

Abdeslam brothers known to Interpol before Paris attacks

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Brussels: Salah and Brahim Abdeslam, the two brothers identified by French authorities in connection with the Paris terror attacks, were already known to the international police cooperation body Interpol and Europe's Schengen Information System before the attacks happened, Belgian media reported on Saturday.

Brahim Abdeslam was one of the suicide bombers who blew himself up in the November 13 massacre in the French capital, while his younger brother Salah Abdeslam remains on the run and the subject of an international arrest warrant.

Sudpresse newspaper group said it received confirmation from the Belgian interior ministry that the two brothers' names appeared on a list of 837 Belgian residents believed to have links to terrorists.

The list was transmitted to Interpol and to the EU's inter-governmental security database, the Schengen Information System on October 29, the newspaper said. It added: "This did not stop Salah Abdeslam travelling freely on the morning of the attacks."

Salah Abdeslam was stopped by police in the northern French town of Cambrai on November 14 - but after a routine identity check was allowed to continue his journey back to Belgium.

According to Belgian broadcaster RTL there were currently eight people in police custody in Belgium in connection with the Paris attacks and the subsequent terror alert in Brussels.

Hamza Attouh, Mohamed Amri, Lazez Abraimi and Ali Oulkadi are suspected of helping provide transport to Salah Abdeslam.

Abdeilah Chouaa and Mohamed Bakkali were arrested on November 23 and 26 respectively and the Belgian federal prosecutor has not given the reason for their ongoing detention.

Two other men, identified by RTL as Samir Z. and Pierre N. are believed to have links with Bilal Hadfi, one of the suicide bombers who struck at the Stade de France in northern Paris on November 13.

- IANS