

The Japan Times **NEWS**

A 17-year-old Swedish woman who is suspected to be an Islamic State supporter arrives for the start of her trial at the main court in Vienna Thursday. Austrian authorities said Thursday they are probing four men in custody over their links to the November Paris attacks. | AP

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Four in Austria custody who arrived as migrants probed over Paris attacks, Islamic State links

AFP-JIJI

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VIENNA – Austrian prosecutors said Thursday they were investigating four people being held in custody for possible links to the Nov. 13 Paris terror attacks, two more than previously confirmed.

Calling the investigation “highly complex,” Salzburg prosecutors said that all four are believed to belong to the Islamic State extremist group, which claimed responsibility for the Paris attacks.

The officials said that in addition to an Algerian and a Pakistani, whose arrest on Dec. 10 was announced several days later, two others have been detained since Dec. 18.

The first two, aged 28 and 34, were believed to have been in the same migrant boat traveling to Greece as two men involved in the Paris atrocities that killed 130 people, prosecutors said in a statement.

While those involved in the attacks were able to travel onward, the pair now in Austrian hands were held up by Greek authorities for 25 days because they were carrying fake Syrian passports.

They then arrived in Salzburg in western Austria at the end of November — after the Paris killings — and Austrian police arrested them at a center for migrants on Dec. 10.

Eight days later, the other two, a 25-year-old Moroccan and a 40-year-old Algerian, were arrested “because of indications of close contact with both the first two suspects,” prosecutors said.

The statement stressed that contrary to some media reports, the men had not confessed to planning any attacks.

Prosecutors added that two other men, aged 22 and 28, who said they were migrants, were arrested in Salzburg, on Sept. 17 and Oct. 10, after recounting that they had fought for Islamic State.

There is, however, no evidence that these two were involved in any attacks in Europe, nor of any links to the other four men detained, prosecutors said, although investigations were continuing.

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