KOSOVO JAILS SIX FOR PLANS TO ATTACK NATO TROOPS, OTHER COUNTRIES

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A court in Kosovo said it had jailed six people, including a woman, for terms ranging from one to 10 years, for planning attacks on NATO troops and the public in Kosovo, Belgium and France.

The population of Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008, is nominally 90 percent Muslim, but largely secular. NATO has fewer than 4,000 troops there, with the mission to keep the fragile peace since the war ended in 1999.

A prosecutor told Reuters the suspects, arrested last year, and one of whom also had a Belgian passport, were supporters of the Islamic State militant group, and some were in contact with Kosovo-born militants involved in fighting in Syria and Iraq.

The six people were preparing terrorist attacks inside and outside Kosovo, terrorist attacks against discos in Gracanica, attacks on the Orthodox church in North Mitrovica, attacks on NATO troops in Kosovo and other terrorist attacks in France and Belgium, the court said in a statement late on Wednesday.

Both Gracanica and North Mitrovica are areas inhabited mainly by the Serb minority that lives in Kosovo.

More than 300 Kosovo citizens have travelled to Syria since 2012 and 70 men who fought alongside militant groups were killed.

There have been no Islamist attacks on Kosovan soil, although more than 100 men have been jailed or indicted on charges of fighting in Syria and Iraq. Some of them were found guilty of planning attacks in Kosovo.

The authorities face the difficult task of how to reintegrate the returnees. International and domestic security agencies have previously warned of the risk posed by returning fighters.

In April this year Kosovo brought back 110 of its citizens from Syria, including four fighters, 32 women and 74 children.

The four jihadists and the women have been indicted for participating in foreign wars, an offence punishable with a prison term of up to 15 years.

Prosecutors said they were investigating more than 200 other suspects.

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