

THREAT ASSESSMENT: MARCH – JUNE 2026 FESTIVAL CYCLE

Scope: European Faith Communities (Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh)

Status: Elevated Risk – Amber/High

Geopolitical Context: U.S.-Israel-Iran Escalation & Hybrid Warfare in Europe

1. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT THREAT LANDSCAPE

The intersection of the Middle East conflict escalation and the Russia-Ukraine hybrid front has created a "perfect storm" for domestic security in Europe. External geopolitical triggers are translating directly into localised communal tensions.

- **Primary Actors:** Lone-actor extremists (radicalized online), state-sponsored hybrid actors (disinformation), and organised hate groups.
- **Dormant Cells:** Nation-state actors are increasingly deploying dormant implants for long-term strategic advantage. The current threat landscape shows a shift toward *tentative infiltration* techniques. Rather than a brute-force attack, actors use low-signal probes to bypass automated detection, establishing a foothold for dormant cells that can be activated at a later date.
- **Target Profile:**
 - "Soft targets" including houses of worship, community centers, and large-scale public outdoor celebrations.
 - High-Profile Individuals: VIPs, executives, security guards, visible individuals and groups.

2. GEOPOLITICAL IMPACT FACTORS

- **Transnational Spillover:** Retaliatory sentiments from the Iran-Israel strikes are at a peak. Jewish and Muslim communities are facing a surge in "proxy" hostility, where global events fuel local hate crimes.
- **State-Sponsoring of Instability:** Increased foreign hybrid activity aims to exploit social fractures. This may manifest as "false flag" provocations or digital disruptions intended to incite inter-communal violence.
- **Economic Stress:** Global energy spikes in March 2026 are increasing social agitation, providing a fertile ground for populist and extremist recruitment.

3. CALENDAR-SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES (MARCH – APRIL 2026)

- **Ramadan/Lent/Purim/Holi/Passover/Eid Al-Fitr/Vesak:** Concurrent observances increase the "target surface" across Europe.
- **Flashpoints:** Public processions and "breaking of fast" events are high-visibility moments requiring active perimeter management.

The density of concurrent religious observances creates high-visibility targets:

Faith Community	Key Observance	Primary Risk Factor
Muslim	Ramadan/Eid Al-Fitr	Congregate iftars, Friday (Jumu'ah) prayers and Eid Al-Fitr prayers; risk of targeted vehicle-ramming, anti-Muslim assaults or harassment and targeted attacks.
Jewish	Purim/Passover (Pesach)	High-visibility public parades; risk of antisemitic assault or disruptive protests and targeted attacks.
Christian	Lent / Holy Week/Easter	Wide attended services and public processions; risk of anti-Christian assault or disruptive protests and targeted attacks.
Hindu/Sikh	Holi / Hola Mohalla	Large outdoor gatherings; difficulty in perimeter control and crowd management, risk of targeted attacks
Buddhist	Vesak	Large outdoor gatherings and ceremonies; difficulty in perimeter control and crowd management, risk of targeted attacks.

4. PRIMARY THREAT VECTORS

- Armed Assault & Low-Tech Terror:** Use of knives, vehicles, or arson remains the most likely threat to crowds during processions.
- Cyber-Disruption:** Potential for state-aligned hackers to target community communications, spreading fake "threat alerts" to cause panic during feasts.
- Hate Speech & Harassment:** Physical intimidation of congregants entering or exiting venues, particularly targeting those in traditional religious dress.

5. RECOMMENDED MITIGATION (SASCE PROTOCOLS)

- **Enhanced Perimeter Security:** Implement "Standoff Zones" for vehicle traffic near major mosques, synagogues, and churches during peak hours.
- **Interfaith Communications:** Maintain a "Direct Line" between community leaders of different faiths to prevent the spread of disinformation.
- **Crisis Training:** Re-brief volunteers and staff on "Run-Hide-Tell" protocols and suspicious package recognition.
- **Law Enforcement Liaison:** Proactive engagement with local police to ensure visible patrolling during the highest-risk hours of the festivals.

SASCE Security Checklist: Festival Edition

A checklist for upcoming festivals and events:

1. Personnel & Coordination

- ✓ Security Coordinator: Designate a single point of contact for emergency decisions.
- ✓ Volunteer Briefing: Ensure all greeters/stewards know the "Run-Hide-Tell" protocol.
- ✓ Liaison: Confirm direct contact numbers for local law enforcement and nearby faith centers.

2. Physical Site Security

- ✓ Perimeter Check: Verify all secondary exits are clear and functional but secured against external entry.
- ✓ Access Management: Implement bag checks or visual screening for large gatherings.
- ✓ Ongoing Review: Walk the site to identify new vulnerabilities, such as unlit areas or blocked cameras.

3. Communication & Digital Safety

- ✓ Incident Flowchart: Post a physical flowchart for reporting suspicious activity in the staff room.
- ✓ Cyber Hygiene: Secure community social media and email accounts against "hijacking" or disinformation campaigns.
- ✓ PA System Test: Ensure emergency announcements can be heard clearly over music or crowd noise.

4. Emergency Response Readiness

- ✓ First Aid Stations: Restock kits and ensure their locations are marked on event maps.
- ✓ Evacuation Plan: Establish "Safe Assembly Points" at least 100 meters away from the main building.

Suspicious Items: Refresh staff on the "HOT" protocol (Hidden, Obviously suspicious, Typical of the area).

EMERGENCY ACTION STEPS

STAY ALERT	STAY SECURE	STAY CONNECTED
Observe: Identify hostile reconnaissance (e.g., suspicious filming of entrances).	Access: Ensure all emergency exits are clear and functional.	Report: Log non-emergencies at sasce.eu .
Act: Use the "HOT" protocol for suspicious items (Hidden, Obvious, Typical).	Perimeter: Establish a visible "steward presence" at all entry points.	Emergency: In the event of an active threat, Dial 112 immediately.
Verify: Don't share unverified social media "threat alerts"—check official channels.	Cyber: Update passwords for all community social media accounts.	Liaison: Inform local police of specific feast times and expected crowd sizes.