

Seven arrests in Netherlands over 'significant terror attack plot'

From [The Times](#)

Seven men have been arrested in the Netherlands on suspicion of plotting a significant terror attack. The alleged attackers intended to carry out an assault using rifles, grenades and a car bomb.



Heavily armed police arrested the men on Thursday in the towns of Arnhem, about 62 miles (100km) south of Amsterdam, and Weert close to the borders of Belgium and Germany.

An investigation, which has run for several months, was launched into whether the alleged ringleader, a 34-year-old man of Iraqi heritage, wanted to carry out an attack using bomb vests and assault rifles,

An investigation of potential targets is continuing.

Prosecutors said three of the attackers, including the 34-year-old Iraqi, were previously convicted of attempting to travel overseas to join extremist networks.

They say the investigation had to be accelerated because of

the suspects' "advanced preparations".

The plot was revealed as the Dutch government announced plans to register the race and religion of gun owners after a series of Islamist terrorist attacks across Europe such as the shootings and bombings in Paris three years ago.

Ferdinand Grapperhaus, the justice minister, said that police "required personal data including race or ethnic origin, political views and religious and philosophical convictions" for gun registration. "There are diverse risk factors for gun ownership," he wrote in a ministerial memorandum to parliament.

However, MPs, including those in the governing coalition, and gun-owners' associations criticised the measure as discriminatory in a country that prides itself on liberalism. The Royal Dutch Sports Rifling Association said that the proposal was unnecessary because "almost no shooting incidents" or terrorist attacks involved legal weapons.