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Suicide Blast Kills 7 Police at Funeral

By The Moscow Times

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State-run NTV reported from the scene of the incident that worshipers gathered in the mosque Sunday to clear away damage from the previous night's attacks.

A suicide bomber killed at least seven police officers attending the funeral of a colleague in Ingushetia, hours after masked gunmen opened fire in a mosque in Dagestan, killing one person.

The seven officers were killed when a suicide bomber attacked a wake being held Sunday for a fellow officer shot a day earlier in the Malgobek district in the north of Ingushetia.

The attack also wounded 11.

Witnesses said a man wearing camouflage clothing detonated a suicide belt after walking up to the group of officers, who had just arrived at the funeral. A pool of blood lay in the street outside the home in the village of Sagopshi.

"A suicide bomber went into the yard of a private home, where police officers had come

to offer condolences to their late colleague, and activated a bomb device attached to a belt," a spokesman for the local investigators, Zurab Geroyev said, Interfax reported.

The bombing came hours after two masked gunmen opened fire in a mosque in nearby Dagestan, killing one Muslim worshipper and wounding eight others who were celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

A man who was injured in the attack said some 50 people were gathered in the mosque at the time.

"We were sitting, just finished our prayer and wanted to break our fast," said Rukhit Samedov, wearing a blood-stained T-shirt and cradling his bandaged hand.

"People just sat down, started eating, and the door opened and there was shooting from automatic guns," he said. "They wore masks and some sort of camouflage."

Law enforcement officers sent in a robotic device to defuse a bomb left by the attackers at the mosque, in the city of Khasavyurt. The bomb consisted of a gas canister stuffed with explosives and had a force equivalent to between 30 and 40 kilograms of TNT, Interfax reported, citing the police.

"Eight people have been admitted to the hospital. Five of them are in the trauma unit; three are in intensive care. Two of those are in very grave condition," said Ramazan Ismailov, the chief surgeon at the Khasavyurt hospital.

RIA-Novosti said later that one man had died in the hospital.

The attacks shook Russia's Muslims, many of whom were celebrating Eid al-Fitr, known as Uraza-Bairam in Russia, to mark the end of a month of fasting for Ramadan.

"This monstrous behavior by militants showed that they will desecrate even a Muslim shrine and the holiday of Uraza-Bairam," Ingush President Yunus-Bek Yevkurov said on state television.

(Reuters, MT)

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