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Bratislava Shooting: The Making of Terrorgram's First 'Saint'

By Saddiq Basha

SYNOPSIS

The anti-LGBTQ shooting in Slovakia on 12 October 2022 reifies previous observations of an emerging global trend of far-right copycat attacks. Yet, the incident also revealed signs of another potential threat – specifically, the growing influence of an accelerationist far-right media collective, Terrorgram.

COMMENTARY

On 12 October, two individuals were killed and a third was injured in a shooting outside a popular gay bar in Bratislava, Slovakia. The perpetrator, 19-year-old Juraj Krajcik, was discovered with plans to attack multiple targets, including Slovakian Prime Minister Eduard Heger. These plans were detailed in a 65-page manifesto titled "A Call to Arms" which Krajcik shared on Twitter prior to the attack. He also responded to discussions about his attack on a far-right associated 4chan forum before committing suicide the following morning.

Krajcik's manifesto and online comments indicated that he adhered to a militant white supremacist accelerationist ideology. As with previous copycats, he appeared to be influenced in part by the acts of past far-right shooters, far-right social media platforms, and the domestic rise of far-right populism.

While the little-known Bratislava shooting appeared to reflect [common drivers](#) of far-right violence, it also has broader implications for clearer understanding of the ever-changing nature of far-right extremism. In particular, it represented the first instance in which the emerging role of accelerationist far-right media collectives was explicitly acknowledged.

The Far-Right In Slovakia

The Bratislava shooting arguably transpired amid the social and political mainstreaming of the extreme far-right in Slovakia – as showcased by the rise of the neo-Nazi People’s Party Our Slovakia (L’SNS), which first entered parliament in 2016 and has since received consistent political [support](#).

The exclusivist narratives promoted by L’SNS, as well as other local far-right civic organisations (e.g., The Slovak Revival Movement) and influencers (e.g., conspiracy theorist Danny Kollár), have eroded public tolerance for ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. This is evident from a recent [report](#) by the Slovak Interior Ministry, which noted a discernible increase in the number of intolerance-fuelled extremism cases (e.g., Holocaust denial and glorifying Slovakia’s Nazi past) in the last two years.

Notably, the Bratislava shooting will be Slovakia’s [first](#) case of terrorism if investigations support its reclassification as a terrorist attack rather than an LGBTQ hate crime.

Accelerationism and the Lasting Legacy of Far-Right ‘Saints’

Krajcik’s manifesto revealed that he subscribed to an accelerationist worldview, which has been [identified](#) by the Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) community as central to a “newer and more radical white supremacist ideology” that is becoming prevalent among extreme far-right communities.

Accelerationism purports that acts of mass violence will hasten the collapse of socio-political systems believed to be systematically oppressing white people, and will eventually lead to the establishment of a desired white ethnostate.

This worldview was evident in Krajcik’s diagnosis of the perceived threat and his call for action. He believed that a supposed “ZOG” (i.e., Zionist Occupation Government) was responsible for a rise in social degeneracy and the alleged genocide of white people. Hence, the only way to ensure the survival of the white race is to recognise the futility of the democratic process and to engage in “violence at a large scale” against targets such as politicians, government buildings, Jews and other non-whites, and the LGBTQ community, to accelerate the decline of a ZOG-led social order.

For Krajcik, previous far-right shooters were a significant ideological source of these accelerationist ideas. They included the New Zealand mosque shooter Brenton [Tarrant](#) and the Poway, California, synagogue shooter John [Earnest](#), whom he considered to be his “main two inspirations to carry out an operation,” with the former’s manifesto being specifically cited as a “required reading for anyone seeking to fight an active resistance against ZOG.” However, he asserted that the Buffalo, New York State, shooter Payton [Gendron](#) was the one who gave him “new inspiration” to act “after years of procrastination.”

These acknowledgements, coupled with the fact that Krajcik’s manifesto mirrored the question-and-answer format and accelerationist themes of earlier shooters, underlined how the actions and manifestos of past far-right terrorists continue to sustain the copycat trend. However, a key difference that makes the Bratislava shooting unprecedented is specifically the self-acknowledged influence of the accelerationist far-right media collective, Terrorgram.

Far-Right Online Echo Chambers

Krajcik also indicated that his radicalisation was a result of exposure to 8chan online forums and Terrorgram media publications, both of which have been [highlighted](#) as notable sources of online far-right extremism and radicalisation.

Krajcik credited 8chan (now known as 8kun) for having “completely change[d] [his] view of the world” through various online threads that first exposed him to the materials of previous far-right shooters and other white supremacists. However, unlike previous shooters, Krajcik’s radicalisation was also explicitly tied to the online accelerationist media collective, the “Terrorgram Collective”, that fed him with both ideological and operational materials.

The Terrorgram Collective has been [described](#) by CVE analysts as a “loosely connected network of Telegram channels and accounts that adhere to and promote militant accelerationism.” The collective is also known for producing aesthetically curated propaganda — often using dark menacing visuals that incorporate fascists or/paramilitary imagery and symbols — that valorises the ‘achievements’ of past shooters and canonises them as ‘saints’.

The Terrorgram Collective’s influence was evident in Krajcik’s manifesto, where he explicitly acknowledged its role. Specifically, he thanked the collective for having produced manifestos such as Militant Accelerationism and The Hard Reset, which went in-depth on “some issues, concepts and things that anyone who seeks to fight ZOG should know.” Furthermore, these texts also “provided practical means” to resist the ZOG compared to other more theoretical far-right materials.

Implications of the Bratislava Shooting

Krajcik’s manifesto has since been widely circulated and well-received within extreme far-right communities. In one Terrorgram-affiliated group, the administrator had shared the manifesto as well as a propaganda poster of Krajcik who was hailed as “Tarrant’s sixth disciple and Terrorgram’s first saint.” The poster also described Krajcik as someone who “died a free man, with dignity and a smile on his face; his mission accomplished; his legacy immortalised; his purpose fulfilled,” before concluding with a reminder: “Remember lads: Men of Action never die – they Ascend”.

Terrorgram’s recognition of Krajcik’s actions and canonisation of him as its first saint could have serious implications. For one, it could serve as a compelling mental heuristic that could persuade those within the militant accelerationist system to emulate the legacy of the ‘saints’.

Terrorgram’s enhanced credentials within the extreme far-right ecosystem could also enable it to expand its efforts (i.e., producing more “practical guide”-style manifestos and videos) and network (i.e., collaborating with other far-right collectives to concentrate their outreach efforts), reinforcing the radicalisation cycle.

Steps In Countering Terrorgram

To address this threat, closer attention should be paid to such far-right media

collectives which are not only disseminating the materials of past shooters but are also expanding their production of high-quality media and propaganda materials.

Policymakers should continue to cooperate with social media and technology companies in blocking and deactivating extremist accounts and groups. Yet, given the decentralised and dynamic nature of extremist far-right networks, this might prove challenging since these groups often collapse, reorganise, and re-emerge after every crackdown.

Thus, a complementary approach could be the use of [digital disruption](#) methods that can mitigate the influence of these networks by making it difficult for internet users to come across extremist content and instead redirecting them to counter-narratives. Only by recognising the ever-changing nature of far-right extremism and adapting our CVE measures accordingly will we be able to effectively mitigate the influence of far-right media collectives and, therefore, the cycle of violence.

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