

## Suicide Attack on Army Medical Corps Bus in Rawalpindi, Pakistan

### Incident

On 4 February 2008, a suicide bomber riding an explosive-packed motorcycle rammed himself into a 30-seater coaster bus of the Army Medical Corps (AMC).<sup>1</sup> The attack took place in front of the main gate of National Logistics Cell (NLC), about 400 yards from the RA Bazar Police Station in Rawalpindi Cantonment at about 7.22<sup>2</sup> am.<sup>3</sup> At least 11 persons, including 6 security personnel, were reported killed, while 45 others were injured.<sup>4</sup>

### Details

According to eyewitnesses, the suicide bomber blew himself up in-between three vehicles.<sup>5</sup> Another eyewitness stated that the bomber rammed his motorcycle into the coaster from the front and blew himself up.<sup>6</sup> The attack was so severe that it blew up the roof, windows and doors of the bus, and damaged two other vehicles as well.<sup>7</sup> Rescue workers cut open the wreckage to pull out the bodies and injured.<sup>8</sup> According to a security official who spoke on condition of anonymity, "It was definitely a suicide attack targeting personnel belonging to army organisation ... it was a link in the chain of suicide attacks targeting Army and government personnel and installations."<sup>9</sup>

The attack was so severe that the explosion was heard several kilometers away from the site, while windowpanes of dozens of adjacent buildings were broken and a number of vehicles passing on the busy road were damaged.<sup>10</sup> According to an eyewitness who runs a shop in the locality: "there was a big fireball. Some pellets from the bomb hit the wall of my shop."<sup>11</sup> Others reported pieces of vehicles flying in the air with shrieks and cries of the injured.

A joint team of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Military Intelligence (MI) collected evidence from the spot and started investigating the incident. Separately, civilian intelligence agencies like Intelligence Bureau (IB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and police have initiated their own investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by a police officer: 'Pindi Suicide Attack: 10 Killed', *The Post*, 5 February 2008

<sup>2</sup> According to various accounts, various witnesses have recorded the time of attack as 7.19 am, 7.25 am and 7.30 am by *The News*, *Daily Times* and *The Post*.

<sup>3</sup> '11 Killed, 45 Injured in Pindi Suicide Attack', *The News*, 5 February 2008

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> '10 Killed, 27 Hurt as Bomber Strikes Army Bus', *Daily Times*, 5 February 5, 2008

<sup>8</sup> *The Post*, Op.Cit.

<sup>9</sup> *Daily Times*, Op.Cit.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> 'Pindi Suicide Attack: 10 Killed', *The Post*, 5 February 2008

The head and limbs of the alleged suicide bomber were retrieved from the scene and sent to Pakistan military's Combined Military Hospital (CMH) for DNA test and reconstruction of his face.<sup>12</sup>

The 4 February suicide attack in Rawalpindi city is the fourth such attack targeting security personnel and installations. Previously, suicide attacks against military installations took place on 4 September 2007 (twin attacks targeting a military bus near Qasim Market and a motorcycle-borne suicide attack targeted a military vehicle in RA Bazar); 24 November 2007 (twin suicide attacks involving vehicle-borne suicide attack on a military bus in front of ISI's Hamza Camp and a suicide attack on a military picket near the General Headquarters (GHQ)).

The suicide attacks against Pakistan security forces come in the wake of military operations in South Waziristan Agency (SWA), Darra Adam Khel in Khyber Agency and Swat district of the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP). It needs to be mentioned that there was already credible intelligence information available within the government regarding impending attacks in Rawalpindi and Islamabad that could target the Islamabad international airport, police and military installations, prominent political figures and foreigners. It was also reported that the suicide bombers might use cyanide-dipped nails in the explosives, which can increase the loss of lives and create panic among the security personnel.<sup>13</sup> Although the government had beefed the security arrangements in the city, but the terrorists were able to struck a vehicle carrying medical doctors, a non-combatant unit of the Pakistan Army.



Picture of the AMC Bus destroyed in the Attack  
Courtesy (The News and Daily Times)

<sup>12</sup> The News, Op.Cit.

<sup>13</sup> 'Another Suicide Attack Feared', *Dawn*, 4 February 2008



سکیورٹی ایگراڈ اپنی ہی میں خودکش بم دھماکے کی جگہ کا معائنہ کر رہے ہیں، ان سب میں تاجہ بونوالی گاڑی

Courtesy Urdu Press