

ISIS claims responsibility for truck attack in France's Nice

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Nice (France): Dreaded terror group Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the deadly truck attack in French resort city of Nice on Thursday.

In a statement via its Amaq news service, ISIS said one of its "soldiers" carried out the attack on Thursday night "in response to calls to target nations of coalition states that are fighting ISIS".

Tunisian Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, 31, smashed a 19-tonne truck into crowd of people in the Riviera city who were celebrating Bastille Day -- France's national day. Police said he had no known connection to jihadist groups.

French President Francois Hollande met with his defence and security chiefs and cabinet ministers as criticism from the opposition and media mounted over security failings after the third major attack in France in 18 months.

Some 30,000 people had thronged the palm tree-lined Promenade des Anglais on Thursday night to watch a fireworks display with their friends and families, but the night turned to horror as the truck left mangled bodies strewn in its wake.

Hollande said the country would observe three days of mourning as he warned the death toll could rise further, with more than 50 people still fighting for their lives.

Four more people linked to Lahouaiej-Bouhlel have been arrested. The driver's estranged wife is also being held by police.

The latest massacre has once again shaken the country to its core, and prompted questions about the effectiveness of security measures with the country already under an eight month-long state of emergency.

France, which has a Muslim population of nearly five million, is also the origin of hundreds of jihadists who have flocked to fight alongside ISIS.

The Mediterranean city of Nice, with its pebble beaches and clear blue water, has been a magnet for sun-seekers and the jetset since the 19th century.

The bloodshed comes eight months after Islamic State jihadist attacks on Paris nightspots left 130 people dead, dealing a hard blow to tourism in one of the world's top destinations.

Islamic State has repeatedly singled out France as a prime target, and the country has been under a state of emergency ever since the November 13 Paris attacks.

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