

39 killed as gunman opens fire in nightclub during New Year's eve party in Istanbul

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Istanbul: At least 39 people, including 16 foreigners, were killed and dozens were injured after a gunman, dressed as Santa Claus, opened fire at a popular nightclub in Istanbul last night, Turkey interior minister informed today.

35 killed as gunman opens fire inside a nightclub on New Year's eve in Istanbul

The attack was took place in the Reina nightclub, in the Ortakoy area, at about 01:30 local time (23:30 GMT), media reports said.

City's Governor Vasip Sahin said the attacker killed a police officer and a civilian at the gate of Reina by the Bosphorus, before entering inside and raving through the crowd celebrating the New Year.

"The inglorious (attacker) raved through the place with Kalashnikovs. The US intelligence warned over such an attack about one week or 10 days ago and measures have been taken, including the sea front. And look what has happened then," Mehmet KoÅşarslan told HÃ¼rriyet reporter Toygun Atilla adding that such an attack was coming, but could not be prevented.

Unconfirmed initial reports speculated that the attack was held by a person wearing Santa Claus costume.

The Governor did not respond to a question on whether the attacker was still inside or not.

Reina is one of the international nightclubs in Istanbul frequented by the high-society, celebs, artists and football stars, Hurriyet Daily News added.

Some revelers had jumped into the water to escape the gunfire and were being rescued by police, NTV said.

Some 25,000 police officers have been on duty against a possible terror attack in Istanbul during the New Year's Day celebrations in the wake of consecutive bomb attacks across the country in 2016, which claimed hundreds of lives.

- (With IANS inputs)