

Islamic State group carried out the attack in Jakarta: Reports

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Jakarta: At least 7 people, including 4 attackers, have been killed in a series of blasts in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, with reports of ongoing gunfire.

Police said they suspected a suicide bomber was responsible for at least one of the blasts. One blast went off in a Starbucks cafe and security forces were later seen entering the building.

The area also has many luxury hotels, and offices and embassies, including the UN, French. It was not clear who was shooting but police had cordoned off the area, preventing reporters from going near the scene.

Jakarta police spokesman Col. Muhammad Iqbal says seven people including four attackers have been killed in the brazen attacks in the downtown capital.

He said police have recovered the bodies of the attackers, but it is not clear if more remain at large.

Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, who is on a working visit in the West Java town of Cirebon, has ordered security forces to hunt down the perpetrators and their network behind the attacks in Jakarta.

"I have received reports some time ago about the explosion in Thamrin street, Jakarta. We express condolences for those who became victims, but we all also condemn the attack that caused restlessness among the community," Jokowi said.

The President said the situation is under control and called on people to remain calm.

"The state, nation and people should not be afraid of, and lose to, such terror acts," Jokowi said.

Jokowi also said that he was cutting short his visit and returning to the capital.

Indonesian network TVOne said that at least three more explosions have taken place in Jakarta. It said that the explosions occurred Thursday in Cikni, Silpi and Kuningan neighborhoods, near the Turkish and Pakistani embassies.

A UN regional representative in Jakarta, Jeremy Douglas, tweeted that a massive explosion in front of the UN office in the Indonesian capital has been followed by at six other blasts and gunfire.

He said police and broadcasting announcements for people to stay away from windows.

The country has been on high alert after authorities said they had foiled a plot by Islamic militants to attack government officials, foreigners and others.

About 150,000 police officers and soldiers were deployed during New Year's Eve to guard churches, airports and other public places. More than 9,000 police were also deployed in Bali, the site of Indonesia's deadliest terror attack, which killed 202 people in 2002.

The Aamaq news agency, which is affiliated with the Islamic State group, is quoting an unnamed source as saying the group carried out the attack in Jakarta.

The news agency has been used as a source for the IS militants in the past. However, according to SITE, which tracks militant websites, the Islamic Group has not yet issued a communique claiming responsibility for the attack.

The report in Arabic said that a source told Aamaq that "fighters from the Islamic State carried out this morning an armed attack that targeted foreigners and the security forces tasked with protecting them in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta."

- (*with AP inputs*)