

61 killed, over 100 injured as terrorists storm Pakistan police centre in Quetta; ISIS claims responsibility

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Karachi: In one of the deadliest terror attacks in Pakistan, at least 61 people, mostly young cadets, were massacred and more than 100 others injured when heavily-armed Islamic State militants attacked a police training centre here in the capital of the restive Balochistan province.

Balochistan home minister said death toll may climb up

The hours-long attack on the facility - which was home to nearly 700 recruits - lasted until early hours today.

At least three gunmen stormed Quetta's sprawling Police Training College last night and targeted the sleeping quarters of recruits. They first killed a police guard at the watch tower and then stormed the dormitory while cadets rested.

The attack sent the terrified men aged between 15 and 25 fleeing for safety. Many of the cadets jumped off the rooftops to try to escape.

Eyewitnesses said the attackers were armed with klashnikovs. The attack appeared well coordinated, with experts saying the militants fired at the training centre from five separate points.

Most of the deaths occurred when two of the attackers blew themselves up. The third was shot dead by Frontier Corps troops. Officials said most of the 61 killed were police cadets but some of the casualties were of the army personnel who responded to the attack.

"We can confirm 61 dead in the attack at the police training college. They include 60 police cadets and one army soldier," officials said.

More than 125 people were admitted to hospitals. About 20 of them were critical.

IG Frontier Corps (FC) Major General Sher Afgan said the three terrorists were believed to be from the Al-Alimi faction of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi group affiliated to Pakistani Taliban. He told reporters the militants were communicating with handlers in Afghanistan and taking instructions from them. All three attackers were wearing suicide vests.

Later Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack. It said three attackers were deployed for the attack but did not give the motive for carrying out the attack.

The Jhangvi has roots in Punjab province and has a history of carrying out sectarian attacks in Baluchistan, particularly against the minority Shias.

Pakistan's powerful army chief General Raheel Sharif reached Quetta to take stock of the situation. He attended the funeral prayer of those killed and visited the facility, where he was briefed on the attack by officials.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also arrived in Quetta and was chairing high-level meetings here. He has cancelled all other engagements today.

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