

[Brazil arrests group plotting 'acts of terrorism' before Olympics](#)

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Brazil's federal police began an antiterrorism operation early Thursday, just over two weeks before the Olympics start in Rio de Janeiro, a justice ministry source told Reuters.

The source said that federal police had arrested members of a group that was preparing acts of terrorism.

It was unclear where the operation was taking place or what the specifics of the operation were.

Earlier this week, a group on the Telegram messaging-app channel "Ansar al-Khilafah #Brazil" pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, according to Newsweek.

SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks jihadi activity, reported that one message in the channel said, "If the French police cannot stop attacks on its territory, training given to the Brazilian police will not do anything."

It's not clear if this group, or anyone tied to it, was involved in the antiterrorism operation reported by Reuters, and there are doubts about the legitimacy of the announcement.

"The Ansar al-Khilafah Brazil Telegram channel appears to be the work of an ISIS social media activist rather than reflecting any bricks-and-mortar initiative," J.M. Berger, coauthor of "ISIS: State of Terror," told ABC News.

Doubts notwithstanding, the reference to failures of French security forces, which are working with Brazilian officials on Olympic security, has stoked worries about safety at the Rio games.

And, amid the myriad social and financial issues facing the Rio Olympics, slated to start August 5, security has come to the fore in the days since an attack in Nice, France, that left more than 80 people dead.

Brazilian officials had already banned trucks from parts of Rio to reduce congestion and make emergency responses easier. In the wake of the Nice attack, in which a man drove a truck down a promenade, killing 84 people, Brazilian officials reconvened to assess the city's security preparations.

"I have no doubt that the Brazilian authorities and the International Olympic Committee have taken note of what happened. They're checking to see if they've incorporated that thinking into their plans," Jim Hutton, chief security officer at travel-risk-management company On Call International, told Business Insider.

Brazil already plans to deploy 85,000 soldiers and police to provide security for the games, and additional security measures reportedly include extra checkpoints, barricades, and traffic restrictions.

"This is the kind of thing that makes you pause and go back and refresh what you're doing based on what is a pretty simple threat: One guy with one truck. But look at the damage that he did," Hutton said.

Concerns are likely to persist, however.

The recent news, reported by The Wall Street Journal, that the contractor to provide security personnel to the games was only hired and began working at the beginning of July raises questions about how stringent and prepared the people tasked with monitoring security checkpoints and other goings-on will be.

Rio's mayor, who has criticized Olympic officials and even the Rio state government, nevertheless insists that the games will be safe.

"During the Olympics you'll have absolute peace. Because you'll have the army, national guard, the armed forces, the marines," Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes told the Los Angeles Times.

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