

# Bombing in North Ossetia Kills 15

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A man gesturing with both hands toward the blast site in a Vladikavkaz market Thursday, Sept. 9.  
**Kazbeg Basayev**

ROSTOV-ON-DON — A suicide car bomber hit the central market of the North Ossetian capital on Thursday, killing at least 15 and wounding more than 130 people in one of the worst attacks in the volatile region in years, officials said.

The attacker detonated his explosives as he drove by the main entrance to the Vladikavkaz market, the Emergency Situations Ministry said.

At least 15 people, including the suicide bomber, were killed and 133 were wounded in the explosion, said Alexander Pogorely of the Emergency Situations Ministry's branch in southern Russia. He said 87 of the injured were hospitalized, many in grave condition.

Television stations showed a shrapnel-littered square in front of the market, with blood stains on the pavement and rows of vehicles scarred by the blast.

President Dmitry Medvedev sent his regional envoy to Vladikavkaz to help coordinate efforts to assist the victims.

No one has immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing, which was the deadliest such attack in the region since a double suicide bombing killed 12, mostly police officers, in the republic of Dagestan in April. Twin suicide bombings on the Moscow metro in March killed 40 people and wounded more than 100.

The market and its surrounding blocks have been the target of several bomb attacks over the past dozen years, in which scores of people have died.

North Ossetia was the scene of the 2004 Beslan crisis, in which Chechen militants took hundreds of hostages at a school — a siege that ended in a bloodbath killing more than 330 people, more than half of them children.

The Vladikavkaz market was bombed in 1999, killing 55. Another bombing in 2001 killed six people. In 2004, 11 people died when a minibus stopped near the market was bombed.

Unlike most other North Caucasus regions where Muslims make up the majority of the population, North Ossetia is predominantly Orthodox Christian.

The market attack came as Muslims were preparing to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, a holiday marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

"The crimes like the one that was committed in the North Caucasus today are aimed at sowing enmity between our citizens," Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said in televised remarks during a meeting with Russia's top Islamic cleric. "We mustn't allow this."

In Dagestan, officials said Thursday that a hotel employee and another civilian were shot to death by men trying to build a bomb in their hotel room.

Local Interior Ministry spokesman Vyacheslav Gasanov said the shooting took place late Wednesday in the capital, Makhachkala. He said three armed men fled a room in the small hotel after an explosion and opened fire on a hotel clerk and another person who confronted them. He says police found several bombs and six grenades in the room.

In the Dagestani town of Khasavyurt, on the border with Chechnya, a policeman returning home from work was shot to death, Gasanov said.

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