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French soldier stabbed on patrol outside Paris

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French police are seeking to arrest a man after he stabbed a French soldier on patrol in a business district west of Paris on Saturday, President François Hollande said. The soldier was approached from behind and stabbed in the neck.

A French soldier patrolling a business neighbourhood west of Paris was stabbed in the neck on Saturday by a man who quickly fled the scene and is being sought by police, President Francois Hollande said.

The soldier was patrolling in uniform with two other men as part of France's Vigipirate anti-terrorist surveillance plan when he was approached from behind around 1800 p.m. and stabbed in the neck with a knife or a box-cutter.

Hollande, in the Ethiopian city of Addis Ababa, commented on the stabbing to say that the man was still on the run and police were exploring all leads.

"We still don't know the exact circumstances of the attack or the identity of the attacker, but we are exploring all options," Hollande told journalists.

Pierre-Andre Peyvel, police prefect for the Hauts-de-Seine area, said the soldier had lost a considerable amount of blood but would survive, and was being treated in a nearby military hospital.

"The wound appears to be quite serious, but it's not life-threatening," he told iTele news television.

Peyvel said the man was able to flee into a crowded shopping area in the La Defense business neighbourhood before the two other soldiers, who were walking in front of him, were able to react.

French daily Le Parisien cited a police source as saying the suspected attacker was a bearded man of North African origin about 30 years old, and was wearing an Arab-style garment under his jacket.

However, Peyvel declined to confirm or deny that description and said further details about the attacker's identity would be forthcoming.

France is on high alert for attacks by Islamist militants following its military intervention in Mali in

January, which prompted threats against French interests from AQIM, the North African wing of al Qaeda.

The attack came days after a British soldier was killed on a London street by two men who said they were acting out of revenge for violence against Muslims.

(REUTERS)

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