Spot Report On The Bombing At The Indonesian Embassy in Paris

21 March 2012

The Incident
A parcel bomb exploded outside the Indonesian embassy in Paris on 21 March 2012, breaking windows. The explosion had not resulted in casualties.¹

At around 5 am Paris local time, three people had placed a package outside the embassy building in Rue Cortambert, in Paris elegant 16th district. The package was spotted under the embassy’s windows by a worker clearing bins in the street.² The employee looked inside the bag, opened it and thought it must be a bomb as he saw a canister attached to wires. He removed it from the building, dropped it, left the area and called the police. It exploded shortly afterwards at around 5:45am.³

After the explosion, police and fire fighters rushed to the area and sealed off the road where the blast occurred. A bomb disposal team was also in place to make sure that any remaining explosives were safely disposed.⁴

⁴ “Parcel bomb explodes outside Indonesian embassy in Paris,” The Telegraph, 21 March 2012.
The explosion took place as French elite police in the southern town of Toulouse were engaged in a standoff with the man believed to have shot dead three children and a rabbi at a Jewish school, and three off-duty soldiers, in a series of killings that have shocked the nation.\(^5\)

Although the explosion took place near the embassy, the head of the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency (BIN), Lt. Gen. Marciano Norman, stated that the Indonesian Embassy was not the intended target of a bomb blast outside the mission in Paris. He based his analysis on the CCTV footage mounted on the embassy building.\(^6\)


Who are conducted the attack?

No group or individual has immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. However, police had three suspects in custody who were being questioned over the explosion. Police have not revealed the identities of the men in custody.

Prior to the embassy bombing, on 15 March 2012 three French soldiers were killed in a drive-by shooting near a military base in the southwestern city of Montauban and on 19 March 2012 a shooting took place at Ozar Hatorah school, a Jewish school in Toulouse which left four people dead. The Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that it was too early to link perpetrators of these attack and those of the embassy’s parcel bomb.

7 Ibid.


The recent bombing of the embassy was the second explosion outside the Indonesian embassy in Paris. In October 2004, 10 people were injured when a parcel bomb left outside the embassy exploded. Most of those injured, including four embassy staff, were injured by flying glass.\textsuperscript{11} The bombing in 2004 had also taken place at around 5 am - similar to the timing of the recent bombing. The 2004 bombing of the Indonesian embassy still remains unsolved. The type of bomb used and the timing selected to carry out the attack might suggest that perpetrators are from the same group or they are connected to each other.

Impact Analysis

It is probably that Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists in France may want to attack Indonesian interests in France. The Indonesian government have been capturing and killing Al Qaeda operatives in Indonesia.

Given that similar attempts have been made in the past against the Indonesian embassy, the present attack highlights the weakness of the embassy security. The need for target hardening the building through installing bomb blast proof infrastructure is crucial. This will protect the building and embassy staff from the blast in the future.

The State Intelligence Agency (BIN) has also stepped up their efforts in gathering intelligence on foreign terrorists targeting Indonesian interests overseas particularly in France. Working with other state intelligence agencies. A cohesive intelligence framework would provide an ideal barrier to future attempted attacks.