

Understanding nihilistic violent extremism and the True Crime Community in France

🔍 Digital dynamics and prevention
challenges of an emerging threat

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Key findings

The arrest of an individual for sexual extortion and the decapitation of animals in the Eure department, a series of attacks planned by students in French schools, and the trial of a founding member of a group in Antibes that encouraged young girls to self-harm online are all manifestations of a new security threat in France: violent nihilist extremism. This emerging threat, active on French soil for several years now, presents an unprecedented challenge for all actors across the security continuum.

AN EMERGING THREAT

Nihilistic Violent Extremism is a new security threat in France, whose perpetrators and victims are primarily minors. They operate mainly online and in a decentralized manner.

A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

Unlike historical extremist movements, ideology is not the primary motivation for the perpetrators, who act mainly out of a fascination with violence. Nevertheless, misanthropy and nihilism are widespread within the movement.

ACTS OF VIOLENCE

In France, Nihilistic Violent Extremism is behind two types of violence: cases of online sexual extortion and Targeted violence in schools.

A TERRORIST MOVEMENT

Several groups within this movement, such as 764, MKY, and O9A, have been designated as terrorist organizations abroad in recent months.

Foreword

The threat that this report seeks to characterise did not arrive fully formed. Nihilistic Violent Extremism (NVE) is the product of nearly a decade of subcultural drift, technological acceleration, and a global rupture in the normal architectures of adolescent socialisation. NVE represents a hybridization of threats and harms that are part sexual violence, self-directed violence, and coercive control; part terrorism and violent extremism, part school-safety and school violence; part extreme violence and animal abuse; and part cybercrime and organized cyber-harassment, whose potency lies in the way its constantly evolving nature confounds efforts to understand and counter it, and in the absence of a limiting ideology. Nihilistic violent extremists are individuals or networks that actively encourage, promote, glorify, or engage in serious acts of violence and/or criminality with no specific end state.

At the core of this threat environment is a deep-seated sense of anomie characterized by a sense of futility, lack of purpose, and emotional emptiness and despair. For those who are anomic, striving is considered useless, because there is no accepted definition of what is desirable. This stems from a social system that is suffering from instability resulting from the breakdown of normative standards, values, and a lack of collective purpose or ideals operating at both the individual and communal levels.

It is further accompanied by a deep-seated nihilistic orientation and driven by misanthropy that fuels a desire not to reform but to destroy, a tearing down of normative societal structures with no vision for reconstruction. Ideology is not absent, but it is not a primary-driver of violence; most often ideology plays a secondary or tertiary

role — it is a weak driver that acts more as a justification for actions already primarily-driven by clout-seeking, trauma, and grievances. Taken together, these anomic and nihilistic orientations result in a bricolage of drivers and ecosystems that collapses traditional moral and epistemic boundaries in order to justify violence as an end in itself.

NVE did not emerge in isolation; rather, it formed out of a transnational virtual network and is composed of subcultures, fandoms, and digital communities that normalize, celebrate, and commodify violence, trauma, and sadism. Status and belonging are conferred through the ability of individuals to shock, transgress, and escalate harm, most often through the curation of grotesque, violent, or otherwise transgressive visual styles and videos. Visual aesthetics are therefore not superficial, but foundational, serving as a primary medium of identity and belonging. Identity in NVE spaces is performed through stylized violence, and the boundaries between play, spectacle, and extremism collapse.

As a hybridized threat space, NVE blurs the boundaries between national security, criminality, and conduct that is sub-criminal/national security creating jurisdictional complexities whereby an incident or threat actor can fall simultaneously within the responsibilities of local police of jurisdiction, provincial or state-level policing, and federal or national law enforcement. Critically, this is a victim-driven space, not a doctrinally driven one; participation is shaped less by coherent ideology than by aesthetics, fandoms, subcultures, and a pervasive sense of anomie. This brief provides an overview of eight distinct feeder ecosystems

that serve as pathways into the edgesphere, the broader digital ecology within which NVE milieus are situated. These ecosystems are not mutually exclusive; individuals frequently participate across multiple feeder communities simultaneously, and their cumulative exposure across these spaces accelerates radicalization trajectories and complicates threat assessment, prevention, and intervention efforts.

The edgesphere had taken shape over the preceding years; what followed at the turn of the decade was not the emergence of NVE so much as its catalysis. Between 2020 and 2022, the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic functioned as what I have come to describe as the COVID-19 Blender. First, the wholesale migration of adolescent life to screens during prolonged school closures collapsed the boundary between the digital and the physical for a cohort of young people whose social development was already partially mediated by devices. Second, the simultaneous deterioration of youth mental health, social polarization, and dramatic shift in day-to-day life, expanded the pool of vulnerable and isolated minors available to violent extremist and predatory communities that specialise in identifying, grooming, and weaponizing vulnerable and at risk individuals. Third, the proliferation of persistent ecosystems of harmful content and malicious actors accelerated exposure to gore, terrorism and violent extremism, sextortion, and the broader transgressive aesthetic on which the edgesphere depends for recruitment and retention. The blending of increasing risk factors with youths and illegal and harmful digital milieus are central to the emergence of NVE.

The cohort that came of age during this period, and the one which makes up the largest population of individuals active in the edgesphere, is Generation Alpha. It is a generation whose primary socialisation has been mediated through screens rather than through embodied presence. Many were

handed devices before they could walk and owned devices before they entered the education system; their earliest memories are of algorithmic content feeds; their playdates, conflict resolution, and basic emotional literacy were partially or entirely staged through devices and/or the web. The pandemic did not create this condition, but practitioners report that it accelerated and entrenched it. Teachers, clinicians, child-protection professionals, and academics increasingly describe what they observe as its consequences: atrophied social skills, difficulty with unstructured play, reduced facial-emotion recognition, and a sense of disconnection they characterise as qualitatively different from the existential loneliness familiar to previous generations. These realities play a role in feeding the sense of anomie described by youth in NVE milieus, and feed into the epidemic of loneliness and isolation felt by youth today.

These are the demographic and developmental foundations on which my study of NVE rests. In example, youth being recruited into Com Network communities in 2026 are not the same youth who entered them in 2018-2019; they are more isolated, more digitally embedded, more anomic, and arriving with fewer protective factors in place, while the risk factors are on the rise.

The historical arc therefore reveals three interdependent elements. The first is the maturation of the edgesphere and the hybridization of: terrorist and violent extremist milieus, the True Crime Community, extreme trolling communities, cybercriminal ecosystems and groups, gore network and platforms, animal abuse milieus, sadistic online exploitation, and self-directed violence ecosystems. The second is the demographic and societal maturation of the target population: a generation whose vulnerability profile is the product of compounding educational, social, and technological dislocations, of which COVID-19 was the most consequential single accelerant.

Third, new generations of threat actors and networks will continue to emerge as long as the underlying ecosystem of feeder communities, aesthetic capital, and target vulnerability remains intact. The deliberate co-opting of legacy terrorist brand archives, a practice that confuses jurisdictional and legal categorisation in ways that constrain prosecutorial and preventive response, is likely to deepen rather than diminish.

The convergence of these trajectories is what defines the present moment, and it is the reason that NVE cannot be addressed adequately by any single agency, statute, or disciplinary framework. Nor is NVE only a security issue; prevention is also a central part of any adequate response. The underlying risk factors and drivers of radicalization to nihilistic violent extremism, must be addressed.

Addressing the underlying risk factors and drivers of radicalisation to nihilistic violent extremism matters given the range of severe harms involved across the NVE life cycle: from the early experiences of isolation and trauma that open vulnerabilities to recruitment, to the harms perpetrated within NVE communities, to the challenges that arise after criminal-justice measures have run their course. Because we are dealing primarily, though not only, with juvenile offenders, and because the intermixing of drivers and harms involved is still being understood, juvenile justice systems may be strained to manage these cases without closer collaboration across sectors, even as those same systems also offer services and supports well suited to working with complex youth cases.

Given the severity and complexity of the drivers and harms involved, greater cross-sector collaboration and investment in prevention will be important to building a stronger, multi-sector community of practice, one better able to divert and disengage youth from these milieus and, ideally, to reach them at earlier stages of vulnerability and need.

The threat described in the pages that follow is neither a passing subcultural phenomenon nor a localised criminal problem. It is global, multi-racial, culturally-diverse, the product of identifiable historical processes, a specific generational rupture, and a digital ecology that continues to evolve faster than the institutions designed to respond to it.

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Blog From The Depths 

Glossary

Nihilist violent extremism is a phenomenon that has only recently been studied, and whose scope is sometimes difficult to grasp due to a proliferation of definitions. To clarify this, the report uses the definitions listed below, all of which are drawn from the work of Marc-André Argentino¹.

Edgesphere

The edgesphere is an ecosystem composed of several constantly evolving and interconnected internet subcultures that emerged on the fringes of the most extreme communities of teenagers who spend the majority of their time online, and which began to form and evolve between 2018 and 2020².

The Com

The “Com,” short for “The Community,” is an informal yet highly interconnected network of servers, chat rooms, forums, and accounts spread across multiple platforms, both mainstream and encrypted. It is not a single community, but a set of interlinked digital spaces within the Edgesphere that share members, methods, and a common culture of antisocial behavior. These groups collaborate, compete, and influence one another, sometimes engaging in criminal activity or violent extremism³.

Nihilistic violent extremism

Nihilistic violent extremism is a movement that calls for acts of physical or sexual violence and intimidation, driven by a fascination with violence and chaos, without a clear ideological motivation⁴.

True Crime Community

The True Crime Community⁵ is an online ecosystem linked to nihilistic violent extremism, bringing together individuals fascinated by violent crimes — particularly planned school shootings — who discuss the topic online. Among them, some seek to emulate the perpetrators of school shootings by carrying out attacks themselves. This phenomenon of emulating targeted violence is not new⁶ and first emerged with the Columbine (Colorado) shooting in April 1999⁷. However, the phenomenon has been observed to concentrate first on platforms like Tumblr, and then more broadly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the ecosystem expanded and consolidated. Since then, there have been a significant number of Targeted violence in school settings where the perpetrators frequented the same online spaces or were in virtual contact, without necessarily coordinating their actions. This consolidation of the True Crime Community catalyzes the threat of a violent act. The attacks committed by Nathalie Lynn Rupnow in Madison in December 2024 (Wisconsin, 2 dead and 6 injured), by Solomon Henderson in Nashville in January 2025 (Tennessee, 1 dead and 2 injured), by Robin Westman in Minneapolis in August 2025 (Minnesota, 2 dead and 28 injured), and by Desmond Holly in Evergreen in September 2025 (Colorado, 2 injured) illustrate this rapid evolution in the United States. It is nevertheless important to understand that this phenomenon is not limited to the Western world, as evidenced by the increase in cases in Russia and Brazil in recent years. The True Crime Community is an ecosystem adjacent to the NVE, and its members may overlap. However, not all attacks originating from the TCC are necessarily linked to the NVE.

Introduction

This report is an introductory study on Nihilistic Violent Extremism (NVE). The emergence of this phenomenon in France in recent years has been the subject of very little research and remains, at present, a niche topic studied by a handful of researchers, practitioners, and journalists. **The primary objective of this report is therefore to provide a framework for studying and defining the phenomenon and its many components (I).**

This was made possible only by the prior work of numerous international researchers, to whom we are particularly grateful. The report thus seeks to compile and clarify their work in order to present to practitioners, researchers, and the general public an overview of the phenomenon and the risks it poses, with the aim of better protecting the population, particularly minors. This is by no means an exhaustive study and aims above all to open the debate on the subject and enable continued joint efforts to combat the threat it poses.

The report also aims to publish, for the first time, data on the spread of the phenomenon of nihilistic violent extremism in France (II). While domestic security services have only recently begun working on the subject, the phenomenon remains poorly understood or little known outside of a few specialized analysts and researchers. The cases listed in this report — whether involving sexual extortion or planned violence in schools — have increased in recent years. Despite research efforts to compile a comprehensive list of all cases, it is clear that those mentioned here represent only the tip of the iceberg. The authors' discussions with numerous professionals suggest that the number of victims and violent incidents linked to NVE in France is far greater than those studied here. Several organizational factors

explain this: limited understanding and classification of the phenomenon, the minority status of both perpetrators and victims, cross-cutting threats involving different units, etc. It is also for these reasons that the report, far from being alarmist, hopes to help open a debate on this diversification of the extremist threat in France.

In 2024, Point de Contact, an French NGO dedicated to internet safety, received reports of content linked to NVE movements. This content was not immediately identified as such due to its hybrid nature, the lack of connection to a clearly established ideology, and the difficulties in classifying it as illegal. **The volume of reports remained limited, but these initial cases prompted the association to investigate them in order to better understand the characteristics of these groups and their methods of dissemination.** This report aims to document the presence of these movements in the digital space by synthesizing existing research, particularly that of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). It also analyzes how they fit within the French legal framework and situates them within the context of the European Digital Services Act (DSA). Finally, it highlights the challenges they pose in terms of classification, handling, and moderation by online platforms (III).

DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NIHILISTIC VIOLENT EXTREMISM

🔍 PART I



Nihilistic Violent Extremism (NVE) is a new threat, now present and active in France. While a diversification of threats has been observed on the national territory in recent years, the emergence of new security phenomena such as Nihilistic Violent Extremism complicates the work of all actors across the security continuum. The challenges are manifold: varying definitions, diverse methods of operation, and unprecedented motivations. Consequently, this report aims to provide an initial introduction to the threat posed by this phenomenon internationally, before focusing on its implications in France. Far from being an exhaustive treatise on the subject, the objective here is to define, explain, and present this new threat now present in France.

1 | DEFINITIONAL CHALLENGES

Nihilistic violent extremism is a new phenomenon and is therefore subject to debate. Several terms, definitions, and subcategories have been proposed by experts in the field. These include “nihilistic and apocalyptic violent extremism,” “sadistic online exploitation,” “participatory memetic violent extremism,” and “online cult communities”⁸. These terms, which will be defined in the glossary of this report, illustrate the various aspects of the phenomenon. For the sake of clarity, the term “nihilistic violent extremism” (NVE) will be used throughout this document. It will be defined, following the work of Marc-André Argentino, as a form of extremism in which “individuals [...] commit criminal acts to achieve political, social, or religious objectives, motivated primarily by a hatred of society as a whole and the desire to bring about its collapse by sowing chaos, destruction, and social instability. [They] act alone or in networks to destroy civilized society through the corruption and exploitation of vulnerable populations, often minors”⁹.

2 | CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT

Decentralization and online presence

The NVE can thus be described as an aggregation of online communities that share a fascination with violence in various forms. Consequently, these members interact primarily online and not at all or very little in the real world. Individuals involved in the movement are present on a range of online platforms (notably Telegram and Discord) where they exchange and share violent content. Most of their victims are also recruited and abused online, often through online games such as Minecraft or Roblox. This online presence complicates investigations, in which the digital component is crucial. Those involved are often relatively aware of the illegality of their actions and of the need to conceal them. The ephemeral nature of chat groups, the use of pseudonyms, and the complexity of belonging to multiple groups contribute to the difficulties in identifying perpetrators of criminal offenses. While the vast majority of these offenses are committed online, violent acts are also regularly observed in public spaces and particularly in educational settings.

Minor importance of ideology

Individuals involved in the movement act primarily out of a fascination with violence rather than ideological motivation. The goal is not the transformation of current society or the establishment of new norms, but the destruction of existing ones. The violence perpetrated by these individuals, in various forms, is both the means of action and the ultimate goal. As Marc-André Argentino explains, the majority of perpetrators “commit

these acts without any ideological or political aim; they wish neither to change society nor to overthrow a political entity. These acts committed by minors against other minors are devoid of meaning and purpose in their eyes; they are purely nihilistic, misanthropic, and aim to sow chaos for the simple pleasure of sowing chaos”¹⁰. The perpetrators are above all fascinated by violence, in various forms, directed against their victims as well as, at times, against themselves. While the absence of ideological motivations remains a major characteristic of NVE, there is nevertheless an ideological spectrum among those involved, ranging from a pure fascination with violence to an aestheticization of content derived from other terrorist movements (far-right, jihadism, etc.), up to the adoption of terminology or ideas from the far-right. The consumption and dissemination of online propaganda content derived from other movements are also common. This sometimes complicates the classification of nihilistic violent extremism when a perpetrator collects videos of jihadist attacks, montages featuring swastikas, Satanist material, as well as videos of surgical procedures or fatal accidents. The movement shares an accelerationist character with other far-right or Satanist movements and seeks the collapse of the “system” through a proliferation of acts of destruction against it. This desire for chaos justifies multiple modes of action against a “society” that those involved seek to destroy.

Some debates persist, however, regarding this lack of ideological motivations, particularly considering that the nihilism and misanthropy of individuals active within the movement were in themselves a form of ideology¹¹.

Diversity of modus operandi

While violence remains the primary objective of individuals acting within the movement, it can take very diverse forms. The majority of victims in

NVE cases are targeted by sexual extortion in the form of online threats. The victims, very often minors, are contacted via online games such as Roblox and Minecraft. The perpetrators then use deception to obtain compromising information (address, intimate photos) about the victim, before using it to force the victim to send them more content involving degrading acts (self-harm, extreme sexual acts, killing of pets, or even videos of sexual assaults on other minors). The discovery of self-harm (particularly if symbols or letters are inscribed) on the victim, or of bloodstained drawings on the walls, is common. These cases of sexual extortion sometimes lead to the victim's suicide. Physical violence against individuals has also been reported, including knife attacks, particularly against vulnerable people (homeless individuals, minors, the elderly, etc.), notably in Romania¹² and in Sweden¹³. The True Crime Community, an online community fascinated by violent crimes, some of whose members are active within the NVE movement, is also responsible for a series of Targeted violence in schools, particularly in France¹⁴. Several cases of child abductions have also been reported in the United States (Virginia¹⁵, Pennsylvania¹⁶). Cases of arson and vandalism have also been reported.

Juvenile perpetrators and victims

The vast majority of perpetrators and victims within the NVE movement are minors. As Michele Prado, an independent researcher and founder of Stop Hate Brasil, explains regarding the Brazilian example: "In Brazil, the most common age group among perpetrators of these acts is between 13 and 17 years old. However, we have documented numerous cases where the attacks began around age 15 and continued into adulthood. As for the victims, we have already identified cases involving children as young as 9 years old." The most famous case is probably that of Bradley Cadenhead, who founded 764 — one of the main groups in the NVE movement — at the age of 15 and was sentenced in 2023 to 80 years in prison in the United States. In an initial attempt at synthesis, Marc-André Argentino examined the ages of perpetrators and victims in 223 cases of NVE-related violence. The average age of victims is 14.9 years, with at least one victim under the age of one. As for the perpetrators, the average age is 20.4 years. However, little data is available on the subject. As Bjorn Ihler (CEO of Revontulet) notes during an interview with the authors of the report, "since this data focuses exclusively on arrests, we estimate that the number of young victims and offenders is actually much higher. In many cases, [...] the sensitive nature of these cases justifies their non-publication. Furthermore, many of these victims and perpetrators are minors in the jurisdictions where their cases are handled; they may therefore be subject to forms of criminal prosecution other than arrest. "Furthermore, a number of perpetrators were initially victims who chose to participate in the abuse, notably by recruiting other victims. According to Bjorn Ihler, 'There is no clear distinction between victims and perpetrators.' Adult perpetrators are often young adults who were already active within the movement during their adolescence.

Importance of status

Beyond a fascination with violence, perpetrators are motivated by the desire to attain status within the NVE movement. In these virtual communities, creating and sharing violent content is a means of climbing the group's "hierarchy." Perpetrators collect and share images of abuse (forced mutilation, drawings with blood, degrading sexual acts, etc.) committed against specific victims in "lorebooks," compilations of images extorted from their victims. When physical violence is committed, it is very often filmed or streamed live for the rest of the movement. The dissemination of this content online allows perpetrators to gain "status" within the community, as well as a series of "rewards" such as a title or access to a private server or chat group. These rewards are fleeting and can be revoked by the administrator of one of these groups, which drives perpetrators to escalate their violence. As Argentino explains, an author's status depends on the degree of violence and depravity they display¹⁷.

3 | GROUPS LINKED TO NVE

It remains difficult to establish the scope of the phenomenon and the security risk posed by the NVE movement. The novelty of the phenomenon, the difficulties in classifying it as hate crime, sexual violence, or terrorism, combined with the small number of participants, limit the ability to compile data. Nevertheless, in an article titled "Beyond the Headlines: Arrest Data and Drivers of Nihilistic Violent Extremism in the Com Network," Marc-André Argentino conducted an initial quantitative analysis of arrests linked to The Com¹⁸ internationally. He identified 194 arrests linked to The Com in 29 different countries, resulting in the deaths of 14 victims and 2,776 victims who suffered abuse.

The objective of this segment will therefore be to discuss a selection of active groups and major cases abroad, before examining the issue in France.

764



764 is one of the most active groups within The Com¹⁹, specializing in sexual extortion. Created in 2021, based on another group called "CVLT" ("Cult"), it was founded by Bradley Cadenhead, then 15 years old, in Stephenville, Texas²⁰. Arrested in 2023, Cadenhead has since been sentenced to 80 years in prison. Several other prominent members of the group were subsequently arrested in the United States²¹, as well as in Europe²². This initial series of arrests in 2022 and 2023 destabilized the group, which was officially dissolved before reemerging under various names (676, CVLT, Court, Kaskar, Harm Nation, Leak Society, H3ll)²³. Since then, and despite several recent arrests in the United States and Greece²⁴, 764 and its various offshoots remain active. Among these cases is the "White Tiger" case, whose trial began in Hamburg in January 2026. The alleged perpetrator, 21-year-old Shahriar J., is being prosecuted for abusing nearly 30 minors online between 2021 and his arrest in June 2025. He faces charges for 204 offenses, including one homicide — after driving a victim to suicide — and five counts of attempted murder. Eight victims, aged 11 to 15, have been identified in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Germany. Shahriar J. is being tried by a special juvenile court due to his age at the time of the offenses. The trial is scheduled to conclude in December 2026²⁵. Since December 2025, 764 has been designated as a terrorist group in Canada and New Zealand.

No Lives Matter (NLM)



No Lives Matter (NLM) is a group that emerged from The Com, similar to MKY, but whose publications and members are primarily based in the Western world and communicate mainly in English. The ideology promoted by NLM is described as nihilistic accelerationism, advocating aimless misanthropic violence, with the stated goal of “ushering in an era where no race, gender, or age group is safe.”²⁶ “Hatred of humanity” and the distinction between “predator and prey” are themes prominently featured in the group’s manifestos, alongside the desire to “purify the world through violence”²⁷, with the sole aim being this violence and the “prestige” it brings to members who carry out attacks. In October 2024, a 14-year-old boy was arrested in Hasselby, Sweden, for two attempted murders and six other assaults. A member of 764 and NLM, he reportedly acted to support the group’s objectives. Eight videos were posted on a Telegram group named NLM764 (No Lives Matter 764). They show eight sequences of attacks, some involving knives, targeting mainly elderly people but also a pregnant woman. Not all of the victims have been identified. One of the group’s founders, Justin B., was also arrested in the Netherlands in the summer of 2025 and is now being prosecuted for terrorism²⁸.

The Order of 9 Angles (O9A)



The Order of the Nine Angles (O9A) is a Satanist group founded in the United Kingdom in the 1960s, which influences a number of groups stemming from The Coms. O9A is a decentralized accelerationist and Satanist network that believes Western Judeo-Christian values corrupt society and seeks to replace them with a new social order blending fascism, social Darwinism, and Satanism²⁹. O9A encourages its online members to commit acts of violence or sexual assault in order to challenge Western values. Several members have been arrested in the United States and Europe since 2020. O9A and its members have been responsible for numerous terrorist and criminal acts since the group’s founding. The most famous case is likely the arrest of Ethan Meltzer, a paratrooper with the 503rd U.S. Infantry Regiment and an O9A member, for attempting to organize an ambush of his unit during a deployment on an overseas mission, with the aim of making them a “sacrifice.” Other arrests, particularly among the armed forces and internal security forces, have taken place every year since 2019 in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Romania, Sweden, and Russia. In 2025, two notable arrests took place in Brazil, as well as in Bolzano (Italy) in February, where a 15-year-old was planning an attack. The Order of the Nine Angles was designated a terrorist group by the New Zealand government in December 2025³⁰, along with affiliated groups, including 764, No Lives Matter, and Maniac Murder Cult.

MKY (Manyaki: kult ubiystva, Maniac Murder Cult)



MKY is a group founded by Yegor Krasnov, a 20-year-old Ukrainian national, in Dnipro in 2017. It is the only group that first formed offline before spreading online. MKY members promote an ideology that blends neo-Nazism, esotericism, and Satanism. This hybrid ideology encourages an accelerationist tendency, calling for violent acts against designated enemies (notably the homeless, migrants, and alcoholics) and against society at large, in the hope of a Racial Holy War (RaHoWa). Assaults, murders, or acts of agitation must be filmed and posted online to gain status within the organization through a “Murder Points” system (for example, 200 points for a murder, 100 points for an assault, varying depending on the action and the quality of the recording). After its creation, MKY spread throughout Ukraine and Russia, notably in Moscow, Voronezh, Gelendzhik, Yaroslavl, and Tambov³¹. In 2023, 17-year-old Nino Luciano H. was arrested in Romania. He was suspected of assaulting an 82-year-old man by pushing him down a flight of stairs, before filming the stabbing murder of a 74-year-old woman two weeks later³². The group claims responsibility for about fifty murders between 2017 and 2023, though this cannot be confirmed. Yegor Krasnov, known by the alias “Maniac,” was arrested by the FSB in 2020³³. His successor, Mikhail Chkhikvishvili, a Georgian national known by the pseudonym “Commander Bucher,” was also arrested in Moldova in 2024 for attempting to organize hate crimes and mass killings in the United States. Chkhikvishvili had attempted to organize an attack in which a member would have dressed as Santa Claus to distribute poisoned candy to racial minorities in New York³⁴. Chkhikvishvili was extradited to the United States, where he pleaded guilty before a federal judge in late 2025 and was sentenced to 15 years. Canada and New Zealand designated MKY as a terrorist group in December 2025.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY AND TRENDS IN FRANCE



PART II



1 | SEXUAL EXTORTION

The first cases of sexual extortion in France began with the group “CVLT” (pronounced “cult”), initially created on Kik Messenger in 2017 before becoming a Discord server in late 2019³⁵. It was founded by Rohan Sandeep Rane, an Indian student at SKEMA Business School in Antibes (Alpes-Maritimes)³⁶ and brought together about 150 people, several of whom would become known for their involvement in the NVE movement, such as Collin John Thomas Walker, Kaleb Merritt, and Bradley Cadenhead, who in turn founded 764 in 2021. By 2020, Rane, who says he was “bored” during the lockdown, began ramping up the group’s activities — known as CVLT — from Antibes. The group’s objective, shared by its members, is to create “sadistic followers” through the production and distribution of child pornography and degrading acts. To do this, Rane and the other members would approach minors online, gain their trust, and ask them to send sexually explicit videos, which he would then threaten to share with their relatives identified on social media. If they refused, the victim was threatened with real-life violence. Once the victim is drawn into the network, Rane and his accomplices demand increasingly degrading videos, forcing some of their victims to mutilate themselves and carve their names into their flesh, to cut and eat their hair, to hang themselves with belts, to beat themselves, to commit sexual or violent acts against their pets, and to view violent content (animal torture, sexual violence, gore and sexual content, child pornography)³⁷ while considering themselves “CVLT slaves.” They also disseminate a range of ideologically diverse content promoting pedophilia, anarchy, Nazism, nihilism, and rape. Some victims are also driven to suicide on camera. According to Barrett Gay, Digital Research Analyst at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), CVLT “lays the groundwork for the movement, particularly with regard to sexual

extortion. Rohan Rane is the first to link an individual’s reputation on the server to their capacity to produce sadistic and pedocriminal content. From that point on, every member is expected to be an active content producer.”

Thanks to a tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Rane was arrested in March 2021 by officers from the Central Office for the Suppression of Violence Against Persons (OCRVP) and the Office for Minors (OFMIN)³⁸. Six victims aged 11 to 16 living in the United States and Canada were identified. During the same period, due to the gradual disappearance of CVLT between 2021 and 2022, Bradley Cadenhead founded 764, as a continuation of the original group. Rane’s trial was held on March 3, 2025, before the Paris Departmental Criminal Court on charges of acts of torture and barbarity, corruption of minors by an organized gang, and extortion by an organized gang. The defendant faced up to 20 years in prison. During the hearing, he stated, “I am guilty; I take full responsibility.”³⁹ The charges were then reclassified, and the trial was referred to a criminal court of first instance, with a date yet to be determined. He now faces a potential life sentence. Rohan Rane is also being prosecuted in the United States⁴⁰ and faces extradition.

On August 19, 2025, the first arrest linked to the 764 group took place in France, in the Eure department. A man in his twenties was arrested and subsequently charged with “possession, viewing, and distribution of child pornography as part of an organized group, animal abuse, acts of cruelty toward animals, and exploitation of minors”⁴¹. He is suspected of having forced about fifty young girls to mutilate themselves, encouraging them to stab themselves in the thigh or chest and to write his name on their arm or stomach. Approximately two thousand videos and images were discovered on his digital devices, including child pornography, notably the rape of infants, videos of mass

killings and traffic accidents, and videos of violence against animals. The suspect is believed to have decapitated dogs and rabbits, photos of which were found on his phone⁴². Unknown to law enforcement, the individual admitted to joining a group affiliated with 764 after proving his “commitment” by having “coerced or succeeded in convincing other internet users to self-harm, mutilate themselves, or prove that [he] had tortured and killed animals”⁴³. During his police custody, the suspect admitted to “impulses of rape, torture, or murder”⁴⁴. While the prosecutor noted during his press conference that the perpetrator “did not claim to hold neo-Nazi ideas or to be a neo-Nazi” himself, media coverage remains rather simplistic, linking the phenomenon to the far-right or masculinism, without mentioning the Nihilistic Violent Extremism and fascination with violence intrinsic to the Evreux arrest.

The arrests of Rohan Rane and the Evreux suspect are the only two publicly documented cases in France. Nevertheless, it seems likely that many more cases exist, whether or not they have been prosecuted. Several victims have testified about these situations, which began notably on the online game Roblox as early as 2018⁴⁵, and the High Commissioner for Children, Sarah El Haïry, has cited more than 500 reports on this platform alone⁴⁶, though it is not possible to determine whether these were linked to nihilistic violent extremism. As with Targeted violence in schools, several challenges complicate institutional action on this issue: the novelty and lack of understanding of the subject, an unprecedented format involving actors who do not usually work together, the multiplicity of platforms, the age of the victims, and their difficulties in filing complaints, etc.

2 | TARGETED VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Targeted violence in schools were a rare criminal phenomenon, though not unprecedented, until the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of nihilistic violent extremism. Two major cases are worth noting: the attack at the Olivier de Serre middle school in Meyzieu (Rhône) in April 2008 and the shooting at the Alexis de Tocqueville high school in Grasse (Alpes-Maritimes) in March 2017. On April 24, 2008, Philippe, a 15-year-old high school student, arrived at his school in Meyzieu with three knives — each with blades measuring between 15 and 20 centimeters — hidden in his backpack. At 9:45 a.m., during an Italian class, he leaned toward another student and asked her if she believed in God, before stabbing her in the neck as she tried to answer “no.” Another student tried to intervene and was stabbed seven times. Philippe then left the room and entered another classroom, where he stabbed a third student in the chest before fleeing the school. He was apprehended half an hour later on the streets of Meyzieu, after slashing his throat and wrists⁴⁷.

On March 16, 2017, shortly before 1 p.m., a scooter pulls up near Alexis de Tocqueville High School in Grasse. Killian B., a 16-year-old student, gets off carrying several weapons in his bag and a rifle covered with a piece of cloth. He climbs over the school’s fence and shouts to the scooter’s driver, 17-year-old Lucas R., to “watch the news.” He then opens fire in the schoolyard and heads toward the building’s entrance. The principal, Hervé Pizzinat, attempts to speak with him. Killian explains that he is not aiming at him, but is seeking to kill several specific people in the high school. As Hervé Pizzinat tries to approach him, the shooter opens fire and wounds him in the shoulder. He then moves through the building, entering various rooms and opening fire, before returning to the schoolyard. He was

then apprehended without resistance⁴⁸. Investigators found a shotgun, a .22 LR revolver, an alarm pistol, a smoke grenade, and a homemade explosive device — likely non-functional — on his person. Five people were wounded by gunfire⁴⁹.

These two attacks, nine years apart, were at the time the only examples of planned violence in schools in France. While the phenomenon spread across Europe following the major media coverage of the Columbine massacre in 1999, it primarily affected Germany (Erfurt in 2002, Winnenden in 2008, among others) and Finland (Jokela in 2007, Kauhajoki in 2009). French schools had, until then, been spared. Two factors may explain the absence of such cases in France: the difficulty for minors to obtain a weapon, which remains a major obstacle today for those with fleeting impulses toward violent action, and limited linguistic proficiency, which restricts access to the writings of authors across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, references to the Columbine massacre are already evident in the two cases from 2008 and 2017. In Meyzieu, the question posed by the attacker is a simple translation of “Do you believe in God?” uttered by Eric Harris during his killing spree in the library. In the case of Grasse, references to Columbine are numerous, particularly on the perpetrator’s social media: photos of the deceased perpetrators, subscriptions to several YouTube channels on the subject, songs referencing the massacre, and interest in the “Columbiners” community⁵⁰. He had also stated that he wanted to be “the first French school shooter”⁵¹. His accomplice, meanwhile, was fascinated by the Chardon High School (Ohio) shooting and its perpetrator, Thomas Michael “T.J.” Lane III, whom he had attempted to contact by mail. The media prevalence of Columbine — the third most covered media event of the 1990s in the United States — thus made it a reference point for violent teenagers seeking to emulate the attack and join the “community” of school shooters, even as far as France. The Grasse attack, however, differs in

several respects. The perpetrator’s interest in gory content and the presence of an accomplice illustrate the evolution of the emulation phenomenon — shifting from a “Columbine effect” to a shift toward the True Crime Community, linking online exchanges and real-life attempts with a convicted perpetrator, and composite interests blending neo-Nazi symbolism and a fascination with violence. The use of multiple firearms also indicates an evolution of the threat that was unprecedented until then. The transformation and spread of the phenomenon and its codes would continue over the following years.

Two arrests linked to similar plots took place in Montpellier in 2019⁵² and in Le Havre in 2021. In both cases, a fascination with violence was noted. The suspect in Le Havre, however, spoke of his desire to “do worse than Columbine”⁵³ and showed a pronounced interest in symbols associated with the far-right.

In March 2024, Rodi A., a 17-year-old student, was arrested in Antibes (Alpes-Maritimes) while planning a mass shooting at his horticultural high school. It was a tip from his child psychiatrist to law enforcement that led to his arrest. The young man then told investigators that he wanted to become a mass murderer and made numerous references to school shootings that had taken place in the United States. Furthermore, he perfectly illustrates the evolution of the True Crime Community in France and the phenomenon of violent nihilistic extremism, blending a fascination with serial killers, occult symbols, and a keen interest in Nazism. He was subsequently incarcerated⁵⁴.

In May 2024, another attack took place in Chemillé-en-Anjou (Maine-et-Loire). Early in the day, an 18-year-old student stabbed an English teacher and two other students at L’Hyrôme High School, before fleeing through a window and being apprehended by the National Gendarmerie⁵⁵. He explained that his act was premeditated, that he “wanted to know what it

was like to kill someone⁵⁶ and that he hoped to become famous as a result of his act. The victims had been chosen at random, ruling out the possibility of any desire for revenge, whether real or perceived. While no direct reference to the True Crime Community or its language was made, this fascination with violence illustrates the phenomenon's expansion.

The year 2025 saw a major expansion of the phenomenon with four attacks. First, on March 25, a student carried out an attack at Montesquieu Middle School in Evry-Courcouronnes (Essonne). Aged 14, he threw two explosive devices, consisting of a mixture of hydrochloric acid and aluminum, into a school counselor's office and a classroom. Fortunately, neither detonated. A safety and prevention assistant managed to subdue the teenager, who was arrested by the Evry municipal police and then taken into custody.

Police found two lighters, a knife, a hammer, and other similar explosive devices on the suspect. He reportedly hid some of the weapons in the school before the attack. He was also reportedly wearing a tactical vest during the attack, according to several witnesses. A search of his computer revealed that he had planned a more complex attack before settling on the use of explosive devices. In fact, he had planned to use "toxic gas" inside the school before deploying the explosive devices against law enforcement. He also hoped to take a hostage during his attack. As is often the case, he had warned some of his classmates by telling them, "Don't come on Tuesday," and hinting that he intended to "do something crazy with chemicals."

The student's profile reveals a brilliant academic record with a 17.5 GPA, but also a fascination with weapons and violence, particularly in connection with the Russia-Ukraine conflict⁵⁷.

On April 24, around 12:30 p.m., a student attacked several teenagers with a knife at the private Notre-Dame-de-Toutes-Aides high

school in Nantes (Loire-Atlantique). The attack began on the second floor of the school, where a 17-year-old student was killed and three others were injured⁵⁸. The suspect was then subdued by the school's IT manager. He was wearing a balaclava, a black glove, tinted glasses, safety boots, and a helmet. Two knives were found on him, including a hunting knife that was covered in blood. The perpetrator was identified as Justin P., a 16-year-old student at the school. He was known to have suicidal tendencies and reportedly asked one of the police officers to "shoot him in the head" during his arrest. He also sent a manifesto to several students at the school prior to his act. Titled "The Immune Action," the manifesto is divided into three parts: "Globalized Ecocide: The First Aggression," "Systemic Violence and Social Alienation: The Second Aggression," and "Totalitarian Social Conditioning: The Third Aggression." It contains elements of language drawn from radical ecology and the far left, as well as vague references to Ted Kaczynski, nicknamed "Unabomber," and "satanic symbols." The text of the manifesto is complex and offers an unprecedented insight into the author's mindset, yet it has been subjected to simplistic media coverage. As Bjorn Ihler explains, "The Immune Action was a sophisticated [...] even erudite manifesto. In it, he denounced modern civilization as a machine doomed to the 'decomposition of humanity' and positioned himself as an immune response to 'globalized ecocide' and 'totalitarian social conditioning.'" Newspapers interviewed several of his peers and discovered that, in addition to his eco-extremism and Nazi rhetoric, Justin also expressed a certain affinity for the 9/11 terrorists as well as other Islamist-inspired extremists. However, the news media and social media almost exclusively classify him as a Nazi-inspired individual⁵⁹. This superficial media coverage unfortunately contributes to a misunderstanding of the phenomenon. The composite ideological influences characteristic of nihilistic violent extremism illustrate above all a fascination with violence in all its forms, rather

than a structured terrorist plan. Although the perpetrator stated that his text “does not justify any act,” it nevertheless reveals his familiarity with the language of various terrorist movements, his obsession with violent action, and his desire to turn his attack into an act of communication.

The next attack took place on September 10, 2025, at 1:55 p.m., when an individual entered the Vert d’Azur horticultural high school in Antibes. He first went to the school restroom and took an anti-anxiety medication there. Upon leaving the restroom, he then attempts to stab a 15-year-old student, who manages to dodge the attack and raises the alarm. He then assaults another 16-year-old student in the schoolyard, wounding him in the head. The perpetrator finally stabbed a 52-year-old English teacher,⁶⁰ who was in the courtyard. Once his victim was on the ground, he stabbed her several times, particularly in the abdomen. A school maintenance worker, armed with a pole, put an end to the attack with the help of another worker and the principal. The rapid arrival of National Police forces led to the perpetrator’s arrest. He was quickly identified as Rodi A., 18, who had already been arrested the previous year while planning his attack. He is described as fascinated by mass killings and serial killers. After spending 11 months in detention, during which he attempted suicide, he was released. He then resumed planning his attack. The Antibes case clearly illustrates the danger posed by individuals fascinated by violence, for whom disengagement from violence is a long and uncertain process. A 17-year-old girl, hospitalized in a psychiatric ward in Cherbourg-en-Cotentin, described as his girlfriend and sharing his plans for the attack, had been the subject of an investigation at the time and was arrested following the attack.^{61 62}

Fifteen days later, another attack took place. On September 24 at around 8:15 a.m., a teenager stabbed a music teacher at Robert-Schuman Middle School in Benfeld (Bas-Rhin). The 66-year-old victim was wounded in the face. The

perpetrator then fled on a bicycle before being caught by the police. He then stabbed himself several times in the throat. A 14-year-old with a disability who was placed in a child welfare facility, “Nicolas” had already been reported to the Ministry of Education earlier that year, followed by a temporary suspension from the school. Fascinated by weapons and Nazism,⁶³ he died five days later from the injuries he inflicted on himself⁶⁴.

On November 20, 2025, a high school student of legal age was arrested by law enforcement after making threats of a mass shooting at François-Villon High School in Paris’s 14th arrondissement. He had told his classmates the day before that a mass shooting would take place around 1:15 p.m. the following day. Police officers were deployed near the school at the scheduled time and arrested the suspect. The perpetrator was enrolled in a program for school dropouts. Fascinated by school shootings in the United States, he had made homophobic and racist remarks in the past and watched videos of executions and surgical procedures. He had shown these videos to a classmate who subsequently had to be treated by a psychologist. Once again, a fascination with violence in all its forms appears to be the primary motivation here.

In March 2026, on March 4 at around 9:30 a.m., a 8th-grade student stabbed another student at the end of a physics and chemistry class at Beauregard Middle School in La Rochelle (Charente-Maritime). The victim, aged 13, was stabbed twice with an Opinel-type knife — first in the shoulder and then in the stomach. He was hospitalized, and his condition is not life-threatening. The perpetrator was separated from his victim by the teacher and then taken into custody by school staff before being arrested by officers from the Anti-Crime Brigade (BAC). He had no prior record with law enforcement and is being charged with attempted murder. The perpetrator, also 13 years old, filmed the attack with the intention of

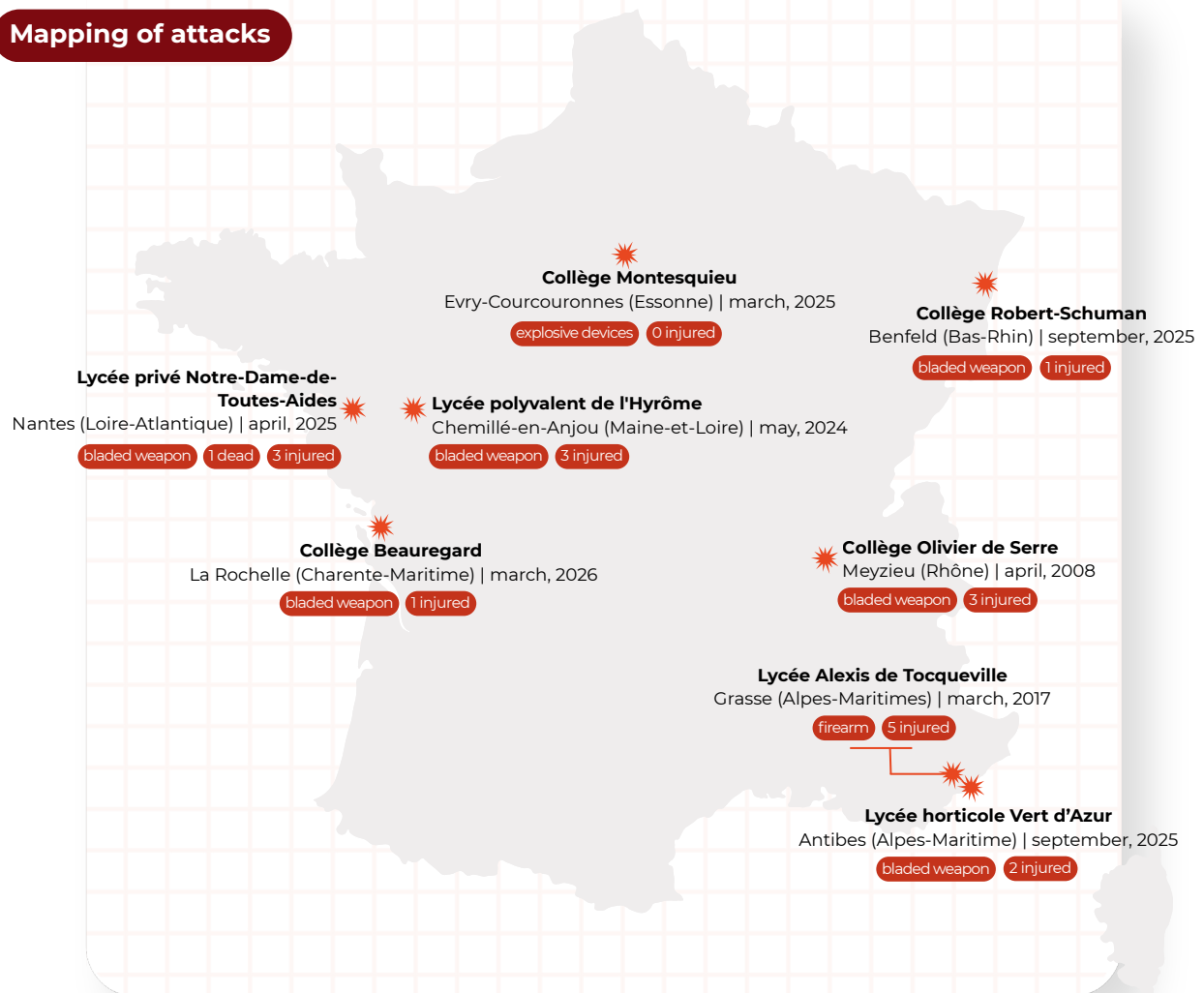
posting it online later. He admitted to “regularly watching, for entertainment, videos of mass killings, knife attacks, and beheadings”⁶⁵.

An analysis of planned school shootings and attempted school shootings in France reveals several key findings regarding the nature of the threat. Since 2008, eight attacks have occurred in French schools, six of which have taken place since 2024⁶⁶. At least six have been thwarted. These figures include only cases that have been made public and officially classified as such. It is the authors’ view that many planned school shootings linked to the True Crime Community have not received media coverage and remain unrecorded. The young age of the perpetrators, difficulties in classification, and a lack of understanding of the subject in public discourse have therefore very likely led to a downplaying of the threat posed by this phenomenon. These attacks resulted in a total of one death and eighteen injuries. This limited human toll is likely due to the young age of the perpetrators (between 13 and 18 years old, with an average of 15.5 years) and the low sophistication of the methods they employ. The vast majority of attacks involved the use of bladed weapons (6), but two of them — in Grasse and Evry-Courcouronnes — saw the perpetrators use firearms and homemade explosive devices, respectively. The low prevalence of firearms in these attacks is a French-specific phenomenon, due to strict gun control, and limits the perpetrators’ capacity for action.

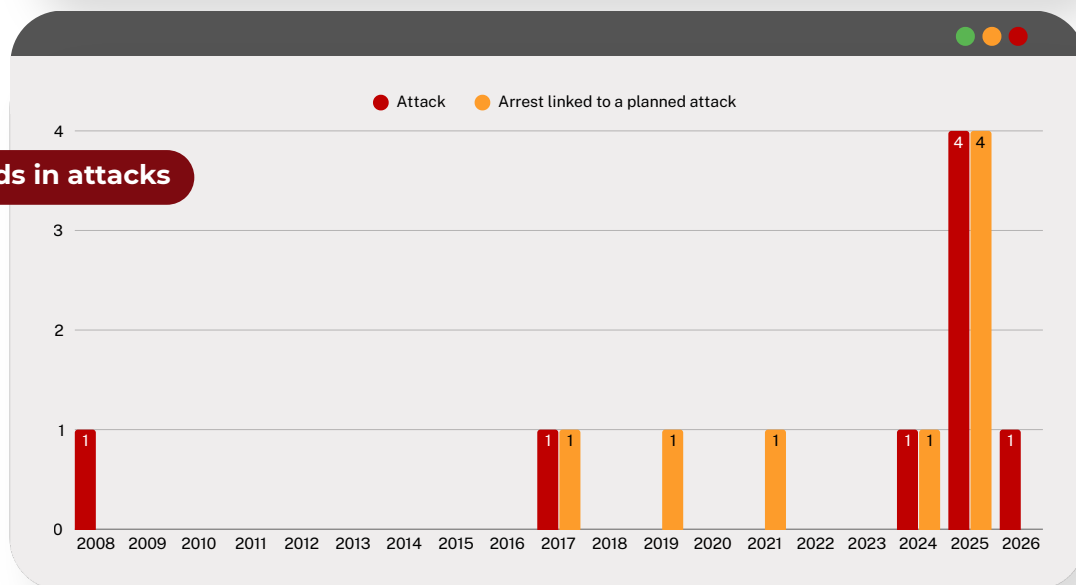
The sample of cases remains small and allows only a partial analysis of the phenomenon within the country, a limitation exacerbated by the incomplete documentation of these cases mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, the recent increase in incidents and their geographical spread (seven departments affected) indicates a rise in the phenomenon. This trend is not unique to France but is also observed abroad, driven by the growth of nihilistic violent extremism and the True Crime Community. More and more teenagers and young adults are

active within these digital ecosystems, drawn by a growing fascination with violence. This communalization of perpetrators and would-be perpetrators through the True Crime Community represents a worrying trend and creates a considerable risk of repetition and emulation in other French educational institutions.

Mapping of attacks



Trends in attacks





THE DIGITAL SPACE AT THE CORE OF NIHILISTIC DYNAMICS

🔍 PART III



The digital realm constitutes the primary space for expression and action for violent nihilist extremist (NVE) networks. These dynamics unfold across various platforms, where the rapid circulation of content and the multiplicity of interactions reinforce their spread and reach.

Digital services thus play a central role in how these communities form, interact, and recruit, while enabling a more or less structured organization of their activities.

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue report⁶⁷, “Beyond Extremism: Platform Responses to Online Subcultures of Nihilistic Violence”, published in February 2026, provides an overview of how NVE networks use digital services, the types of content they disseminate, and their dissemination strategies.

1 | ONLINE NIHILISTIC VIOLENT EXTREMISM SUBCULTURE

Different subcultures within the NVE form generally diffuse and loosely structured networks made up of diverse communities and individuals linked to one or more of these groups.⁶⁸

The so-called “COM” network refers to a decentralized group of individuals and groups operating across a variety of digital platforms (websites, social media, encrypted messaging apps, forums, and online gaming services). Its activities are primarily centered on sexual extortion, swatting — sending false alerts to law enforcement to trap victims — and acts of violence, specifically targeting vulnerable children and adolescents and pushing them toward self-harm, serious violence, or other forms of extreme criminality⁶⁹. Some members

of the network also engage in hacking and online fraud.

Originating from the COM network, the 764 network is one of the most structured, bringing together constantly evolving discussions, groups, and forums across multiple platforms. It is characterized by the exploitation of minors, forcing them to produce child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and self-harm content, and may also encourage its members to commit violence in the real world. Communications are gradually shifted to private spaces to exert pressure and control, particularly through the dissemination or threat of dissemination of sensitive content.

The Maniac Murder Cult (MKY) network, also originating from this environment, uses digital infrastructure to disseminate content related to acts of violence and to organize interactions centered on the glorification of these practices, relying on encrypted platforms and private communication channels.

The No Lives Matter (NLM) network operates primarily through anonymous chat rooms on secure messaging apps, where content, discourse, and resources related to violent acts circulate. The group also relies on selection and promotion mechanisms based on participation in criminal acts⁷⁰.

The True Crime Community (TCC), present on several platforms, including Tumblr, TikTok, Discord, Telegram, and Pinterest, disseminates content related to criminal acts. Within this space, some users produce or share narratives and depictions of mass violence, while the community as a whole glorifies and aestheticizes the perpetrators and acts of this type of violence. It thus plays a role in the circulation of violent narratives and imagery within NVE ecosystems.

Research by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue shows that subcultures of nihilistic violence do

not necessarily organize around clearly identifiable groups, but rather rely on diffuse dynamics of interconnected individuals, at the intersection of community-based logics and more individualized trajectories. They thus highlight the need to prioritize responses based on the analysis of harmful behaviors, rather than merely identifying established groups.

2 | VISUAL CODES AND HYBRIDIZATION OF EXTREMIST REFERENCES

NVE communities disseminate varied content, including extremist symbols (swastikas, Satanist symbols, runes, etc.), images of serial and mass killers, or illustrations glorifying violent acts, aimed at creating a hyperviolent aesthetic. A single piece of content may combine symbols seemingly drawn from different movements — Nazism, jihadism, etc — without any particular ideology serving as the primary driving force. This content can elicit strong emotional engagement, extending to the glorification, or even adulation, of criminals responsible for mass killings, such as the Columbine shooting. In this context, CBT prioritizes narratives focused on the aesthetics of these perpetrators and their personal trajectories.

The hybrid nature of the visual codes used by NVE-related communities complicates their analysis and interpretation. Moderating and identifying these subcultures cannot, therefore, be limited to detecting keywords or isolated symbols. It requires taking into account implicit aesthetic codes as well as content that blends multiple formats, which structure these communities around shared visual references⁷¹.

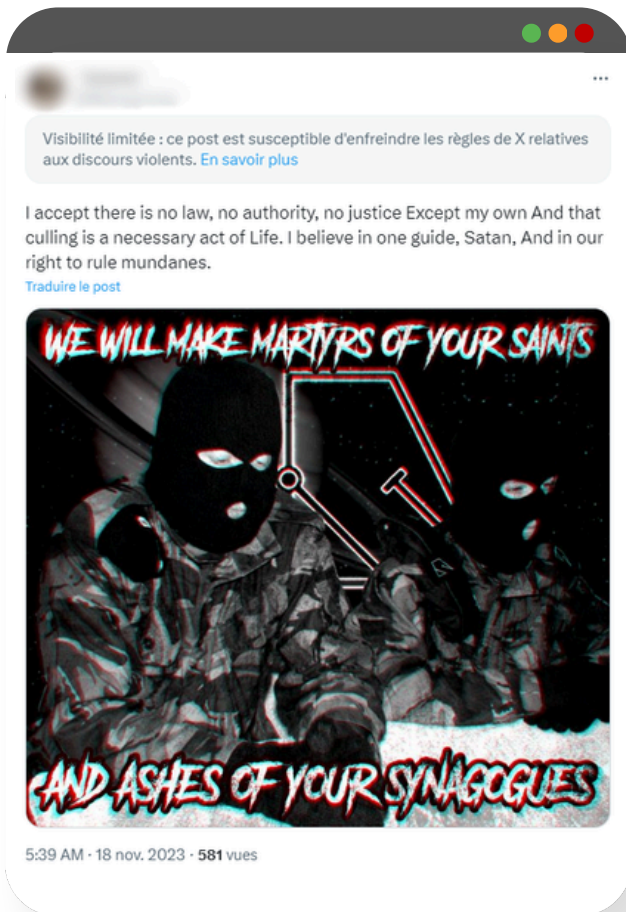
The images presented below are examples of content reported to the Point de Contact teams.

They illustrate the visual codes associated with communities linked to NVExt, as well as the hyper-violent aesthetic described earlier in this report.



Several studies, notably those conducted by Tech Against Terrorism, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, and Europol, highlight the growing use of artificial intelligence as a tool supporting the production and dissemination of extremist content⁷². These uses include the drafting or reformulation of ideological texts, the translation and adaptation of existing content, and the generation of propaganda material. Conversational uses may also reinforce individuals' engagement with certain ideological narratives, although such effects remain insufficiently documented at this stage. At present, these practices primarily serve to amplify

and accelerate content production and dissemination capabilities, without their specific role in radicalization processes and the transition to violent action having been clearly established.

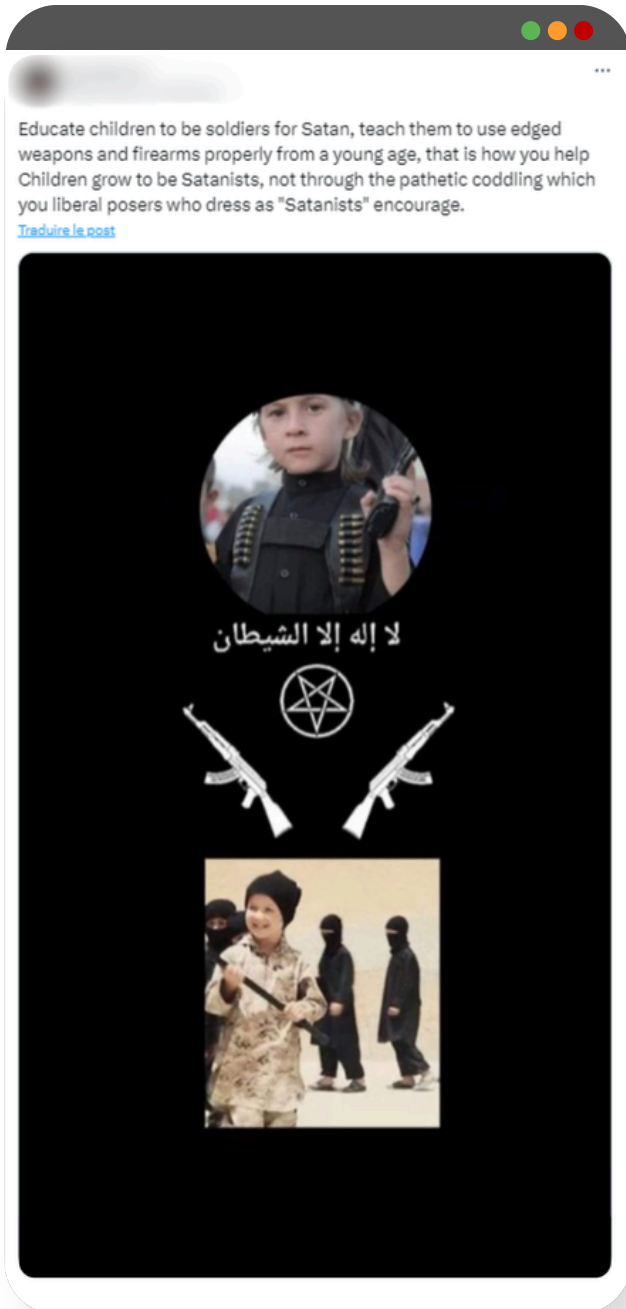


Most benchmark's assessing AI security in relation to terrorism and violent extremism focus primarily on the production of propaganda, instructional content, and techniques for circumventing safeguards. The Christchurch Call, launched in 2019 following the Christchurch attacks, has initiated work aimed at better anticipating emerging risks, particularly those related to prolonged interactions with AI systems, which may reinforce feelings of frustration or resentment and foster the normalization, or even

glorification, of violence. This work aims to develop appropriate responses to these dynamics and to establish an AI safety assessment framework focused on these issues, in order to better understand the diffuse and evolving forms of online radicalization.



Beyond this propaganda content and symbolic staging, these networks can also serve as a vehicle for the dissemination, transmission, or production of extremely serious content. This includes acts of torture, mutilation, CSAM, as well as depictions of acts of cruelty, including toward animals. This content is not solely driven by a



desire to share but may also be produced within communities as part of dynamics of integration, recognition, or internal validation.

For example, in France in the Évreux case, a defendant was suspected of possessing several thousand child sexual abuse files, as well as content depicting self-harm and acts of cruelty toward animals, some of which were reportedly generated as part of his efforts to integrate into the 764 network. Similarly, in the Antibes case, an individual accused of belonging to the CVLT community was charged with possessing child pornography, self-harm content, and ultraviolet content.

3 | STRATEGIES FOR EXPLOITING DIGITAL PLATFORMS

These networks use different platforms depending on their needs: mainstream public platforms (X, Reddit) are used to identify potential victims or individuals likely to be targeted and gradually drawn into exploitative dynamics, whereas private messaging applications (ranging from widely known services such as Discord and Telegram to more alternative or lower-visibility platforms such as Potato and VK) are used for sexual exploitation, particularly through grooming (an online manipulation process in which a person, often an adult but sometimes an older minor, gradually builds a relationship of trust with a minor in order to sexually exploit them) and sextortion (sexual blackmail aimed at obtaining money, sexual content, or sexual acts). Other environments, such as TikTok, SoundCloud, or targeted forums, allow for the dissemination of propaganda, the reinforcement of the group's

aesthetic identity, and the recruitment of new members. This multi-platform strategy facilitates the circumvention of moderation and ensures the continuity of activities⁷³.

These networks also exploit online video game platforms frequented by a very young audience, such as Roblox, to identify potential victims and initiate interactions that can escalate into sexual exploitation practices, such as grooming.

Immersive environments and interactions via avatars can facilitate the establishment of power dynamics, before moving to other digital services that allow for more direct exchanges.

In France, a woman filed a complaint in 2022 after being sexually exploited at age 11 by a Canadian man she met on Roblox⁷⁴. The perpetrator reportedly gradually initiated sexual interactions via avatars in the game's virtual spaces before shifting the exchanges to Instagram and video calls on FaceTime. The victim was then allegedly encouraged to send sexual content and to engage in self-harm during online calls. Although no direct link to NVE networks has been established to date based on the available information, the case nevertheless exhibits comparable mechanisms, notably an initial grooming strategy followed by the use of private messaging on social media to incite violent acts against the victim. Point de Contact has also received reports of similar situations in which children approached on Roblox are offered simulated sexual acts online, before the exchanges are moved to other private messaging applications with the aim of obtaining the sending of sexual content.

Analysis of these dynamics highlights digital ecosystems that are fragmented, adaptive, and particularly difficult to grasp, due both to their ideological hybridization and their ability to exploit structural flaws in platforms and the vulnerabilities of younger audiences. The circulation of extreme content, the dynamics of control, and the multi-platform strategies observed underscore the scale and complexity of

the risks associated with NVE communities.

In this context, it is necessary to examine existing mechanisms for preventing, detecting, and addressing these phenomena. The analysis will thus cover the applicable legal framework in France and at the European Union (EU) level regarding criminal and administrative matters, as well as the obligations of major online platforms — particularly regarding the assessment and mitigation of systemic risks — as set forth in the EU Digital Services Act. The aim is also to assess the extent to which these mechanisms can address evolving networks and the specific challenges related to the protection of minors online and the dissemination of extremely serious content.

4 | FRENCH AND EUROPEAN REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Criminal qualification of associated content and practices

With regard to propaganda, the content disseminated by these groups is not necessarily illegal under French law. Their hybrid nature, blending different formats, registers, and codes, contributes to the complexity of their legal classification.

Beyond this propaganda content, these groups contribute to the dissemination of clearly illegal content and engage in reprehensible practices.

Child sexual abuse material

With regard to illegal content, the dissemination of child pornography as well as content that glorifies or incites acts of terrorism is punishable under Articles 227-23 and 421-2-5 of the Criminal Code. These offenses are punishable by up to 7 years' imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 euros when committed via an online public communication service. The distribution of child pornography is also punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to 500,000 euros when committed by an organized criminal group. Furthermore, making violent, pornographic, or severely degrading content accessible to or exposing a minor to such content is punishable under Article 227-24 of the Criminal Code, with a penalty of 3 years' imprisonment and a fine of 75,000 euros.

Beyond the aforementioned illegal content — this list is not exhaustive — an analysis of these phenomena also leads to an examination of the reprehensible practices employed by these groups.

Incitement and Complicity

In addition to these specific offenses, direct incitement to commit offenses may also be established under Article 24 of the Law of July 29, 1881, on freedom of the press, particularly when public content incites the commission of intentional attacks on life, physical integrity, or sexual assaults, even in the absence of actual commission of the act.

Finally, the charge of complicity, within the meaning of Article 121-7 of the Criminal Code, may be applied when individuals facilitate the preparation or commission of an offense, particularly by providing instructions, exerting pressure, or encouraging the perpetration of the act.

Terrorism

With regard to terrorism, the acts may fall within the scope of the provisions set forth in Articles 421-1 through 421-8 of the Criminal Code, provided they are part of an enterprise aimed at seriously disrupting public order through intimidation or terror. While the existence of an ideological framework is not a formal requirement for this classification, its absence can, in practice, complicate the determination of the intent element. This difficulty is even more pronounced as the understanding of these situations relies heavily on groups already identified as terrorist organizations by French or European authorities, while some movements have not yet been subject to such classification, which can create a gap between observed dynamics and their legal recognition.

Violence against minors

With regard to offenses against minors, several criminal charges may be invoked. Directly inciting a minor to commit a felony or misdemeanor is thus punishable under Article 227-21 of the Criminal Code, with enhanced penalties when the minor is particularly young or when the acts are part of a pattern or occur in a specific context. Furthermore, the provisions regarding sexual offenses committed against minors, set forth in particular in Articles 227-21-1 through 227-28-3, allow for the punishment of conduct such as making offers, promises, or exerting pressure with the intent to incite the commission of sexual offenses, even when such offenses have not been carried out. Article 227-24-1 specifically punishes attempts to induce a minor to undergo sexual mutilation, while Article 227-28-3 punishes incitement directed at a third party to commit sexual offenses against a minor.

Administrative powers for content removal and blocking

Article 6-1 of the Law on Confidence in the Digital Economy (LCEN)⁷⁵ grants the Office for the Fight Against Cybercrime (OFAC) administrative authority to combat certain particularly serious forms of online content. Initially limited to child pornography and terrorist content, this authority was extended to content related to drug trafficking by the Law of June 13, 2025, aimed at freeing France from the trap of drug trafficking⁷⁶, as well as, on an experimental basis, content related to acts of torture and barbarity, under the Act of 21 May 2024 aimed at securing and regulating the digital space (SREN)⁷⁷.

In this context, the OFAC may issue takedown requests to publishers or online service providers. This measure involves requiring the removal of content at the source, that is, by the entity responsible for its distribution or hosting. However, if the removal is not effective within 24 hours, or if the publisher cannot be identified or contacted due to the absence of legal notices, the OFAC may resort to a blocking measure. This involves ordering internet service providers (ISPs) to make the online service inaccessible from French territory. Furthermore, the OFAC may also request that search engines delist the services in question in order to limit their visibility.

The national regime provided for in Article 6-1 of the LCEN complements the European framework established by the Terrorist Content Online (TCO)⁷⁸ Regulation, transposed into Article 6-1-1 of the LCEN, which harmonizes the regime for combating the dissemination of terrorist content on online services within the EU. This coordination allows for the use of distinct and complementary measures. The TCO framework imposes a particularly rapid removal obligation on hosting providers, within one hour. The national framework, meanwhile, allows for the intervention of other technical intermediaries, such as ISPs and search engines, to implement measures to block and de-index content that has

not been removed.

The Law of May 21, 2024, aimed at securing and regulating the digital space (SREN) introduced an extension of these powers. Article 5 provides, on an experimental basis, for their application to the fight against the dissemination of images of torture or acts of barbarity falling under Article 222-1 of the Criminal Code. This two-year pilot program began with the issuance of Implementing Decree No. 2025-146 of February 18, 2025 — that is, on February 20, 2025 — and is scheduled to end in February 2027. It thus enables the administrative authority to intervene more swiftly in response to the circulation of extremely violent content.

According to the 2025 activity report of the qualified expert appointed by Arcom, the French Regulatory Authority for Audiovisual and Digital Communication⁷⁹, 17 removal requests were issued by OFAC in 2025 regarding content related to acts of barbarity. The qualified expert, responsible for reviewing the legality of injunctions issued by OFAC, identified several categories of content related to acts of torture and barbarism, including “paramilitary abuses, scenes of extreme violence that are purely gratuitous, arbitrary, and devoid of any context, as well as acts of terrorism whose dissemination is not necessarily intended to be apologetic but simply ‘gory.’”

However, the same report emphasizes that Article 222-1 of the Criminal Code does not explicitly define the concepts of torture and acts of barbarity. Their characterization therefore relies on judicial interpretation, with the judge determining that the offense is established in the presence of acts of exceptional gravity, exceeding mere violence, and causing the victim acute suffering in a manner that negates human dignity.

The question of whether to make this extension permanent arises. The ongoing pilot program could thus lead to the permanent establishment

of these powers, in order to strengthen the effectiveness of measures to combat the online dissemination of particularly serious content, including when such content is part of dynamics involving the circulation and glorification of extreme violence, such as those observed within NVE networks. From this perspective, a recommendation in favor of generalizing this mechanism appears relevant.

Regarding terrorist content, the OFAC issued 3,724 takedown requests and 4 blocking requests in 2025. According to the report by the qualified expert, **takedown requests targeting white supremacist content related to far-right terrorism are on the rise, following a decline observed in 2024.** Child sexual abuse content remains by far the most prevalent, accounting for 96% of removal requests issued by OFAC, or 94,698 reports.

The judicial judge's powers of intervention are set forth in Article 6-3 of the LCEN. This provision states that the president of the judicial court, ruling under the expedited procedure on the merits, may order any person likely to contribute to the matter to take any appropriate measures to prevent harm or to put an end to a disturbance resulting from content disseminated on an online public communication service.

On this basis, the website WatchPeopleDie, which disseminated particularly violent content including images of deceased persons, scenes of torture, and acts of barbarism, was subject to a blocking order in France. In a decision dated December 18, 2025, the Paris Judicial Court, acting on a referral from Arcom, ordered this measure following reports that had gone unaddressed. Internet service providers were thus ordered to make the site inaccessible from French territory⁸⁰.

European Digital Services Act

The European Digital Services Act (DSA)⁸¹ establishes a harmonized framework within the EU to regulate the liability of online intermediary services and ensure a safe digital environment, notably by enshrining the **principle that what is illegal offline must also be illegal online.** It establishes reporting mechanisms allowing any user to report illegal content (Article 16), as well as injunctions issued by competent authorities to intermediary service providers to take action against specific content or to provide information (Articles 9 and 10).

Trusted flaggers

Article 22 of the DSA defines the status of trusted flagger, which may be granted by the Digital Services Coordinator to entities with proven expertise in detecting illegal content and processing reports. Reports issued by these entities must be treated as a priority by online platforms. Trusted flaggers are required to publish an annual transparency report, contributing to the transparency of platforms' moderation practices. In this context, Point de Contact was designated a trusted flagger in March 2025.

The DSA imposes enhanced obligations on very large online platforms and search engines, that is, services with more than 45 million monthly active users in the EU⁸², which must identify and assess systemic risks (Article 34) and implement appropriate mitigation measures (Article 35), particularly regarding the dissemination of illegal content, the protection of fundamental rights, and user safety. It also sets out specific obligations regarding the protection of minors (Article 28), requiring platforms to design their services in a way that ensures a high level of safety and privacy protection for minors.

Online movements associated with nihilistic violent extremism (NVE) are likely to generate demonstrable or reasonably foreseeable systemic effects, notably by facilitating the dissemination of illegal content, contributing to the normalization of violence, and fostering the emergence of community dynamics that encourage harmful behaviours within digital spaces.

These phenomena may infringe upon human dignity, public health, as well as individuals' physical and psychological well-being. As such, they must be subject, on the part of very large online platforms, to risk identification and assessment, as well as the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

These risks can manifest, in particular, through the circulation of content featuring extreme and gratuitous violence, the formation of NVE communities, and the targeting of vulnerable populations such as minors for the purposes of exploitation and radicalization.

Children's exposure to content originating from these groups occurs within a digital environment where platforms' implementation of truly effective age verification measures remains insufficient, thereby limiting their ability to specifically identify and protect minors.

According to an Arcom study published in September 2025⁸³, 62% of adolescents report not having provided their actual date of birth when registering on at least one social media platform, which illustrates the practical limitations of current age verification mechanisms⁸⁴.

NVE communities directly exploit this structural flaw: although children are present on these digital services, they are not systematically identified as such, which leads to the coexistence, within the same space, of minors and at-risk communities.

The analysis of systemic risks, as derived from the

DSA, thus leads us to move beyond an approach focused on isolated content to understand the dynamics of dissemination and the structuring of online communities, which must be taken into account in the development and implementation of platform moderation policies.

5 | ONLINE PLATFORM MODERATION

Cette partie du rapport se concentre sur les plateformes les plus fréquentées par les jeunes français, notamment TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram et WhatsApp (all owned by Meta)⁸⁵.

It will also be extended to other services such as X (formerly Twitter), Roblox, or Telegram, which present specific vulnerabilities. The social network X is characterized in particular by insufficiently effective moderation and by the ease with which radical discourse can be disseminated⁸⁶. Roblox is an immersive and interactive space where interactions between users, often young people, can facilitate social dynamics that can be exploited for manipulative purposes. Telegram is based on an architecture combining public channels, discussion groups, and private messaging, which facilitates the rapid circulation of content and, in some cases, limited traceability within channels with a large audience. The platform can also facilitate the formation of autonomous communities, within which sensitive or violent content circulates over the long term⁸⁷.

To date, Roblox and Telegram have not been designated as very large online platforms under the DSA by the European Commission and are therefore not subject to the obligations regarding the assessment and mitigation of systemic risks⁸⁸.

The insufficiently regulated presence of minors in these spaces exposes them to multiple levels of risk. First, it increases their exposure to propaganda content produced by NVE communities, which is often disseminated in a diffuse manner and is difficult to detect. Second, it paves the way for progressive targeting strategies, based on identifying vulnerable profiles and establishing repeated interactions. Finally, these dynamics can evolve into more structured forms of manipulation, including shifting interactions to private spaces, particularly via messaging services, where moderation and reporting mechanisms are more limited and less visible.

Digital services are required to prohibit content and behavior prohibited by the laws of EU member states, such as CSAM, grooming, sextortion, and terrorist content, among others. Regarding propaganda content originating from NVE communities, its illegality depends on its nature and the context of its dissemination, particularly when it may constitute incitement, provocation, or the glorification of criminal offenses. Its hybrid nature, combining ideological, narrative, and community dimensions, complicates its identification and detection by moderation systems.

Moderation policies for digital services may also go beyond mere legal requirements by establishing stricter internal standards to limit the dissemination of content that could harm users and more broadly reduce risks within their services.

The digital services mentioned in this section all have policies explicitly banning terrorist and extremist organizations, as well as content that supports, promotes, or disseminates them; NVE communities would thus, in principle, fall within the scope of these rules.

However, these community guidelines are largely based on frameworks designed for relatively structured forms of organized violence, whether

involving identifiable organizations or behaviors clearly linked to established risk categories. In this context, Meta stands out with a tiered classification system distinguishing different degrees of association with violent organizations, while TikTok and Snapchat favor broad categories grouping various forms of violent actors. X and YouTube also use unified categories covering terrorism, violent extremism, and criminal organizations, without fine-grained segmentation between these categories. Roblox adopts a more behavioral approach, focused on the support or promotion of banned entities, while Telegram primarily adheres to European regulatory compliance without developing a detailed, publicly accessible internal taxonomy.

Operationally, moderation systems show a high degree of uniformity. They rely on similar mechanisms for content removal, account closure or suspension, visibility limitation, and, in some cases, restrictions on monetization or distribution. Differences between platforms stem primarily from the degree of automation, intervention thresholds, and how sanctions are applied, rather than the nature of the measures themselves.

Transparency, however, represents a significant difference among platforms. Moderation data is generally presented in the form of aggregated categories specific to each service, without harmonization of the scope. The published figures are therefore difficult to compare across platforms due to varying internal definitions and classifications. Meta, Snapchat, and X provide overall action counts without breaking them down by severity level or entity type. YouTube offers a partial breakdown of content related to incitement to violence and violent extremism within its overall removal figures, without explicitly distinguishing terrorism from other forms of violence. Telegram relies largely on data from external partnerships, while Roblox and X publish aggregated information without detailed granularity. Overall, the categories used are neither comparable nor standardized across platforms.

In this context, certain patterns related to terrorist and violent extremist content emerge from the overall volume of moderation actions. However, their analysis remains fragmented and dependent on each platform's specific categories. These moderation mechanisms appear primarily suited to structured and clearly identifiable forms of violence, but show limitations in addressing more diffuse, less hierarchical, or less ideologically driven forms of online violence that do not fit into the more traditional categories of terrorism or violent extremism.

Furthermore, when content disseminated by these networks employs multiple, often implicit codes — without an explicit ideological framework or a direct message inciting violence — its identification cannot rely solely on the detection of keywords or isolated symbols. It requires a more nuanced understanding of the imagery used, visual codes, shared references, and community practices that structure these digital spaces. In this context, the existence of terms of use and moderation policies, however detailed their wording may be, is not sufficient in itself to ensure effective content regulation. Such regulation primarily depends on their operational implementation, their contextual interpretation, and the quality of the detection and enforcement mechanisms deployed.

All platforms feature a moderation architecture that is generally consistent in its principles but heterogeneous in its categories and in the transparency of public data. This fragmentation limits the possibility of direct and consistent comparison of moderated content, while confirming that its handling still largely relies on frameworks designed for more traditional forms of online threats⁹⁰.

Several international initiatives also structure efforts to prevent and moderate online terrorist content. The [Christchurch Call](#), launched in 2019 following the Christchurch attacks, provides a policy framework for cooperation between states

and digital platforms aimed at reducing the circulation of terrorist content and anticipating emerging risks in digital environments. The [Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism \(GIFCT\)](#), an initiative led by major technology platforms, ensures operational coordination, notably through the sharing of databases of identified content and technical detection tools. [Tech Against Terrorism](#), an organization supported by the United Nations, focuses more on operational and technical support, particularly for smaller platforms, in order to strengthen their capacities for moderating and identifying terrorist content. These mechanisms were historically designed in response to relatively structured forms of terrorism and are now facing more diffuse, hybrid, and community-based forms of violent content, particularly within nihilistic violent extremism dynamics, which partially fall outside traditional analytical and operational frameworks.


The [INHOPE network](#)⁹¹, which brings together organizations specialized in combating online child sexual abuse and exploitation (with [Point de Contact](#) as the French representative), has launched the [Universal Classification Schema \(UCS\)](#)⁹², an international framework designed to harmonize the classification of content by analysts, digital services, and competent authorities. Designed to improve the consistency of report handling and to facilitate victim identification across different jurisdictions, this system is based on a structured description of observable characteristics within content. The Schema is also relevant in the context of movements associated with NVE. Certain documented situations involve CSAM, some of which present a particularly severe level of violence, including acts of torture and cruelty, such as mutilation. By providing a common framework for describing and classifying content, the Schema may help strengthen content analysis, facilitate the identification of potential victims, and improve information sharing among field actors, thereby supporting cooperation and investigative efforts at international level.

Conclusion


Violent extremism is an emerging threat in the French security landscape. While it remains a minor phenomenon compared to others such as jihadism, the far-right, and the far-left, it is also poorly understood and little known, despite its presence in France for several years. The various instances of this phenomenon on French soil also remain poorly documented. The analysis of the phenomenon presented in this report is only a first step, intended to be taken up and expanded upon by other researchers. Beyond the necessary awareness regarding nihilistic violent extremism, it is important to understand that since the perpetrators of such acts are predominantly minors, they will receive short prison sentences and are likely to reoffend. Efforts in vigilance, prevention, and enforcement are therefore crucial, on the part of parents, security professionals, researchers, and society as a whole.

The digital environment serves as a central space for expression and recruitment for NVE networks. These communities exploit the complementary nature of platforms to disseminate violent content, circumvent moderation, and target vulnerable audiences, particularly minors. While platforms have rules covering terrorism and violent extremism, their mechanisms remain primarily suited to structured and identifiable forms of violence. They thus show certain limitations when faced with more diffuse, hybrid, and evolving networks, which calls for an approach that goes beyond the mere analysis of isolated content.


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Footnotes

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⁶⁶ Several attacks were excluded from this list because perpetrators appeared to act mainly out of revenge rather than imitation of an online violent phenomenon. These include the Saint-Jean-de-Luz attack (2023), Nogent (2025), and Sanary-sur-Mer and Ancenis attacks (2026).

⁶⁷ The Institute for Strategic Dialogue has developed, since 2025, a body of work on nihilistic violence subcultures, combining foundational reports and thematic analyses, including “Spotting the signs: recognizing and responding to subcultures of nihilistic violence” (December 2025), “Networks of harm: a victim-centric resource on the 764 network” (November 2025), and studies on online dynamics and associated communities.

⁶⁸ Global network on extremism and technology (GNET), “Nihilistic violence”, 2026. Available here: https://gnet-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/GNET-nihilistic-violence_web.pdf

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⁷² Tech Against Terrorism, « Early terrorist experimentation with generative artificial intelligence services », 2026, <https://techagainstterrorism.org/hubfs/Tech%20Against%20Terrorism%20Briefing%20-%20Early%20terrorist%20experimentation%20with%20generative%20artificial%20intelligence%20services.pdf> ; Europol, « TE-SAT 2024 – Synthèse (FR) », 2024, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/TE-SAT%202024%20-%20Synth%C3%A8se%20-%20FR.pdf> ; Europol, « Tech Watch Flash – The Impact of Large Language Models on Law Enforcement », s.d., <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Tech%20Watch%20Flash%20-%20The%20Impact%20of%20Large%20Language%20Models%20on%20Law%20Enforcement.pdf> ; Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), « Terrorism, extremism, disinformation and artificial intelligence: a primer for policy practitioners », s.d., <https://www.isdglobal.org/publication/terrorism-extremism-disinformation-and-artificial-intelligence-a-primer-for-policy-practitioners/> ; Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET), « Artificial Intelligence and Countering Violent Extremism: A Primer », 2020, https://gnet-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GNET-Report-Artificial-Intelligence-and-Countering-Violent-Extremism-A-Primer_FRENCH.pdf.

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⁷⁴ Lou Attard, Elle, « Cet homme est toujours actif : le témoignage de Noémie, victime d'un pédocriminel sur Roblox », 2025. Available at: https://www.elle.fr/Societe/News/Cet-homme-est-toujours-actif-le-temoignage-de-Noemie-victime-d-un-pedocriminel-sur-Roblox-4436499?at_term=elle&at_campaign=facebook&at_medium=Nonli#=

⁷⁵ French Republic, Law no. 2004-575 of 21 June 2004 on confidence in the digital economy

⁷⁶ French Republic, Law no. 2025-532 of 13 June 2025 aimed at removing France from the narco-trafficking trap

⁷⁷ French Republic, Law no. 2024-449 of 21 May 2024 aimed at securing and regulating the digital space

⁷⁸ European Union, Regulation (EU) 2021/784 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online

⁷⁹ ARCOM, « Rapport d'activité 2025 de la personnalité qualifiée », 2025. Available at: <https://www.arcom.fr/se-documenter/etudes-et-donnees/etudes-bilans-et-rapports-de-larcom/rapport-dactivite-2025-de-la-personnalite-qualifiee>

⁸⁰ Paris Judicial Court, Judgment of 18 December 2025, case no. 25/57898.

⁸¹ European Union, Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a single market for digital services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act)

⁸² As of today, the European Commission has designated 23 Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs): Alibaba AliExpress, Amazon Store, Apple App Store, Booking.com, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Wikipedia, Zalando, Shein, Temu, Pornhub, XVideos, XNXX, Stripchat, Reddit, as well as Microsoft's services. It has also designated 2 Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs): Google Search and Microsoft Bing.

⁸³ ARCOM, « Protection des mineurs en ligne : quels risques ? Quelles protections ? », 2025. Available at: <https://www.arcom.fr/se-documenter/etudes-et-donnees/etudes-bilans-et-rapports-de-larcom/protection-des-mineurs-en-ligne-quels-risques-queelles-protections>

⁸⁴ Preliminary findings: Meta in breach of the Digital Services Act for failing to prevent minors under 13 from accessing Instagram and Facebook : In this context, on 29 April 2026, the European Commission adopted preliminary findings as part of proceedings initiated under the Digital Services Act against Meta (Facebook and Instagram), considering that the measures implemented remain insufficient to ensure effective protection of minors. In particular, it identified the absence of sufficiently effective age-verification mechanisms, allowing users under the age of 13 to access the platforms, as well as shortcomings in the identification and assessment of risks related to minors' exposure.

⁸⁵ ARCOM, « Protection des mineurs en ligne », 2025 (op. cit. 83)

⁸⁶ In December 2023, the European Commission opened formal proceedings under the DSA, notably concerning the dissemination of illegal content, the management of systemic risks, and the adequacy of moderation resources; in July 2024, it issued preliminary findings of non-compliance to the platform. In France, the Paris Public Prosecutor's Office opened an investigation in 2025 into X over suspicions of algorithmic manipulation, before opening or extending further investigations in 2026, notably concerning the dissemination of child sexual abuse content and sexual deepfakes.

⁸⁷ Telegram has been the subject of recurring criticism regarding the effectiveness of its moderation practices, due to the dissemination of terrorist, criminal, or illegal sexual content on some of its channels. Since the arrest of Pavel Durov in France in August 2024, the platform has nevertheless announced the strengthening of certain moderation measures and its cooperation with judicial authorities.

⁸⁸ This position remains subject to debate, with several European institutional and parliamentary actors challenging the reliability of the figures provided and referring to higher estimates, while the Commission states that it continuously monitors the calculation methodology and the evolution of the reported data. « Parliamentary Question E-001293/2025 – Telegram VLOP Classification » (European Parliament), « Parliamentary Question E-004541/2025 – European Democracy Shield and Telegram » (European Parliament), « EU Investigating if Telegram Played Down User Numbers to Avoid Regulation » (Ars Technica, 29 August 2024), « EU's Telegram Dilemma: The Rise of Unchecked Influence » (EUvsDisinfo, European External Action Service).

⁸⁹ GNET, Nihilistic Violence, 2026 (op. cit. 68)

⁹⁰ See Annex (p. 47)

⁹¹ INHOPE is a global network of hotlines dedicated to eliminating child sexual abuse material from the Internet. Since 1999, INHOPE has provided the public with a safe and anonymous way to report online child sexual abuse material and ensure that such reports are forwarded to the competent authorities in the country hosting the content. This enables the rapid removal of illegal and harmful material from the Internet.

⁹² INHOPE, « What is the Universal Classification Schema? », 2024. Available at: <https://universalclassificationschema.org/>

Annex

COMMUNITY RULES OF DIGITAL SERVICES ON TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM - MAY 2026

X (formerly -Twitter)

Definition	Targeted Content or Behaviour	Measures in Place	Transparency	Analysis
X defines "Violent Entities" as organisations or individuals involved in acts of violence or the promotion of violence, including violent extremist organisations and affiliated entities.	Affiliation with violent or hateful entities, promotion, glorification, dissemination of propaganda, recruitment, and content associated with these organisations (including symbols, manifestos, and communications of support).	Suspension of accounts affiliated with or supporting these entities, content removal, visibility restrictions, and graduated enforcement actions based on the severity of the violation.	For the period 1 April – 30 June 2025, X reports 3,248 account suspensions for violations of the "Violent and Hateful Entity" policy. No specific figures for terrorism or violent extremism are published; these are aggregated within this broader category. The DSA report does not provide a more granular breakdown by entity type.	The policy is relatively structured and operational, but transparency remains limited due to aggregated categorization. The absence of an explicit distinction between terrorism and other types of violent entities reduces the clarity of enforcement against NVE and limits cross-platform comparability.

Meta

Definition	Targeted Content or Behaviour	Measures in Place	Transparency	Analysis
<p>Meta defines "Dangerous Individuals and Organisations" according to a three-tier classification: Tier 1 (organisations involved in terrorism or mass violence); Tier 2 (structured violent organisations); Tier 3 (entities or individuals indirectly supporting, glorifying, or representing these actors).</p>	<p>Content supporting, glorifying or representing these entities, as well as propaganda, recruitment, coordination, or legitimisation of their activities.</p>	<p>Content removal, removal of affiliated accounts/pages/groups, prohibition of presence for Tier 1 entities, and graduated restrictions for Tiers 2 and 3 based on the degree of association or risk.</p>	<p>For the period 1 January – 30 June 2025, Meta reports several million enforcement actions under this policy. Data is published in aggregated form and is not broken down by tier (1/2/3) or entity type.</p>	<p>The tiered classification is well-structured and allows for a clear risk gradation (from indirect support to terrorism). However, transparency remains partial: despite high enforcement volumes, the absence of a public breakdown by tier limits precise evaluation of how terrorism is treated relative to other categories of dangerous entities.</p>

TikTok

Definition	Targeted Content or Behaviour	Measures in Place	Transparency	Analysis
<p>TikTok prohibits the presence of violent or hateful organisations and individuals, including: violent extremists, violent criminal organisations, violent political organisations, hateful organisations, and perpetrators of mass or serial violence.</p>	<p>Prohibited content includes: promotion, glorification or support of these actors, propaganda, recruitment, financing, dissemination of symbols or manifestos, as well as any form of material support (logistical or otherwise).</p>	<p>Content removal, account removal, prohibition of presence for relevant organisations, removal of supportive or glorifying content, and enforcement actions up to and including permanent bans following review — including off-platform elements.</p>	<p>In its DSA H1 2025 report, TikTok reports the removal of approximately 27.8 million pieces of content in violation of its Community Guidelines (all categories combined). Transparency reports do not provide a dedicated, itemised category for terrorism or violent organisations: such content is integrated into broader aggregates. No detailed public breakdown isolates cases related to violent or extremist organisations.</p>	<p>The policy is relatively explicit in its definition of prohibited actor categories, particularly through a detailed typology. However, transparency data remains highly aggregated, making it impossible to isolate the exact share of content related to violent or terrorist organisations. From a NVE perspective, this significantly limits quantitative assessment of how these networks are handled.</p>

Snapchat

Definition	Targeted Content or Behaviour	Measures in Place	Transparency	Analysis
<p>Snapchat prohibits organisations and individuals involved in terrorism, violent extremism, and hateful organisations. The framework relies on a single category encompassing multiple forms of organised violence.</p>	<p>Content supporting, glorifying or promoting these organisations, recruitment, dissemination of propaganda, associated symbols, and any incitement to violence.</p>	<p>Content removal, account removal, prohibition of use for relevant entities, and reporting to authorities in cases of identified serious risk.</p>	<p>For the period H2 2025 (EU TCO report): 511,176 reports; 32,948 enforcement actions; 21,895 unique accounts affected under the "terrorism & violent extremism" category. Data is published in aggregated form, without breakdown by organisation or content type.</p>	<p>The category aggregates terrorism, violent extremism, and other forms of hateful or violent content, which limits granular analysis of specific dynamics. The model relies primarily on proactive internal detection, making it difficult to independently evaluate the relative share of different content types processed.</p>

Roblox

Definition	Targeted Content or Behaviour	Measures in Place	Transparency	Analysis
<p>Roblox prohibits content or behaviour that incites, supports, glorifies or promotes terrorist or extremist organisations or individuals. The policy also covers their ideology, imagery, and activities.</p>	<p>Prohibited content includes: support or promotion of terrorist or extremist organisations, glorification, recruitment, financing, dissemination of propaganda, associated symbols, and any content inciting users to leave the platform to join or obtain information about these groups.</p>	<p>Content removal, account removal, automated and human-led moderation, and processing of reports related to these violations.</p>	<p>Roblox publishes transparency reports (including the EU TCOR 2026 report and associated compliance reports) presenting overall moderation volumes related to obligations on terrorist content. Data is aggregated into platform-specific internal categories and does not allow for standardised breakdowns of content related to terrorism or violent extremism.</p>	<p>Transparency remains aggregated and non-standardised, limiting the ability to isolate terrorism- or violent extremism-related dynamics in Roblox's public data. Roblox follows a pattern similar to other platforms: strong normative formalisation, but low quantitative comparability.</p>

Telegram

Definition	Targeted Content or Behaviour	Measures in Place	Transparency	Analysis
<p>Telegram does not publish a detailed internal taxonomy of terrorism in its public-facing rules. The framework relies primarily on compliance with European Regulation 2021/784 (TCO) on the dissemination of terrorist content online.</p>	<p>Removal of terrorist content upon request from competent authorities; content related to propaganda or the dissemination of material identified as terrorist under the TCO legal framework.</p>	<p>Removal of content upon injunction by European authorities.</p>	<p>For 2025 (Etidal/Telegram report): 97,611,787 extremism-related pieces of content removed and 4,294 channels closed. For the period 2022–2025: 258,307,577 pieces of content removed and 19,087 channels closed. These figures derive from an external partnership and cover extremist content broadly, without any public distinction between terrorism and other forms of violent extremism.</p>	<p>The policy is structured primarily around a regulatory compliance logic rather than any internal classification of terrorism or violent extremism. This results in low conceptual and statistical granularity compared to other platforms, but reflects strong dependence on the European legal framework for the handling of such content.</p>

Youtube

Definition	Targeted Content or Behaviour	Measures in Place	Transparency	Analysis
<p>YouTube prohibits content produced by, or promoting, terrorist, criminal, or violent extremist organisations, as well as any form of support, glorification, or justification of their activities.</p>	<p>Prohibited content includes: material linked to terrorist or violent extremist organisations, glorification of violent acts or figures, recruitment, financing, dissemination of propaganda, associated symbols, or content inciting violence.</p>	<p>Content removal, channel removal, strikes, demonetisation, distribution restrictions, and moderation combining automated systems and human review.</p>	<p>For the most recent period covered by the Google Transparency Report, 4.2% of removed videos (361,240 videos) were removed for incitement to violence or violent extremism. Data is published in aggregated form by violation category, without any distinction between terrorism, violent extremism, or other forms of violent content falling within the same category.</p>	<p>The policy is well-structured and explicitly covers both terrorism and violent extremism within a unified category of violent content. Transparency is relatively high in terms of volume and relative share (4.2%), but remains aggregated: it is not possible to precisely isolate the share attributable to terrorism within removed content. From a NVE perspective, this enables a global quantification of the phenomenon but does not allow for fine-grained segmentation of specific dynamics.</p>

