

---

## **BARCELONA AREA HIT BY TWO DEADLY TERROR ATTACKS**

- 18.08.2017

---

Deutsche Welle, 18 August 2017

Two vehicle ramming attacks in Barcelona and a seaside town have killed 14 people and injured scores. Authorities say the two incidents and an earlier explosion are connected.

A moment of silence was observed by thousands in Barcelona's Placa de Catalunya on Friday to honor the victims of the previous night's deadly terror attack.

Earlier on Friday, Spanish police intensified the manhunt for suspected Islamist militants a day after assailants plowed vehicles through crowds in a popular Barcelona district and another seaside town, leaving at least 14 people dead and more than 100 wounded.

The death toll rose from 13 on Friday afternoon after a woman wounded in the attack at the coastal town of Cambrils succumbed to her injuries.

Police have detained three men, including a Moroccan and a Spanish national from the North African Spanish enclave of Melilla, in the nearby towns of Ripoll and Alcanar in connection with the twin attacks.

The suspected driver of the van in the Barcelona attack is still on the loose after escaping the scene on foot.

The van zigzagged down Barcelona's Las Ramblas thoroughfare at 4:15 p.m. (1415 UTC), striking pedestrians strolling along the busy tourist district.

"It was clearly a terror attack, intended to kill as many people as possible," Josep Lluís Traperó, a senior police official for Spain's Catalonia region told reporters.

The three detained men knew the attacker but have so far not been proved to have directly participated in the attack, Traperó said. One of the detained men has been linked to the rented van used in the Barcelona attack.

There may be other persons who "colloborated in other aspects of the attack, including its preparation," Traperó said.

Authorities have identified Moussa O. as the prime suspect and driver, according to Spanish news agency EFE. He is the younger brother Driss O., who was taken into custody on Thursday.

Thirteen people were killed and at least 100 injured, including people from at least 20 nations. France's foreign ministry said 26 of its citizens were among the injured. Spain's El Pais newspaper reported three of the dead were German nationals.

Although the German government has not confirmed any fatalities, the Foreign Ministry in Berlin did say on Friday that 13 of its citizens were wounded in the attack - "some of them so serious that they are still fighting for their lives."

Rome meanwhile gave a statement saying that two Italian citizens had been killed. One was 35-year-old Bruno Gulotta, who was killed in front of his wife and two young children according to a statement from his employer.

### Second attack

Eight hours after the rampage, police shot and killed five suspects attempting to carry out a similar vehicle ramming attack in the seaside town of Cambrils, 120 kilometers south of Barcelona.

Six civilians and a police officer were injured when the vehicle rammed into pedestrians, prompting a police patrol to unleash a hail of gunfire. Some of the assailants were armed with knives and wearing fake explosive belts, authorities said.

Cambrils mayor Cami Mendoza praised the "speed and efficiency" of the police response that prevented what could have been a much more bloody attack.

Catalonia's interior minister, Joaquim Forn, said early Friday that attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils were linked.

There may also be a connection with a gas explosion in the town of Alcanar that killed one person on Wednesday. "We suspect that they (the occupants) were preparing an explosive device," Traperó said.

The so-called "Islamic State" claimed its "soldiers" carried out the Barcelona attack in response to the US-led military campaign targeting the group in Syria and Iraq.

The IS claim has yet to be verified by the authorities. The group often claims credit for terror attacks even when it plays to no direct role in organizing or carrying out attacks.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said Catalonia was "today hit by jihad terrorism like other cities have been throughout the world." He announced three days of national mourning.

The premier of the autonomous state of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, said democracy, freedom and equality are stronger values than terrorist violence.

"We know that all good people, of all backgrounds, religion and social status stand with the victims. They are on our side," he said.

If the IS claims are confirmed, it would be the latest attack inspired or directed by the terror outfit in Europe over in the past two years. A number of those attacks, including in Nice, Berlin, London and Stockholm, used similar simple vehicle attacks that authorities and experts say are nearly

impossible to prevent.

Spain, the world's third biggest tourism destination, is no stranger to terrorism by jihadists and Basque separatists. Bomb attacks carried out by al-Qaeda on Madrid commuter trains in 2004 left 191 people dead in Europe's bloodiest terror attack.

But if confirmed, it would be the first terror attack on the country carried out by IS. Since 2015, Spanish authorities have arrested nearly 200 suspected Islamist extremists.

---

Kaynak/Source: