

Female Suicide Bomber Injures At Least 18 in Dagestan

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A female suicide bomber blew herself up in the southern Russian region of Dagestan on Saturday, killing one and injuring at least 18, including two children and five police officers, authorities said. The attacker was later identified as a widow of two Islamic radicals killed by security forces.

It was the first suicide bombing in Dagestan since the Boston Marathon attacks last month.

In Saturday's attack, the bomber detonated an explosives-laden belt in the central square in the provincial capital, Makhachkala, Dagestan's police spokesman Vyacheslav Gasanov said.

The woman was identified as Madina Aliyeva, 25, who married an Islamist who was killed in 2009 and then wedded another Islamic radical who was gunned down last year, police spokeswoman Fatina Ubaidatova said.

Since 2000, at least two dozen women, most of them from the Caucasus, have carried out suicide bombings in Russian cities and aboard trains and planes. All were linked to an Islamic insurgency that spread throughout Dagestan and the predominantly Muslim Caucasus region after two separatist wars in neighboring Chechnya.

The bombers are often called "black widows" in Russia because many are the widows, or other relatives, of militants killed by security forces. Islamic militants are believed to convince "black widows" that a suicide bombing will reunite them with their dead relatives beyond the grave.

Police said two of the people injured in the attack were in critical condition. There were no details about the injured children.

This week, a double explosion in Makhachkala killed four civilians and left 44 injured, while three security officers and three suspected militants have been killed in other incidents. One of the devices was in a parked car, and the other was placed in a trash bin.

Although Chechen separatists were battered almost a decade ago, Islamists continue to move through the region's mountains and forests with comparative ease despite security sweeps by federal forces and police under the control of local leaders loyal to the Kremlin.

Human rights groups say that abductions, torture and extrajudicial killings of young men suspected of militant links by Russian security forces have helped swell the rebels' ranks. Caucasus experts say that Islamists routinely extort money from government officials and businessmen and attack or kill those who refuse to pay.

In the wake of Saturday's bombing, acting Dagestani President Ramazan Abdulatipov linked terrorist acts in the republic to "corruption among the local authorities that has been building up for many years," Interfax reported Sunday.

At the same time, he expressed confidence that extremism can be defeated in the republic, noting that the majority of local residents don't support the rebels, but instead help law enforcement officers to fight them, and rural communities "expel those who preach fanatical ideas of Wahabiism and extremism."

In the past several months, 15 to 17 rebels voluntarily surrendered to authorities and "showed eagerness to return to peaceful life," Abdulatipov said.

He praised local police and security officers for their "efficient work."

Calling the bombings on Saturday and those that occurred last Monday "medieval," Abdulatipov said they represent "a kind of agony of bandit forces existing in Dagestan."

He also said in a statement on his website that the masterminds of the bombings "have nothing to do with Islam."

"Islam is a religion of peace, kindness and it is edifying," he said.

Abdulatipov called on Dagestani residents to "cleanse your village of the evil spirits," referring to the rebels, in order to "save your children and your future."

Abdulatipov also ordered an increase in the amount of compensation given to the families of the victims of the two recent bombings, which jointly killed one and injured 63 people.

“These people are not to blame for the authorities' failure to secure their safety in a sufficient manner,” Abdulatipov said.

Early Sunday, an Emergency Situations Ministry plane transported three people who were injured in Saturday's bombing to Moscow for treatment, Interfax reported.

Material from The Moscow Times has been added to this report.

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