**207 dead, 500 injured in Sri lanka Easter bombing**

More than 207 people were killed and at least 500 injured in bomb blasts that ripped through churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, the first major attack on the Indian Ocean island since the end of a civil war 10 years ago.

Seven people were arrested and three police officers were killed during a security forces raid on a house in the Sri Lankan capital several hours after the attacks, many of which officials said were suicide bomb explosions.

The government declared a curfew in Colombo and blocked access to social media and messaging sites, including Facebook and WhatsApp. It was unclear when the curfew would be lifted.

“Altogether, we have information of 207 dead from all hospitals. According to the information as of now we have 500 injured people admitted to hospitals,” police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera told Reuters.

Three churches in various parts of the country and four hotels in Colombo were hit. At least 27 of the dead were foreigners, including five British people, two of whom had dual US citizenship, and three Indians, according to officials in those countries.

Agence France Presse reported that it had seen documents showing that Sri Lanka’s police chief Pujuth Jayasundara issued an intelligence alert to top officers 10 days ago, warning that suicide bombers planned to hit “prominent churches”. He cited a foreign intelligence service as reporting that a little-known Islamist group was planning attacks.

Pope Francis, in his Easter Sunday address, condemned as “such cruel violence” the bombings in Sri Lanka that killed more than 207 people and were timed to coincide with the most important day in the Christian liturgical calendar.

World leaders have reacted to the series of bomb blasts that struck luxury hotels and churches across Sri Lanka, US President Donald Trump said America offered “heartfelt condolences” to the Sri Lankan people and stood ready to help, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there was “no place for such barbarism in our region”, and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said the bombings were “an assault on all of humanity”.

UK Prime Minister, Theresa May on Twitter also said, “the acts of violence against churches and hotels in Sri Lanka are truly appalling, and my deepest sympathies go out to all of those affected at this tragic time.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has also expressed outraged at the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka and recalls sanctity of all places of worship. He reiterates UN's support and solidarity with the people and Government of Sri Lanka.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand, where a gunman shot 50 people dead in two mosques last month, said in a statement: “Collectively we must find the will and the answers to end such violence.”

President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan via his Twitter handle @RTErdogan also said: “I condemn in the strongest terms possible the Easter terror attacks in #SriLanka. This is an assault on all of humanity.

Nigeria president Muhammadu Buhari has expressed shock and sadness over the terrible attacks on several churches and hotels in Sri Lanka on the holy day of Easter.

The vast majority of those killed are thought to be Sri Lankan nationals, including dozens who were attending Easter church services.

At least five British people including two with joint US citizenship are believed to be among the dead. The US State Department says "several" Americans have been killed.

Three Danish citizens and two Turkish nationals were also killed, their governments have confirmed.

Netherlands Foreign Minister Stef Blok said in a statement that one Dutch national has also died.

Reports say three Indian nationals and one Portuguese citizen have also been killed, with more foreign nationals still to be identified.

Colombo resident Usman Ali told the BBC there were massive queues as he joined people trying to donate blood.

He said: "Everyone had just one intention and that was to help the victims of the blast, no matter what religion or race they may be. Each person was helping another out in filling forms."

**photo: Sri Lanka bombing**

 **caption: crime scene officials investigating explosion area in Colombo, Sri Lanka Photo: Reuters**

 **Sri Lanka bombing 1**

 **caption: scene of st Anthony's shrine, kochchikade church after explosion in Colombo, Sri Lanka Photo: Reuters**

 **Sri Lanka bombing 2**

**AFRICA**

**1.**

**Top members of Bashir's party arrested by new Sudan leaders**

* **Army considers military-civilian rule**

Sudanese authorities have arrested several top members of the former ruling party of ousted President Omar al-Bashir, in a move that could bolster military rulers who are under mounting pressure by protesters to hand power to civilians.

In another part of a widening crackdown designed to remove remnants of Bashir’s rule, the transitional military council (TMC) said it will retire all eight of the officers ranked lieutenant general in the National Intelligence and Security Service Reuters said.

Opposition groups had demanded that the security agencies be restructured. Sudan’s public prosecutor has begun investigating Bashir on charges of money laundering and possession of large sums of foreign currency without legal grounds, a judicial source said earlier on Saturday.

The source said military intelligence officers who searched Bashir’s home found suitcases loaded with more than $351,000 and six million euros, as well as five million Sudanese pounds.

The transitional council spokesman told a news conference in Khartoum on Sunday the military was ready to work with opposition groups to establish a new civilian government.

“The ball is now in the political forces’ court when it comes to the prime minister or a government,” Shams El Din Kabbashi said.

“If they are ready today to approve anything, we are ready to implement it,” he added.

“The chief public prosecutor ordered the (former) president detained and quickly questioned in preparation to put him on trial,” the judicial source told Reuters.

“The public prosecution will question the former president in Kobar prison,” the source said. Bashir has not been questioned yet, the source added. Two of his brothers were also detained on allegations of corruption, the source said.

Relatives could not immediately be reached on Saturday for comment about the investigation.

Separately, a source in Bashir’s National Congress Party said authorities arrested the acting party head Ahmed Haroun, former first vice president Ali Osman Taha, former Bashir aide Awad al-Jaz, the secretary general of the Islamic movement Al-Zubair Ahmed Hassan and former parliament speaker Ahmed Ibrahim al-Taher.

The source also said parliament speaker Ibrahim Ahmed Omar and presidential aide Nafie Ali Nafie were under house arrest.

**photo: Sudan protesters**

**caption: Sudanese demonstrators during the sit-in protest outside Defence Ministry in Khartoum, Sudan. Photo:REUTERS**

**2.**

**Ghana's chief Iman lead muslim faithful to Easter Sunday service**

The National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuhu Sharubutu Sunday morning stunned worshipers at the Christ the King Catholic Church in Accra, when he stormed there with a powerful delegation during their Easter Sunday mass.

He was warmly welcomed by Father Campbell, and a colourful bouquet of flower was presented to the Chief Imam before he was ushered into the Church.

The Chief Imam’s surprise visit was a reciprocal one to earlier engagements with former Archbishop of Accra, Gabriel Palmer Buckle, and other Christian leaders Graphics of Ghana said.

The National Chief Imam turns 100 on Tuesday April 23, and the surprise visit forms part of activities lined up to commemorate his centenary birthday anniversary.

Apart from the visit being a reciprocal gesture, it also forms part of the Sheikh Sharubutu’s life-long commitment to promoting inter-faith dialogue, and a peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians, the two dominant religions in Ghana.

**photo: Ghana chief Imam**

**caption: Ghana national Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuhu Sharubutu at the Christ the King Catholic Church in Accra, Ghana. Photo: Ghana graphic**

**3.**

**Gunmen attack army base, kill 12 soldiers in Mali**

Gunmen attacked a Malian army base in a dawn raid on Sunday, killing 12 soldiers and burning the camp in west-central Mali, a local lawmaker said.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. Central Mali has in the past few years been overrun by jihadists with links to al Qaeda.

According to Reuters reported the unidentified armed assailants attacked the base in Guire district at 0500 local time after approaching in a convoy of 11 vehicles, local lawmaker Niame Keita said.

“There are casualties, at the moment they’re saying 12 killed. They burnt the camp and took equipment,” he said.

In a post on Twitter, the army confirmed there had been an attack and said it had sent reinforcements, without giving further details.

In March, an al Qaeda affiliate said it was behind a similar overnight attack on an army base in the central region of Mopti in which 16 soldiers were killed.

Escalating violence led to the resignation last week of the entire Malian government. The authorities have come under fire for failing to beat back militants and disarm militias, after a massacre of 157 villagers by an ethnic vigilante group shocked the nation in March.

Both Mali and neighbouring Burkina Faso have been hit by the spike in hostilities fuelled by Islamist militants seeking to extend their influence over the Sahel, an arid region between Africa’s northern Sahara desert and its southern savannas.

**4.**

**Rebels attack another Ebola hospital in DRC**

Militiamen in the DRC's North Kivu province attacked another hospital in their most recent assault on organizations fighting Ebola. The city of Butembo in North Kivu province is at the center of the current epidemic.

Rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo attacked a hospital on Saturday, in the latest in a series of attacks on Ebola treatment centers and hospitals in the region DW.com reported.

One of the militants was killed and four more arrested after the attack on the Katwa hospital in the city of Butembo in the northern province of North Kivu, said Butembo Mayor Sylvain Kanyamanda.

Butembo city's deputy mayor, Patrick Kambale Tsiko, told the Associated Press news agency that the attackers were armed with machetes and tried to burn down the center.

The attack came one day after a World Health Organization doctor, Richard Valery Mouzoko Kiboung, was shot dead in an assault by armed militiamen on Butembo University Hospital, according to the WHO.

WHO said the epidemiologist had been deployed to help combat Ebola in the region.

Tsiko cited witnesses as saying the Friday attackers wrongly blamed foreigners for bringing the deadly virus to the region. Attacks hamper medical efforts.

The attacks by rebels, as well as community resistance, have further complicated efforts to contain what has become the second-deadliest Ebola virus outbreak in history.

The number of new cases jumps each time treatment and prevention work is disrupted the disease can spread quickly and can be fatal in up to 90 percent of cases.

**5.**

**Egyptians vote for second day to decide on extension of president's term**

Voting began on Saturday in Egypt in a referendum on proposed constitutional amendments that would extend President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s rule.

Sisi cast his ballot at a polling station in the eastern suburb of Heliopolis in the Egyptian capital, state television showed.

Parliament approved the proposals, which would also bolster the role of the military and expand the president’s power over judicial appointments.

Supporters argue that Sisi has stabilized Egypt and needs more time to complete crucial economic reforms. Critics say they fear that the changes will further limit the space for dissent after a wide-ranging security crackdown.

**photo: President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**

**caption: President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**