

80 killed, over 350 injured in massive blast near Indian embassy in Kabul's diplomatic area

31/05/2017 08:34 by admin

Kabul: A powerful blast today rocked Kabul's high-security diplomatic quarter where the Indian embassy is located, killing at least 80 and wounding over 350 people, besides damaging buildings in the area.

The blast caused minor damage to the Indian embassy building but all staffers at the were said to be safe. The explosion was close to the German embassy but houses many other missions in the vicinity. It was not immediately clear what was the target of the blast that occurred during the morning rush hour.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj tweeted that Indian embassy staffers were safe. Official sources at the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, however, said some damage to the windows of the embassy building has been reported.

Here are the live updates of the Kabul attack:

- * Death toll mounts to 80, over 350 injured in the blast
- * Death toll rises to 65, 325 wounded in Kabul blast, confirms spokesman for Ministry of Public Health: Afghan media
- * We strongly condemn the terrorist blast in Kabul. Our thoughts are with the families of the deceased & prayers with the injured: PM Modi
- * Kabul blast toll leaps to 49 dead, more than 300 wounded, say officials: AFP
- * More than 50 wounded people are in Kabul hospitals so far: Ismail Kawasi, spokesman for the public health ministry
- * At least 50 people were killed or wounded in the suicide car bomb: Najib Danish, deputy spokesman for the Interior Ministry
- * Buildings, including ours, suffered considerable breakages, but all our staff are safe: Indian ambassador in Kabul Manpreet Vohra
- * Massive VBIED (Vehicle-borne improvised explosive device) not too far from our Embassy: Indian ambassador in Kabul Manpreet Vohra
- * By God's grace, Indian Embassy staff are safe in the massive Kabul blast: EAM Sushma Swaraj

No group has claimed responsibility for the Kabul blast as of now

â€The blast smashed windows of the buildings nearby and a huge plume of smoke could be seen spiralling over the area near the presidential palace and other foreign embassies in the Afghan capital. Najib Danish, deputy spokesman for the Interior Ministry, said the explosion was so heavy that more than 30 vehicles were either destroyed or damaged at the site of the attack.

An eyewitness told the local Pajwok news agency that the blast took place close to the German embassy and foreign forces camp. It cited another source as saying the explosion happened in front of the office of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Afghanistan's primary intelligence agency.

Houses hundreds of metres away from the blast site were damaged and windows and doors blown off their hinges. Bodies and injured people were seen in the area. Some women were seen screaming for the lost relatives at the site of explosion.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the blast, but the attack came as the Taliban group steps up their annual "spring offensive".

Both the Taliban and the Islamic State group have staged large-scale attacks in the Afghan capital in the past.

- IT / HT