

France foils terror plot to decapitate army officer

From the French edition of The Local

[As more details slipped out on Thursday](#) it emerged that they were planning to target the Fort Bear military base at Port-Vendres, near the city of Perpignan in the south west. The location was apparently chosen because of its symbolism. Fort Bear is one of the training centres for France's special commando forces who take part in foreign missions such as the French intervention in Mali and Central African Republic.

Sources close to the investigation have told French media that they planned to kidnap and then behead a high-ranking member of the military on January 7th 2016, to mark a year since the terror attacks in Paris. The horrific decapitation was to be filmed on a go-pro camera and the video uploaded to the internet for all to see.

Who are the suspects:

Four young men were arrested on Monday after dawn raids were carried out in various parts of France. The youngest of them was aged just 16. He was later released on Thursday morning when the time limits for keeping him in custody ran out. The others were aged 17, 19 and 23 years old. According to the three other suspects the 16-year-old was eventually sidelined from the plot because they deemed him too young.

All the suspects were described as "radicalised Muslims".

The 23-year-old, considered one of the leaders of the group, is believed to be an ex-member of the French navy. He was apparently kicked out of France's national marines at the beginning of the year for apparent bad behaviour. He had been based at the Fort Bear base and it was former commanding officer that they apparently wanted to target.

According to reports he liked to be known as "the Emir".

According to France's Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve the 17-year-old member of the group came on the radar of French intelligence services after expressing his desire to go and fight in Syria. They became aware of him because it became clear he had been radicalised as he was active on social network sites and had been in contact with French jihadists who are now in prison.

According to French police sources quoted by BFM TV, this suspect had already been questioned by France's counter-terrorist police at the DGSJ back in the autumn of 2014. Authorities didn't have enough evidence to file charges against him but instead placed him under surveillance by wiretapping his phone. This led investigators to the other suspects.