

SPAIN TERROR ATTACKS

WHAT WE KNOW

At least 14 people were killed and more than 100 others injured after drivers slammed into pedestrians in two quick-succession, separate attacks on Barcelona's most popular street and in another busy Spanish seaside town.

WHAT HAPPENED?
An explosion in a house late Wednesday in Alcanar, about 200 kilometres south of Barcelona, left one person dead and seven wounded. Police said they believe the occupants were preparing an explosive device and the blast could be linked to the Barcelona assault. Around 4:50pm on Thursday, a vehicle ploughed into a crowd of pedestrians on the famous Las Ramblas boulevard in Barcelona killing 13 and injuring dozens. Witnesses described scenes of chaos and panic, with bodies strewn along the boulevard as others fled for their lives. The driver fled on foot and remains at large.

SECOND ATTACK
Some eight hours later in Cambrils, a resort town 120 kilometres south of Barcelona, an Audi A3 car hit pedestrians, injuring six civilians and a police officer. One of the civilians, a woman, later died. The five occupants of the car were killed by police, who said they were "working on the hypothesis that the terrorists shot dead in Cambrils are linked to what happened in Barcelona". Later police said the Barcelona driver could be among five suspects shot dead.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?
Emergency services said at least 14 people had died and around 100 more were injured in the two attacks. There were at least 34 nationalities among the dead and injured who came from countries as varied as France, Pakistan,



The famous Las Ramblas boulevard in Barcelona.

Spain, the Netherlands, China, Venezuela, Mauritania, Australia and Britain. Rome said two Italian nationals were killed including a man who died in front of his wife and young children, and Belgium said one of its citizens was among the fatalities. France said 26 of its citizens were among the injured.

WHO IS BEHIND IT?
The Islamic State's propaganda agency Amaq claimed that "soldiers" from the jihadist group carried out the Barcelona attack, according to the SITE Intelligence Group which monitors Islamist websites. Police in the Spanish region of Catalonia where both attack sites are located said they have arrested four suspects, including a Spaniard born in Spain's north African enclave of Melilla and a Moroccan named as Driss Oukabir. But the driver of the van is still on the run.

HOW DID AUTHORITIES RESPOND?
Emergency services quickly arrived on the scene in Barcelona and cordoned off the area, with several ambulances and police vehicles responding. The city also closed down nearby metro stations, with authorities telling people to stay away from the area. Police appealed to people to stay in their homes and avoid unnecessary trips.

PREVIOUS ATTACKS IN SPAIN
Spain was hit by what is still Europe's deadliest jihadist attack in March 2004, when bombs exploded on commuter trains in Madrid, killing 191 people in an attack claimed by al-Qaeda-inspired extremists. In July 2015, a hooded attacker opened fire outside a hotel in downtown Barcelona near Las Ramblas boulevard, leaving two people injured, police said. No suspected motive for that attack was given.

SOURCE: AFP

FATAL VEHICLE-RAMMING ATTACKS IN EUROPE

MAJOR DEADLY ATTACKS USING VEHICLES SINCE JULY 2016



LOCATION	DATE	VEHICLE USED	DETAILED DESCRIPTION
NICE, FRANCE	JULY 14, 2016	TRUCK	Rams into crowd on Promenade des Anglais on night of Bastille Day. Killed: 86. Injured: at least 300. Main suspect: Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouheli (Tunisian). Shot dead at the scene by police.
BERLIN, GERMANY	DECEMBER 19, 2016	TRUCK	Slams into crowd of people at Christmas market. Killed: 12. Injured: more than 40. Main suspect: Anis Amri (Tunisian). Shot dead by Italian police in Milan, Dec 23.
LONDON, BRITAIN	MARCH 22, 2017	CAR	Drives into pedestrian bridge near parliament and fatally stabs a policeman. Killed: 4 by ramming. Injured: around 50. Main suspect: Khalid Masood (British). Shot dead at the scene by police.
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN	APRIL 7, 2017	TRUCK	Mows down shoppers before ploughing into facade of department store. Killed: 5. Injured: around 15. Main suspect: Rakhat Akilov (Uzbek). Arrested several hours after the attack.
LONDON, BRITAIN	JUNE 3, 2017	VAN	Runs over pedestrians on London Bridge, people stabbed in nearby market. Killed: 4 by ramming, more 4 in stabbings. Injured: around 50. Main suspects: Khuram Butt (British), Rachid Redouane (Moroccan-Libyan), Youssef Zaghaba (Italian-Moroccan). Shot dead by police.
LONDON, BRITAIN	JUNE 19, 2017	VAN	Rams worshippers leaving a mosque. Killed: 1. Injured: Around 10. Main suspect: Darren Osborne (British). Arrested. Charged with terrorism-related murder, attempted murder.
BARCELONA, SPAIN	AUGUST 17, 2017	VAN	Rams into crowd on Las Ramblas boulevard, 8 hours later a car hits people in coastal town of Cambrils. Killed: At least 14. Injured: More than 100. Main suspects: Three suspects arrested, 5 'presumed terrorists' killed by police.

SOURCE : AFP PHOTO/ANNE-CHRISTINE POUJOLAT/TOBIAS SCHWARZ/AHMAD GHARABLI/ITN/ODD ANDERSEN/DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS/JAVIER SORIANO

Cowardly, barbaric act

World leaders react to Barcelona attack expressing outrage, solidarity with the victims

AGENCIES

"Revolting", "cowardly", and "barbaric" are some of the words leaders worldwide have used to describe the attack in Barcelona that killed 14 people.

At least 100 others were wounded when a white van ploughed into a crowd in one of the Spanish city's busiest tourist districts.

The attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State, occurred in the bustling Las Ramblas area, a 1.2km stretch of shops and restaurants usually heaving with tourists, reported Aljazeera.

There were at least 34 nationalities among the victims who came from countries as varied as France, Venezuela, Australia, Ireland, Peru, Algeria, Belgium and China, according to Spain's civil protection agency.

Immediately following Thursday's attack leaders worldwide, as with as thousands of people online, condemned the incident. Here is some reaction:

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy called the killings a "savagely terrorist attack" and said Spaniards "are not just united in mourning, but especially in the firm determination to beat those who want to rob us of our values and way of life". He announced three days of mourning.

French President Emmanuel Macron expressed France's solidarity after what he termed a "tragic attack".

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel described the incident as a "revolting attack", reported AFP.

British Prime Minister Theresa May called the attack "terrible" and said the President Vladimir Putin called for the world to unite in an "uncompromising battle against the forces of terror".

"We decisively condemn this cruel and cynical crime against civilians," he wrote in a telegram to Spanish King.

A spokesman said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres "condemns today's terrorist attack on Barcelona" and "hopes that those responsible for this heinous violence will be swiftly brought to justice."

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said: "The Australian people condemn the terrorist attack, the Islamist terrorist attack in Barcelona overnight."

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said: "London stands with Barcelona against the evil of terrorism."

President Donald Trump tweeted: "The United States condemns the terror attack in Barcelona, Spain, and will do whatever is necessary to help. Be tough & strong, we love you!"



Spanish police have released pictures of four suspects linked to the deadly terror attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils.

PHOTO: SPANISH POLICE

'Islamic terrorism must be stopped'

Says Trump a day after suggesting mass execution of extremists

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump on Friday said the world must use "whatever means necessary" to stop "radical Islamic terrorism," after twin attacks in Spain killed at least 14 people.

"Radical Islamic Terrorism must be stopped by whatever means necessary! The courts must give us back our protective rights. Have to be tough!" Trump said in one of his signature early morning tweet storms.

On Thursday, Trump courted controversy in the wake of the Barcelona van attack when he appeared to endorse the idea of mass executions for Islamist extremists. As justification, he alluded to a widely debunked account of summary punishment by a US general in the Philippines in the early 1900s.

Trump tweeted: "Study what General Pershing of the United States did to terrorists when caught. There was no more Radical Islamic Terror for 35 years!"

He was referring to General John "Black Jack" Pershing who was the US governor of largely Muslim Moro province from 1909 to 1913. At the time, the Philippines was a US colony.

The debunked account -- which Trump has referred to in the past -- is as follows: Pershing's forces rounded up 50 Muslim insurgents and executed 49 of them with bullets dipped in pig's blood -- and censored by Muslims to be unholy.

As the story goes, the 50th prisoner was released to tell his fellow fighters about what the Americans had done.

"And for 25 years, there wasn't a problem. Okay? Twenty five years, there wasn't a problem," Trump said in February 2016 in South Carolina during a campaign rally.

Historians have expressed skepticism or outright denial that this event took place.

NEWS IN brief

Lanka names first Tamil navy chief

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena yesterday appointed an officer from the island's Tamil minority to head the navy for the first time since a separatist war erupted 45 years ago. Rear Admiral Travis Sinniah is the first Tamil to head a wing of the military since 1970.

Sierra Leone floods toll passes 400

AFP, Freetown

More than 400 people have died in mudslides and flooding in Sierra Leone with 600 people still missing in the stricken capital, the Red Cross said yesterday, as Britain promised £5 million in fresh aid. The disaster began on Monday when heavy rains hit the city.

China opens its first 'cyber court'

AFP, Beijing

China's first "cyber court" was launched yesterday to settle online disputes, as the legal system attempts to keep up with the explosion of mobile payment and e-commerce. Residents of the eastern city of Hangzhou can now register their internet-related civil complaints online.

Six Vietnamese killed by US war-era bomb

AFP, Hanoi

Six Vietnamese villagers, including three children, were killed yesterday when a US war-era bomb exploded in a mountainous area along the country's south central coast in Khanh Hoa province. Early reports said authorities believe the ordnance detonated after villagers discovered it in their farmland.



People gather on the Rambla boulevard before observing a minute of silence for the victims of the Barcelona attack yesterday; Spain's King Felipe (C) looks down as he stands along politicians including Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy (3rdL) while they observe a minute of silence in Placa de Catalunya, Barcelona; and a woman grieves for the dead in Barcelona.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

ASSAULT ON MODEL

South Africa on 'red alert' for Grace Mugabe

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

South African police have issued a "red alert" on the country's borders to prevent Zimbabwe's first lady from fleeing.

Grace Mugabe, 52, is accused of assaulting a female model in a Johannesburg hotel with an electric cable. She has asked for diplomatic immunity in the case and has not yet been charged.

Her whereabouts were not known yesterday but Fikile Mbalula, South Africa's police minister, said she remained in the country.

"We had already put tabs on the borders in relation to her leaving the country," he said.

So far she has not attempted to flee, Mbalula added.

Attack on Japan same as on US

Says top US general

REUTERS, Tokyo

The top US general restated Washington's "ironclad commitment" to the security of its close Asian ally, Japan, yesterday amid regional tensions over North Korea, telling his counterpart in Tokyo that "an attack on one is an attack on both of us".

Fears about North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons programmes have grown in recent weeks. Pyongyang has said it was considering plans to fire missiles over Japan towards the US Pacific territory of Guam, although North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appears to have delayed the decision.

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and their Japanese counterparts agreed at a meeting in Washington on Thursday to work more closely on North Korea.

"The most important thing it (the ministers' meeting) did was reaffirm the primacy of our bilateral relationship here in Asia-Pacific," US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Joseph Dunford said at the start of a meeting with the Chief of Staff of Japan's Self-Defence Forces, Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano.

"This is a very important time for security in the region and of course we are mostly focused on the threat coming out of North Korea," Dunford said. "I think we have made it clear to North Korea and anyone else in the region that an attack on one is an attack on both of us."

JEWISH SETTLEMENT ON PALESTINIAN LANDS

Israel top court freezes controversial law

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's Supreme Court has frozen implementation of a law legalising dozens of Jewish settlements built on private Palestinian land, which the UN labelled a "thick red line".

The decision was condemned by rightwing Israeli politicians who accused the judiciary of overruling the will of Israel's parliament.

Court documents seen by AFP yesterday show that Judge Neal Hendel issued Thursday an open-ended restraining order suspending a bill passed by parliament that would retroactively legalise a number of outposts across the occupied West Bank.

The decision was in response to a petition brought by 17 Palestinian local councils on whose land the settlements are built.

Israeli and Palestinian rights groups were also parties to the petition.

Hendel wrote in his decision that Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit had asked him to grant the order. It did not specify a time limit but demanded that Israel's parliament, the Knesset, deliver its response by September 10 and that Mandelblit submit an opinion by October 16.

US BLACKLISTING OF MILITANT GROUP India welcomes, Pakistan fumes

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday welcomed the United States' blacklisting of Kashmiri separatist group Hizbul Mujahideen as a terrorist organisation.

The US Treasury Department, in a statement on its website Wednesday, said it listed the Pakistan-based outfit as a "foreign terrorist organisation", freezing its assets "to deny Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) the resources it needs to carry out terrorist attacks".

"We welcome the designation of the Hizbul Mujahideen as a terrorist organisation," Raveesh Kumar, India's foreign ministry spokesman, told reporters.

"All of us are aware of what kind of terrorist activities they have conducted in the state of Jammu and Kashmir," he said, adding it was key to "end moral, diplomatic and material support" to such groups.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947 and both claim the territory in its entirety.

Homegrown rebel groups, including the HM, have been fighting around half a million Indian troops deployed in the region, calling for independence or a merger with Pakistan since an armed rebellion broke-out in 1989.