

Bombs found as execution looms

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BOMBS suspected to have been set up for a retaliation attack over the execution of the Bali bombers have been uncovered in a restive Indonesian region, police said last night.

Two bombs were found on Wednesday and Thursday in Poso, which lies in Central Sulawesi, in areas popular with migrants from the Hindu-majority island of Bali, local police chief Suparni Parto told AFP.

"I think there is a connection between this and the execution of Amrozi and others," Parto said, referring to the three death-row bombers - Amrozi, Mukhlas and Imam Samudra - who are set to be executed as early as today.

Parto refused to specify which group was suspected to be behind the bombs but said there had been protests by Islamist extremists in the region threatening retaliation for the executions.

About 1500 police and military personnel have been deployed in Poso to guard against violence in the wake of the executions, Parto said.

About 1000 people were killed in violence between Muslims and Christians in Poso and the surrounding district in 2000-2001.

In 2005 Islamic militants were widely condemned after beheading three teenage Christian schoolgirls in Poso and low-level tensions continue to simmer in the region.

The trio of Islamic militants behind the 2002 bombings were last night in isolation on death row as their executions by firing squad on the prison island loomed.

Other inmates at the maximum security prison block have been transferred to other nearby prisons to prevent rioting.

Defence lawyer Wirawan Adnan said the legal team had not had any contact with Mukhlas, his brother Amrozi and Imam Samudra since last week when they visited the prison with Mukhlas's family.

"I don't think the Attorney-General's office will give us the luxury of that information because we believe it will be done secretly," said Wirawan.

"They know that our attitude will be that the public has the right to know and any information given to us will be publicised."

He said it was possible that the terrorists had already been given a mandatory 72-hour notice advising that their executions would be carried out. There is no legal requirement for lawyers to be informed.

"We have no way of knowing if they do the executions," he said.

Indonesian authorities remain tightlipped about the timing of the bombers' deaths on Nusakambangan Island, in central Java, but it could happen anytime after midnight. Authorities have said only that the executions will be carried out in 'early November'.

A Bali Parliament official seemed to let slip the bombers would die today while revealing the executions had been

set for August 27 but were postponed at the last minute.

The politician, who asked not to be named, said he had been invited to a ceremony to hand over the bodies of the three Islamic militants to family once the executions are carried out.

``I was invited there to Cilacap (Bali) to be a witness of the bodies being handed over from the Government to the convicted's family," he said.

``I am planning to go on November 1, at noon, along with the other Bali Parliament member."

Terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna, of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism

Research in Singapore, said: ``Within the next 10 days they will be executed."

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