

French security sector grows with terrorism threat

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French soldiers patrol inside the departure terminal of the Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris on Wednesday, a day after triple

bomb attacks in Brussels killed more than 30 people and left more than 200 people wounded. - ALAIN JOCARD/AFP/Getty Images

The terrorist attacks in Brussels have brought the issue of security to the fore.

Neighboring France has met the challenge by expanding government and private security, with the security industry in general seeing a significant increase.

While soldiers patrolling with rifles at the Eiffel Tower has been routine since before the Charlie Hebdo attacks last January, the French state is now spending almost an extra 1 million euros a day for increased security. Nearly 10,000 additional forces protect major tourist sites, synagogues and government buildings.

But not everyone gets their own soldier, so private businesses in France are paying out of their own pockets for tighter security. Heightened security in department stores and supermarkets has become standard.

According to Patrick Haas, an economic analyst specializing in the security market, the sector was a €23 billion industry (equivalent to roughly \$26 billion) in 2014.

This year, private companies are expected to spend an extra half a billion euros on security.

Most of that money will be for guards, and the entire security sector could grow as much as 5 percent.

“After November, businesses realized anyone could be a target, so measures were implemented everywhere,” Haas said.

He also said businesses are hiring more security companies after the attacks. One of those security firms is Gallice, owned by Gilles Sacaze. Sacaze saw a steep uptick in calls for his firm’s services last year. All of his clients increased their security, whether it was industrial sites or public businesses. Growth has been so rapid that he has had to quickly train new agents, and is still looking for more. “We are always looking for candidates,” Sacaze said. The security personnel job market was practically stagnant two years ago. Since France will host the high-profile Euro 2016 championship this summer, Haas estimates a 2.5 percent growth this year with the need for an additional 20,000 to 30,000 guards.