms, the logic behind this theory revolves around the belief in a conspiracy whose purpose is the extermination of the white race. People who adhere to this conspiracy theory claim that there is a deliberate plan of action to promote the mixing of races, thus causing the extinction of white people through forced assimilation, arguing that there is an upcoming structural genocide. According to the white genocide conspiracy theory, the Jewish community is the mastermind and the leading promoter of this plot. However, other groups are also held responsible, such as black people, Hispanics, or Muslims, although they are viewed as pawns rather than architects behind the operation.