

RAPID

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WEEKLY NEWS UPDATE

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The RAPID Weekly News Update is a weekly collection of unclassified media and news bulletins focused on noteworthy improvised explosive attacks and trends in the EOD/C-IED community. To subscribe to this weekly publication and/or to receive additional IED-related reports, please request a RAPID login at <https://rapid.a-tolutions.com> using your government (.mil or .gov) email account.



Police Find Homemade 10Kg Bomb In Poso On Christmas

After dismantling the 10kg bomb, police also found a cell phone used as a timer, nitrate urea powder, hundreds of 13-centimeter-long nails and two detonators, all placed in a laptop bag.



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1. [Security, Pakistan] Low Intensity Bomb Blast In Gilgit, Explosive Material Recovered

Friday, December 21 2012

<http://pamirtimes.net/2012/12/22/low-intensity-bomb-blast-in-gilgit-explosive-material-recovered/>

A low intensity bomb exploded in Jutial area of Gilgit city yesterday evening at around 6 O'clock. There were no reports of casualty or injuries.

The locally improvised bomb was hidden inside a post and place near the General Post Office located on the Shah-rah-e-Quaid Azam in Jutial area.

Police also recovered around 5 kilograms of explosive material from the site, loaded with ball-bearings.



Gilgit: Police officials stand near a blast site in Jutial. The improvised explosive device recovered can be seen on the left.



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2. [Security, Pakistan] Four Kg Bomb Defused In Lyari

Saturday, December 22 2012

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-4-149730-4kg-bomb-defused-in-Lyari>

The Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) defused a four-kilogram bomb concealed in a cement block near Cheel Chowk in Lyari on Friday.

Some passers-by spotted the bomb and informed Baghdadi police, who along with Bomb Disposal Squad officials reached the spot. Police said the locally-made, remote-controlled bomb contained ball bearings.



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3. [Attack, Afghanistan] Seven Killed As Bomb Hits Police Vehicle In Afghanistan

Saturday, December 22 2012

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=188144>

Five civilians and two policemen were killed when a bomb hit a police mobile in Zaranj, the provincial capital of southwestern Afghan Nimroz province, police said. "A police unit was on routine patrol in police district 3 of Zaranj city at about 3:30 p.m. (local time) when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was detonated through a remote control device, killing two policemen and five civilians near the scene," police chief of the district Abdul Haq said.

He said two policemen were also wounded in the attack and the police mobile was destroyed in the incident in the province 790 km southwest of Kabul. The police have rolled out a search operation to find the people behind the attack, the police official added.

No group claimed responsibility for the attacks, but Taliban suspects routinely claim responsibility for such attacks. The insurgent group, who ruled the country before they were ousted by a U.S.-led invasion in late 2001, renewed armed insurgency, staging ambush and suicide attacks, killing combatants as well as civilians.



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4. [Attack, Pakistan] Pakistani Politician Killed In Suicide Bomb Attack

Sunday, December 23 2012

<http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/world/pakistani-politician-killed-in-suicide-bomb-attack-667600/>

The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility on Saturday for a suicide bomb attack that killed a senior politician in northwest Pakistan in one of the most high-profile assassinations of a political leader in months.

The politician, Bashir Ahmad Bilour, was a senior minister in the northwestern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, where the Taliban have a strong presence, and he had a national reputation as one of the most vocal critics of the militants. Mr. Bilour was long on the target list of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, an umbrella organization of the Pakistani militant groups, and survived at least two previous assassination attacks.

At least eight other people were killed in the attack, and more than 15 others were wounded, senior government officials and doctors at a local hospital said.

Mr. Bilour's assassination sent shockwaves through the country's political circles; President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf expressed shock, with Mr. Ashraf terming Mr. Bilour's death "a national loss." The country's leaders announced a national day of mourning.

The attack, a grim reminder of the dangers militants pose to their opponents, comes just months ahead of national elections, expected to be held in the spring. Asad Munir, a security analyst and retired brigadier, said that such attacks would limit the ability of secular, liberal parties in the province to organize public rallies and mobilize their voters.

"Religious parties will take advantage of the situation," he said.

Mr. Bilour was coming out of a meeting of his Awami National Party, the secular party that governs the provincial capital of Peshawar, when the suicide bomber blew himself up, according to the secretary of home and tribal affairs, Azam Khan. Mr. Bilour died within hours, after being rushed to a hospital in critical condition.

Among the others killed in the attack were Mr. Bilour's secretary and a police officer, Mr. Khan said.

The provincial information minister, Mian Iftikhar Hussain, called for immediate action against militants in the nearby tribal region of North Waziristan, the safest haven for militants in Pakistan, saying it was time to take action against all militants.

"Let there be no difference between good Taliban and bad Taliban," he said.

American officials have long called for the Pakistani military to launch a military offensive in North Waziristan, but Pakistani officials have balked at the pressure, saying the army is overstretched and citing fears that an offensive would lead to retaliatory terrorist attacks in cities.

Also on Saturday, police officials in the southern province of Sindh said that a mob had tortured and killed a man accused of burning the Koran, the latest in a series of violent episodes in Pakistan stemming from allegations of blasphemy.



The killing occurred Friday in Seeta, a remote village in the Dadu district. The village's head cleric, Usman Memon, said charred remnants of the Koran had been found in the mosque that morning, and that the victim of the mob violence had been staying at the mosque alone. It is common for impoverished travelers and religious proselytizers to stay at mosques while traveling.

The man, whose name was not known, was handed over to the police and accused of violating Pakistan's blasphemy laws, Mr. Memon said. But as news of the episode spread later on Friday, an angry crowd gathered outside the police station and eventually forced its way in. The man was dragged out, tortured and killed, and his body was set on fire, according to the police.

Usman Ghani, the district's senior police superintendent, said that he had suspended the official in charge of the police station and filed administrative charges against seven other officers for negligence. He said that charges had been filed against 1,000 people believed to have participated in the mob action and that 150 people had been arrested. Little was known about the victim or what motive he was thought to have had for burning the Koran, if he did so.

Blasphemy is a capital crime in Pakistan, and it is a highly emotional issue for the deeply conservative country. Calls for repealing or revising the blasphemy laws have been met with strong resistance from religious leaders, and two prominent advocates of changing the laws were assassinated last year.



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5. [Law Enforcement, Afghanistan] Explosive Facilitator Detained In Baghlan

Monday, December 24 2012

http://www.wakht.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7586%3Aexplosive-facilitator-detained-in-baghlan&catid=6%3Asecurity-a-crime&Itemid=17&lang=en

Afghan National Army Special Forces partnered with Coalition Forces captured a Taliban improvised explosive device facilitator in the Baghlan-e Jadid district, northern Baghlan province, the alliance said in a statement Monday.

The ANASF conducted the overnight operation to disrupt military operations in the area when they found and detained a Taliban logistician and weapons facilitator who is believed to have supplied logistical support for two recent attacks against Coalition Forces, the statement added.

"Afghan National Security Forces are showing outstanding progress," said an operations officer with U.S. Special Forces, the statement said continuing that based on the way they led this mission, he was confident that they will be prepared to handle all security operations without ISAF assistance", the statement said.

The detainee has been transferred to the Afghan National Directorate of Security for trial by the Baghlan judicial system, according to the statement. The government armed oppositions had not still commented on the statement.



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6. [Attack, Afghanistan] Three Afghans Dead In Blast Near U.S. Base

Wednesday, December 26 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2012/12/26/world/asia/26reuters-afghanistan-violence.html?_r=0

A suicide bomber killed three people in an attack on a U.S. base in Afghanistan on Wednesday, the same base that is believed to be used by the CIA and which a suicide bomber attacked three years ago killing seven CIA employees. The Afghan Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in the eastern town of Khost, saying they had sent a suicide bomber driving a van packed with explosives to the base.

"The target was those who serve Americans at that base," said Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

Afghanistan's NATO-led force said the bomber did not get into the base nor breach its perimeter. Police said the three dead were Afghans who were outside the base, which is beside a military airport.

The al Qaeda-linked Haqqani network, widely regarded as the most dangerous U.S. foe in Afghanistan, is active in Khost province, which is on the Pakistani border.

After more than a decade of war, Taliban insurgents are still able to strike strategic military targets, and launch high-profile attacks in the capital, Kabul, and elsewhere.

Three years ago, an al Qaeda-linked Jordanian double-agent killed seven CIA employees and a Jordanian intelligence officer in a suicide bombing at the same base in Khost, known as Forward Operating Base Chapman.

It was the second deadliest attack in CIA history.

Afghan police official General Abdul Qasim Baqizoy, the Khost police chief, said no CIA agents were hurt on Wednesday.

Afghan authorities are scrambling to improve security across the country before the U.S. combat mission ends in 2014.

Besides pressure from the Taliban, U.S.-led NATO forces also face a rising number of so-called insider attacks, in which Afghan forces turn their weapons on Western troops they are supposed to be working with.

On Monday, an Afghan policewoman killed a U.S. police adviser at the Kabul police headquarters, raising troubling questions about the direction of the war.

It appeared to be the first time that a woman member of Afghanistan's security forces carried out such an attack.

On Tuesday, Afghan officials said the woman has an Iranian passport and moved to Afghanistan 10 years ago.

There was no suggestion that Iran was involved in the attack on the American.

Officials suspect she may have been recruited by al Qaeda or the Taliban, and had intended to also kill Afghan police officials.



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7. [Attack, Pakistan] Blast In Karachi Injures At Least Five

Wednesday, December 26 2012

<http://dawn.com/2012/12/26/two-loud-blasts-reported-near-karachis-sohrab-goth/>

At least five people were injured on Wednesday when a bomb apparently fitted in a motorcycle exploded outside a mosque in Sohrab Goth area of Karachi, Pakistan's commercial capital, police said.

According to reports, the powerful blast, which could be heard from afar, triggered an episode of intense firing in Haji Jannat Gul town area located near Sohrab Goth's Al-Asif Square.

Five people were injured in the explosion and were moved to a nearby private hospital.

A loud contingent of police and Rangers cordoned off the area and the bomb disposal squad was called to the scene of the blast.

The blast came as the city was partially shut down Wednesday, which had been announced as a day of mourning by the religious Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ), believed to be a reincarnation of the banned militant outfit of Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan, over an attack on one their central leaders and the killing of four of their men the previous day.

Violence erupted in different parts of the city Tuesday claiming a total of sixteen lives after gunmen opened fire on a car carrying Maulana Aurangzeb Farooqui, who was hit in the leg by a bullet.

Four other people were reported to have been injured in different incidents of aerial firing and ransacking of public and private properties on Wednesday.





AFPAC

8. [Trend, Afghanistan] Spring Wish Denied As Suicide Bomber Brings Down Afghan Juice Empire

Wednesday, December 26 2012

<http://dawn.com/2012/12/26/spring-wish-denied-as-suicide-bomber-brings-down-afghan-juice-empire/>

When a Taliban suicide bomber killed two people on the edge of the Afghan capital this month, there was another casualty – a global fruit juice business optimistically called “Spring Wish” which provided work for thousands of farmers across the country.

Mustafa Sadiq’s empire had been expanding healthily, bringing in badly needed foreign capital, before the attack inflicted the kind of financial loss cash-strapped Afghanistan can ill afford.

The pomegranate juice business was nearly wiped out in the split second it took the militant to detonate explosives in a truck parked near the factory on December 17.

Pieces of shredded metal were scattered everywhere. Chairs were hurled across the office where Sadiq had spent so much time figuring out how to beat the odds against decades of war, instability and hopelessness.

Sadiq was in Dubai drumming up new export deals when an assistant called with the bad news. The call that Sadiq said he did not get is also troubling him.

“So far no officials, for the sake of sympathy, have called us,” Sadiq, 40, told Reuters, standing beside a year’s supply of juice in containers that were ruined in the attack – nearly \$10 million in losses overall.

“In this situation they should have called me and asked what kind of help they could provide. The agriculture, finance, and commerce ministries nobody so far has visited or called.”

The impact of the war, and expectations for the future, are often seen only through the eyes of Western or Afghan soldiers, or officials who point to the progress that has been made.

Sadiq offers another perspective. Some workers told him the bomber triggered the loudest blast they had heard in 30 years.

A Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was followed by a decade of resistance by mujahideen fighters who drove them out. Then warlords carved out fiefdoms and destroyed half of the capital in the civil war that followed.

Dirty Politics

The Taliban took over, were toppled in 2001 and are now raising fears they may return when US-led Nato troops hand over security to Afghan forces in 2014.

But Sadiq does not see the Taliban as the biggest threat to Afghanistan’s future. Instead, he says, officials have turned politics into a commercial enterprise driven by corruption.

“Government employees think it’s time to fill their pockets and grab whatever they can. That will pave the way for civil war,” said Sadiq, as workers feverishly loaded boxes of the little fruit juice left onto a truck, and others worked to rebuild a brick wall.

“You have to struggle, not run away. It is kind of like running away now. They have walls around themselves sitting there and they do not have contact with ordinary Afghans.”

His disillusionment is shared by the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

“There is no guarantee for investment in Afghanistan. People are afraid of the government; there is no rule of law. Government officials can do anything they want,” the chamber’s first vice-chairman, Jan Alokzai, told Reuters.

“President (Hamid) Karzai’s words are only on paper and don’t have any value.”

Afghanistan’s US-backed government says it is committed to building up the economy, attracting foreign investment and helping Afghans secure a brighter future. Karzai says it is contracts with foreigners that spread graft.

Wishful Thinking?

The government has highlighted 2014 as a year to invest in Afghanistan, which relies heavily on foreign aid, and to take advantage of its cheap labor and land leases.



In each of the 10 years following 2014, the government hopes revenues from oil, natural gas, iron, copper and other mining ventures will generate \$4 billion in revenue.

Sadiq spent time in Europe, waiting for an opportunity to return and invest in his homeland. He eventually opened a factory in an industrial park along Kabul's dusty Jalalabad Road in 2008, from where he broke into overseas markets.

Spring Wish, which employed about 1,000 people, was selling produce to the health conscious in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, bringing money into Afghanistan, while anxious Afghans carted \$4.5 billion in cash out of the country last year to safety.

But when asked about the maps on a wall identifying parts of Afghanistan which offer opportunities for farmers and businesses like his, Sadiq could only put his head in his hands and cry.

The dark red seeds from Sadiq's fruits were prized in Europe for their antioxidant qualities, and in Japan where many believe they can help fight cancers. He seems most proud of the fact that he helped 40,000 farmers across Afghanistan earn a living.

As Sadiq tries to persuade his staff to keep dreaming big and to rebuild, one question may haunt him for some time. The suicide bomber parked his truck in a lane between his company and a foreign firm.

The Taliban said it attacked an American company next door, but he still wonders whether his factory, which relied on Italian machinery and benefited from US aid programs, was the target. And he acknowledges he is desperate for money from Western donors.

"Around 120 people were working here and this factory was totally destroyed in the suicide attack," said Mohammed Jaw, 28, a general operator for the company. "A number of our workers will lose their jobs and now everyone is concerned about what happens next."

Despite the loss, Sadiq's entrepreneurial and marketing spirit seems intact.

"Have you tried the juice with mulberry flavor?" he asked proudly. "It's really good."

Then a worker brought the moment back to reality. He lifted his cell phone to show a photograph of the suicide bomber's severed head.





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9. [Security, Afghanistan] Explosive Materials Of Taliban Discovers In Ghazni

Wednesday, December 26 2012

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/5601-explosive-materials-of-taliban-discovers-in-ghazni.html>

The national security officials reported from discovering of huge explosive materials of Taliban in Ghazni province. These explosive materials were discovered from Qala-e-Joz area of Ghazni province.

Sher Mohammad deputy of national security Dept. of Ghazni in a meeting with reporters said Taliban wanted to smuggle these materials from Ghazni to Kandahar province.

At least 8 armed Taliban have been arrested in smuggling of 5200 kg of explosive materials.

According to him, Taliban packed these explosive materials in 100 sacks and were placed skillfully in a vehicle.

Meanwhile, the national security officials of Ghazni said that Taliban wanted to use from these explosive materials in making vest coats and roadside bombs.

The national security officials of Ghanzi said that these explosive materials were smuggled from Pakistan to Afghanistan.



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10. [Trend, Pakistan] Taliban Suspected In Deadly Pakistan Attacks

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/12/20121227154350354955.html>

Government officials have said dozens of fighters armed with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons attacked two tribal police posts in northwest Pakistan, killing two police officers.

Twenty-two tribal police are also missing and presumed kidnapped following the pre-dawn attack on Thursday, in the town of Darra Adam Khel, according to Al Jazeera's Kamal Hyder.

The town is a "strategic corridor" to both North and South Waziristan as well as the Kohat district near city of Peshawar, a region suspected as the main sanctuary of Taliban militants.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but "there were deep suspicions that the Pakistani Taliban were behind the attack and may be holding the men", Hyder reported.

Officials also told the Associated Press that security forces have launched an operation to rescue the missing policemen.

Ceasefire conditions

Almost at the same time that the attacks occurred, Pakistani Taliban officials also outlined conditions for a ceasefire with the Pakistani government, including the adoption of Islamic law and a break with the United States.

The Taliban made the offer in a letter to a local journalist Saleem Safi, who wrote about it the Pakistan daily The News on Thursday.

The reporter said the Taliban demanded that Pakistan stop its involvement in the war pitting Afghan insurgents against the Kabul government and refocus on a war of "revenge" against India.

Safi said the militants also accused Pakistan's army of acting as "mercenaries" for America and pledged to continue attacks on two major political parties they say serve US interests.

The Pakistani Taliban are a separate entity allied to the Afghan Taliban. Known as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), they have launched devastating attacks against the Pakistani military and civilians.

The ceasefire conditions was confirmed by the group's spokesman Ihsanullah Ihsan in a phone call to Reuters.

Ihsan also said that even if there was a peace agreement signed with the government, the Taliban would not disarm because they do not accept Pakistan's "present secular and pro-West system and its constitution."

He said if the Pakistan government wanted a ceasefire, it would have to accept all the demands.

Taliban talks



Pakistani Interior Minister Rehman Malik dismissed the letter saying he rejected any offer of ceasefire unless it came directly from the Pakistan Taliban leader himself.

"I reject all these offers, and any future claims, of Ihsanullah Ihsan, unless and until Hakeemullah Mehsud owns them himself," Malik told reporters.

Military officials told Reuters last month that Pakistan Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud had lost operational command to his deputy, Wali ur-Rehman, who is considered to be more open to reconciliation with the Pakistani government.

The Taliban deny Mehsud has lost command.

The letter from the Taliban spokesman comes as the focus in Afghanistan shifts from a military push by NATO troops to potential peace talks, and amid speculation of a rift between top Pakistan Taliban leaders.

NATO troops are due to hand over control of most operations in Afghanistan to Afghan forces next year and officials have been eager to start peace talks with the Taliban there.



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11. [Security, Afghanistan] Tens Of Kg Of Explosive Devices Discovered In Logar

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/5617-tens-kg-of-explosive-devices-discovered-in-logar.html>

One hundred ninety kg of explosives devices of armed Taliban were discovered in an operation in Logar province. These materials were kept in a hideout of Taliban in the outskirts of Barakai Barak district, and were seized in an operation of Afghan forces yesterday. Abdul Saboor Nasrati police in charge of Logar said to BNA, Taliban wanted to use from these materials in making of roadside mines and vest coats. According to police official of Logar province, these explosive devices were smuggled from Pakistan to Afghanistan. It is said , no one has been arrested in the connection of this case.





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12. [Security, Afghanistan] Three Hundred Fifty Kg Of Explosive Devices Of Taliban Discovered In Kabul

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/5614-350-kg-of-explosive-devices-of-taliban-discovered-in-kabul.html>

NATO said that they arrested explosive devices cache of Taliban in a military operation in Sorobi district of Kabul province. It is said that 350 kg of explosive devices were seized from this cache. BNA quoting from NATO press statement, this cache of explosive devices were kept in a hideout of armed Taliban in the vicinities of Sorrobi district. According to this statement, Taliban wanted to use from this material in making of vest coats and roadside mines.



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13. [Attack, Pakistan] Seven Persons Injured In Explosion In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Friday, December 28 2012

http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=12/28/2012&id=6#6

Seven persons were injured, two among them critically, when an explosive device went off in Omarzai area in Charsadda District, reports Dawn. Local sources said that the explosive device was planted along a road leading to Hajiabad locality in Omarzai area. Two real brothers were among the injured. The injured were identified as Anwar Shah, Sajjad Ali and his brother Nowsher Ali, Aizaz, Fazl Rabi, Syed Mudassar Shah and Mohammad.

In another incident, a gas pipeline was blown up in Sardaryab area, resulting in suspension of gas supply to a number of areas in Charsadda District.

Meanwhile, unidentified militants on December 26 blew up a Government Primary School for Boys in Mushtarzai village in the Badaber suburb of Peshawar, reports Central Asia Online. The School building was destroyed. However, no casualties were reported.

Further, the Police foiled a terror bid and defused an improvised explosive device (IED) planted near a grid station on the Canal Road. The bomb disposal squad defused the IED.



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14. [Security, Pakistan] Explosive Devices Defused In Hangu

Friday, December 28 2012

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-7-150925-Explosive-devices-defused-in-Hangu>

The bomb disposal unit (BDU) official defused an explosive device in Thall tehsil on Thursday, official sources said.

The BDU in-charge in Thall Asadullah said that unknown persons had placed 13 kilograms of explosives outside the residence of one Mudassir Shah in Sra Ghundai village in Thall.

The explosives fitted to a time device were spotted by someone who informed the bomb disposal unit, he said, adding, the officials reached the site and defused the explosives.

The sources said that Mudassir Shah had quit militancy and was leading a peaceful life. "The militants may want to punish him for deserting them," the sources added.



AFRICOM

15. [Attack, Nigeria] Boko Haram Suicide Bombers Attack Mobile Phone Companies In Nigeria

Saturday, December 22 2012

http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2012/12/boko_haram_suicide_bombers_att.php#ixzz2GMWNGzKO

Boko Haram launched a pair of suicide attacks at two mobile telephone offices in the city of Kano. One of the two suicide bombers was stopped before he could execute the attack. Al Jazeera reports:

"There has been a bomb blast at Airtel office. From what we hear, it was a suicide attack. The bomber rammed his car into the gate and blew himself up. The building is on fire," a policeman told the AFP news agency on condition of anonymity.

South Africa's MTN was also targeted.

"The one who hit the Airtel office was shot by military men before the bomb exploded ... at the MTN office the car rammed into the fence but no civilians were killed," Ibrahim Idris, the chief of police in Kano, told Reuters by phone.

Islamist sect Boko Haram has previously blown up telephone masts and offices of phone companies, saying they help the security forces catch its members.

A military source said one security guard was injured and has been taken to hospital.

Today's suicide bombings are the first by Boko Haram since Nov. 25, when a bomber killed 11 people in an attack on a church at a military base in Kaduna. So far this year, Boko Haram has carried out at least 21 suicide attacks [see list below]. The targets have included churches, mosques, newspapers, government officials, and security forces. The terror group also conducted several other suicide attacks in previous years; the most high-profile suicide attack targeted the United Nations headquarters in the Nigerian capital of Abuja in August 2011.

Boko Haram and the global jihad

Boko Haram has aimed to become a player in the global jihad. Its followers are known to fight in Mali with al Qaeda-linked groups, and its members have trained with Shabaab. The terror group has also expanded its propaganda efforts to show solidarity with al Qaeda and its affiliates. In July 2010, Boko Haram emir Abubakar Shekau issued an online statement praising al Qaeda and offering condolences to al Qaeda of Iraq for its loss of Abu Ayyub al Masri and Abu Omar al Baghdadi. He also threatened the United States.

"Do not think jihad is over," Shekau said. "Rather jihad has just begun. O America, die with your fury."

And late last month, Shekau praised al Qaeda and said he and his fighters support jihad in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Chechnya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Algeria, Libya, and Mali.

"We are with our mujahideen brothers in the Cause of Allah everywhere, in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Pakistan, Kashmir, Iraq, the Peninsula of Muhammad [Saudi Arabia], Allah's peace and prayer be upon him, Yemen, Somalia, Al-



geria, and other places that I didn't mention," Shakau said, while also naming top al Qaeda leaders killed by US and allied forces.

Documents seized at Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan showed that top-level Boko Haram leaders have been in touch with al Qaeda, according to The Guardian. In addition, Boko Haram is known to receive support from al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and from Shabaab, an al Qaeda affiliate in East Africa.

The US has only just begun to awaken to the threat that Boko Haram poses to the international community. In June, the US added Shekau to its list of global terrorists, along with Khalid al Barnawi and Abubakar Adam Kam-ba, both of whom have ties to Boko Haram and close links to al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. But the US government has still not added Boko Haram to the list of terrorist entities, as some officials fear the designation would only serve to further radicalize the group.



AFRICOM

16. [Attack, Nigeria] Bomb Goes Off Near Kano Joint

Sunday, December 23 2012

<http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/index.php/news/184078-bomb-goes-off-near-kano-joint>

An explosive device was detonated around 7pm on Sunday evening in Badawa area of Kano state.

The bomb was placed inside a deep gully near a popular hang out called 'A gangara' by residents. However, no one was injured.

Patrons of the joint immediately took to their heels and abandoned the premises.

Meanwhile, the JTF have cordoned off the area.



AFRICOM

17. [Attack, Nigeria] MTN Targeted In Suicide Bomb Plot

Sunday, December 23 2012

<http://www.iol.co.za/business/companies/mtn-targeted-in-suicide-bomb-plot-1.1444592#.UNtkMYaRaSo>

Authorities blame a radical Islamist sect for twin suicide car bombings targeting two major mobile phone companies, an official said on Saturday, blacking out a top operator's network in most of Nigeria's northern commercial hub.

A suicide bomber drove an explosive-laden car into the facilities of the Nigerian subsidiary of Bharti Airtel of India at about 8am in the city of Kano, said Capt. Iweha Ikedichi, who speaks for a special taskforce deployed in Kano to reduce the threat of the Islamic rebels known as Boko Haram.

The attack left an Airtel worker injured, authorities said. It also damaged a switch station, said James Eze, an Airtel spokesman. He said the company was still assessing how bad the damage was, but declined to comment further.

Switch stations control the regional mobile phone network and if they are seriously damaged, the entire network could go down. An Airtel staff who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the press said the targeted switch station covered six northern states, including Kano. But while Airtel's network appeared to be down across Kano Sunday, calls to lines in some of the other states went through.

At about the same time as the Airtel attack, another bomber targeted the facilities of the Nigerian subsidiary of South Africa-based MTN Group, about two miles (three kilometres) away. That attack was botched by security officers who shot the bomber, causing an explosion at the company's gate, Ikedichi said.

The target of the foiled attack was MTN's switch station, said Funmilayo Omogbenigun, spokeswoman for Nigeria's largest cell phone network provider.

Authorities suspect the Boko Haram sect is behind the attacks. The group is held responsible for more than 770 deaths this year alone, according to figures compiled by The Associated Press. Boko Haram's campaign of bombings and shootings has targeted mosques, churches, schools, universities and government buildings. But, four months ago, the group broadened its scope by attacking mobile phone towers for the first time.

In September, a series of attacks damaged more than 31 towers operated by all the major mobile phone providers in the country. Other attacks have occurred since then, further straining the one link Nigeria relies on for communication in a country with very few landlines. While no one claimed responsibility for the attacks, the Islamist sect had threatened mobile phone companies earlier in the year, warning that they would be targeted for cooperating with the government to flush out its members.

In Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with more than 160 million people, mobile phones serve as a valuable life-line in both cities and rural communities. Landlines remain almost nonexistent, as the state-run telephone company has collapsed and repeated efforts to privatize it have failed. More 87 million mobile phone lines were in use in 2009, according to estimates.

"Never would we have expected that telecommunications could be targeted," said Damien Udeh, a spokesman for the Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria. "It portends a dangerous situation for everybody, especially government."



AFRICOM

18. [Security, Nigeria] JTF Uncover Bombs On Kano Streets

Monday, December 24 2012

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201212260647.html>

Operatives of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) in Kano have discovered and detonated explosives planted in strategic location within the metropolis.

The Commandant of 3rd Motorize Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Brigadier General Iliyasu Abba told Reporters in Kano on Monday that " there are desperate attempts by terrorists to instil fear on urban dwellers".

Brigadier Iliyasu Abba added "we have made some arrests while the investigation is still on."



AFRICOM

19. [Security, Nigeria] Nigeria Says Destroys Bomb Factory, Kills Five Gunmen

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/27/us-nigeria-violence-idUSBRE8BQ0MF20121227>

The Nigerian army said soldiers killed five "suspected terrorists" and destroyed a bomb making factory on Thursday in the northern city of Kaduna where the Islamist sect Boko Haram is active.

Kaduna, in the mainly Muslim north, has been the target of several attacks by Boko Haram since the group's low-level insurgency intensified over two years ago.

"On the approach to the factory, some suspected terrorists opened fire and also threw already primed Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) at the troops," Kaduna Army spokesman Sani Kukasheka Usman said in a statement.

"The exchange of fire that ensued resulted in the death of five terrorists, while two that sustained various degrees of injuries are being treated."

Usman said seven rifles, detonating cord, remote detonating switches and IED materials were found and destroyed.

Boko Haram has killed hundreds this year in a campaign to impose Islamic sharia law in northern Nigeria. The sect is the biggest threat to stability in Africa's biggest oil exporter.

In its stronghold in the far northeast city of Maiduguri, seven people were murdered by unidentified attackers on Wednesday, a police spokesman said. A witness said he saw the seven dead bodies, all with their throats cut.

Gunmen killed six people at a church in the northeast town of Potiskum on Tuesday, the third year running that Christmas services have come under deadly attack.

But Boko Haram is not the only threat in northern Nigeria.

Islamist group Ansaru, known to have ties with Boko Haram, has risen in prominence in recent weeks. It claimed an attack on a major police barracks in the capital Abuja last month, where it said hundreds of prisoners were released.

The group said on Saturday that it was behind the kidnapping of a French national last week and it has been labeled a "terrorist group" by Britain.

Security has been tightened throughout the north of Africa's most populous nation and Christmas attacks weren't on the scale of the previous two years when dozens were killed in bomb and gun strikes.

At least 2,800 people have died in fighting since Boko Haram launched an uprising against the government in 2009, watchdog Human Rights Watch says.

The group, which is loosely modeled on the Afghan Taliban, mostly focuses its attacks on the security forces, religious targets and politicians.



AFRICOM

20. [Security, Nigeria] Police Foil Attempt To Bomb Enugu Airport

Friday, December 28 2012

<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/police-foil-attempt-to-bomb-enugu-airport/134718/>

The Police in Enugu State thursday foiled an attempt by suspected terrorists to bomb the Akanu Ibiam International Airport, in Enugu.

Also, the Nigerian Army thursday said it killed five suspected Boko Haram members and destroyed a bomb-making factory in Rigasa area of Kaduna State.

But the police in a statement by its Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Ebere Amaraizu, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), said the operatives of the Explosive Ordinance Department (EOD) of the state Police Command arrested four persons, including a driver in a vehicle with registration number KJA 359 AP.

It was gathered that the suspects were heading towards the Airport in the morning hours of yesterday with some items believed to be dangerous fireworks contained in two cartons, one packet of celebration thunder of 10 shots candle.

The statement further disclosed that the suspects were already helping the police in their investigations at the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Similarly, the spokesman of the 1 Division, Nigerian Army, Col Sani Kukasheka, said in a statement in Kaduna, that the early morning raid was carried out in conjunction with other security agencies.

Kukasheka, said two other suspects were injured during the operation, and that various arms and explosive devices were recovered in a house located off Makarfi Road in Rigasa.

He listed the items recovered to include five Mark four Rifles, three Pump Action Rifles, 20 Rolls of Detonating Cords, 21 Nine Volt Batteries, two Remote Switches, one Testing Metre, five Assorted Daggers and Jack knives as well as other Improvised Explosive Device (IED) materials.

“On approaching the factory, some suspected terrorists opened fire and also threw already primed IED at the troops. The ensuing exchange of fire resulted in the death of five terrorists, while two that sustained various degrees of injuries are being treated. In line with our resolve to deter terrorists, the building housing the factory was demolished,” he said.

The spokesman attributed the success of the operation to the support of “well meaning citizens”, who volunteered information to security agencies.

Meanwhile, gunmen yesterday shot dead a Maiduguri-based merchant, Alhaji Abubakar Girigiri, at his warehouse in the Bolori area of the state capital.

An eye witness told journalists in Maiduguri, that the gunmen came to the warehouse on foot, pretending to be customers before shooting him.

“A group of four teenagers arrived the warehouse on foot and met Girigiri attending to his business. After a short while, two of them brought out guns from their trousers and shot him at close range,” the witness, who identified himself as Malam Modu Lawal, said.

While adding that the businessman died on the spot, Lawal said; “We tried to rush him to the hospital for help but he died before we could do anything.”

The state PPRO, Mr. Gideon Jibrin, confirmed the story, but said the police were yet to get full details of the inci-



dent.

Jibrin also confirmed the killing of seven persons in Jere local government area of the state by gunmen.

He said: "The police is trying to get the full details of the report, so we can unravel the mystery behind the killings."

The Joint Task Force (JTF) on Operation Restore Order also confirmed the killing of three security men in the early hours of Thursday at the Ruwan Zafi area of Maiduguri.





CENTCOM

21. [Trend, Yemen] Yemeni Army Shells Tribesmen Blocking Pipeline

Sunday, December 23 2012

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/yemeni-army-shells-tribesmen-blocking-pipeline>

The Yemeni army launched an assault on Sunday using tanks and rockets on tribesmen blocking repairs to the country's main oil export pipeline, tribal sources said.

"Armed tribesmen prevented repair teams from fixing the oil pipeline and army forces shelled the areas where the gunmen are based using tanks and Katyusha rockets," a tribal source told Reuters. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Earlier this month, the military launched a major offensive against tribesmen suspected of repeatedly blowing up the Maarib pipeline and attacking power lines. At least 17 soldiers were killed in an ambush by suspected al-Qaeda militants.

Local authorities reached a deal last week with tribal leaders under which the military will cease air strikes and the tribesmen will chase those responsible for killing the soldiers.

Yemen's oil and gas pipelines have repeatedly been sabotaged by militants or disgruntled tribesmen since anti-government protests created a power vacuum in 2011, causing fuel shortages and slashing export earnings for the impoverished country.



CENTCOM

22. [Attack, Iraq] Iraq Attacks Kill Four

Sunday, December 23 2012

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/iraq-attacks-kill-four>

Three separate bomb attacks killed a member of the Kurdish peshmerga security forces and three construction workers in Iraq on Sunday, officers and doctors said.

A bomb blast in an under-construction house in the town of Mishahada, north of Baghdad, killed the workers and wounded another, a police captain and a doctor said.

A roadside bomb attack against an army patrol wounded three soldiers in the town of Khanaqin, northeast of Baghdad, while a member of the peshmerga forces was killed when a second bomb exploded as he and his team arrived at the scene of the first bombing.

Two other peshmerga were also wounded in the second Khanaqin blast, an army officer and a doctor said.

The attacks come one day after an explosion at a shop selling CDs killed four people and injured 11 in Qazaniyah, a town northeast of Baghdad.

Police officials said a bomb hidden in a plastic bag exploded near the shop Saturday afternoon. The shop was completely destroyed.



CENTCOM

23. [Attack, Syria] Car Bomb Kills Six In Damascus, Say Activists

Sunday, December 23 2012

<http://gulfnews.com/news/region/syria/car-bomb-kills-six-in-damascus-say-activists-1.1122526>

A car bomb exploded in eastern Damascus on Saturday, a rebel spokeswoman said, while the Syrian government reported that a gunman killed a state television journalist in the capital.

The car bomb exploded in the capital's Kaboun area and left six people dead and 10 wounded, an opposition spokeswoman in Damascus identified as Lena Shami said via an internet call. There was no way to independently confirm the death toll. The official Syria Arab News Agency (Sana) also reported the bombing, blaming terrorists, the government's usual description of rebels seeking to overthrow President Bashar Al Assad.

Shami blamed the bombing on the government, which she said was targeting the area's Sunni residents. Sunnis make up a majority of the nation's population and also of the rebellion.

Meanwhile, a Syrian state television cameraman was killed outside his home in Damascus, Sana reported. Haidar Smoudi was the ninth state-employed journalist killed by "armed terrorist groups," the news agency said. There was no claim of responsibility in the shooting, but anti-government groups have been suspected of carrying out attacks on state-employed journalists.



CENTCOM

24. [Attack, Syria] Syrian Jets Bomb Bakery, More Than 60 Killed

Monday, December 24 2012

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/world/2012/12/24/syrian-jets-bomb-bakery-more-than-60-killed>

A government airstrike on a bakery in a rebel-held town in central Syria killed more than 60 people, activists say. The strike on the town of Halfaya left scattered bodies and debris up and down a street, and more than a dozen dead and wounded were trapped in tangled heap of dirt and rubble.

The attack appeared to be the government response to a newly announced rebel offensive seeking to drive the Syrian army from a constellation of towns and village north of the central city of Hama. Halfaya was the first of the area's towns to be "liberated" by rebel fighters, and activists saw Sunday's attack as payback.

"Halfaya was the first and biggest victory in the Hama countryside," said Hama activist Mousab Alhamadee via Skype. "That's why the regime is punishing them in this way."

The total death toll remained unclear, but the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said more than 60 people were killed. That number is expected to rise, it said, because some 50 of those wounded in the strike are in critical condition.

Amateur videos posted online Sunday showed residents and armed rebels rushing to the scene. One stopped to cover a mound of human flesh lying in the street with his coat.

More than a dozen dead or seriously wounded people lay in the street near a simple, concrete building, some in puddles of blood. Near its front wall, bodies jutted from a pile of dirt and rubble on the sidewalk.

Rebels screamed in distress while trying to extract the bodies, while others carried away the wounded.

It was unclear from the videos if the building was indeed a bakery. Nearly all the dead and wounded appeared to be men, some wore camouflage, raising the possibility that the jet had targeted a rebel gathering.

For the past week, rebels have been launching attacks in the area, most notably in the nearby village of Morek, where they hope to seize control of the country's main north-south highway, preventing the regime from getting supplies to its forces further north in the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo.

On Saturday, one rebel group threatened to storm two predominantly Christian towns nearby if their residents did not "evict" government troops they said were using them as a base to attack nearby areas.

The activist accounts could not be independently verified due to restrictions on reporting in Syria. The Syrian government does not respond to requests for comment on its military activities.

The attack coincided with the start of a two-day visit by Lakhdar Brahimi, who represents the U.N. And the Arab League, to meet with top Syrian officials.

Brahimi has made little apparent progress toward ending Syria's crisis since assuming his post in September, mostly because the sides appear more interested in fighting it out than in sitting down for talks.

Brahimi did not speak publicly upon arriving in Damascus for a two-day mission, and it was unclear whether he would present new ideas to end the war. His trip appeared troubled from the start.

Instead of flying directly to Syria as he had on previous visits, Brahimi landed in Beirut and traveled to the Syrian capital by land because of fighting near the Damascus airport, Lebanese officials said.

The Lebanese officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters, said Brahimi was expected to meet Syria's foreign minister later Sunday and President Bashar Assad on Monday.

The trip is Brahimi's third since taking the job following the resignation of former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan after both sides disregarded a cease-fire he brokered in April.

While not advancing a comprehensive peace plan, Brahimi has called on the sides to negotiate a solution.

The security situation has gotten notably worse for the regime since his last visit, with rebels storming a number of military bases and seizing valuable munitions. Russia, Assad's most powerful international backer, also appears to have changed his assessment of Assad's strength, as top officials say they do not seek to preserve his regime, while



still calling for a negotiated solution.

Still, neither side appears willing to talk.

In a lengthy Sunday news conference, Syrian Information Minister Omran al-Zoubi repeated the Syrian government's line that it is fighting terrorist groups backed by foreign powers who seek to destroy Syria.

Al-Zoubi said the government was willing to engage in dialogue but said the other side wasn't.

"We speak of dialogue with those who believe in national dialogue," he said. "But those who rejected dialogue in their statements and called for arms and use of weapons, that's a different issue. They don't want dialogue."

Rebel groups refuse to talk to Assad, saying too many people have died for him to be considered part of the solution.

Violence raged elsewhere in the country on Sunday. Anti-regime activists reported government airstrikes on suburbs east of the capital and the northern province of Aleppo.

Airstrikes on the town of al-Safira, south of Aleppo, killed 13 people, including a mother and five daughters from one family, a local activist named Hussein said via Skype. He gave only his first name for fear of retribution.

The town lies next to a large military complex with factories and artillery and air defense bases. Hussein guessed the airstrike was payback for recent rebel attacks on the complex.

"The strikes don't hit the fighters at all," he said. "They want to take revenge on the civilians."

The Observatory said at least 10 rebels and an unknown number of government troops were killed in clashes in Afreen, near Aleppo, Syria's largest city, as rebels sought to storm an army base there.

Anti-regime activists say more than 40,000 people have been killed since Syria's crisis began in March 2011.



CENTCOM

25. [Security, Egypt] Egyptian Forces Intercept 17 Rockets Headed For Gaza

Monday, December 24 2012

http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2012/12/egyptian_forces_intercept_17_r.php

On Monday, an attempt to smuggle 17 short-range rockets into Gaza was foiled by Egyptian security forces. The rockets, said to be of the French-made SNEB 68 mm caliber air-launched unguided model, were reportedly confiscated 22 kilometers (13.67 miles) south of el Arish, in the northern Sinai.

The interception occurs just a few days after the Jerusalem Post reported that "Israel and Egypt are carrying on discussions in Cairo that could lead to the further easing of restrictions on the Gaza Strip and prevent a swift re-arming of Hamas."

Following the institution of a ceasefire on Nov. 21 that brought an end to Operation Pillar of Defense, Hamas officials claimed that the agreement did not prevent them from continuing their smuggling efforts. "There is no way to relinquish weapons These weapons protected us and there is no way to stop obtaining and manufacturing them," Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk told the Associated Press.

While Hamas seeks to continue its smuggling through Egypt's Sinai, the issue has garnered greater attention from US officials. According to a readout released by the White House, during a phone conversation on Nov. 21, President Barack Obama told Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the ceasefire agreement provided the US with the opportunity "to intensify efforts to help Israel address its security needs, especially the issue of the smuggling of weapons and explosives into Gaza."

An unnamed US official also told Haaretz in late November: "We will work with Israel and Egypt to prevent the smuggling ... We know that this is a critical issue for preserving stability here, especially given the fact that Iran will not stop trying to transfer weapons to Gaza. We all now understand that we must deal with the smuggling much more effectively than we have up till now."

In early December, a group of US senators called on Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi to increase efforts to prevent weapons smuggling by Gaza-based terror groups.

Thus far in December, no rockets or mortars fired from Gaza have landed in Israel. On Sunday, a rocket fired from Gaza toward Israel landed in the coastal enclave.



CENTCOM

26. [Trend, Syria] Syria Student Turns Bomb-Maker For Jihadists

Tuesday, December 25 2012

<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/syria-student-turns-bomb-maker-jihadists-105455574.html>

"We don't have rocket launchers, but I can make a bomb out of practically anything," says a proud Abu Hudeifa, a university dropout turned member of a jihadist group fighting in Aleppo, northern Syria.

"I connect two cables to the vehicle battery, and when they make contact ... boom!" says the 24-year-old, who confesses a deep hatred for President Bashar al-Assad, as he shows off an old Russian-made rocket mounted on a pick-up truck.

Born in the town of Marea in Aleppo province, which has seen fierce fighting between rebels and regime forces for several months -- Abu Hudeifa has joined the Al-Nusra Front, blacklisted by Washington as a "terrorist" group.

He, however, bears no anger towards the United States and the focus of his hatred is clear.

"I don't hate the United States or the West... I just want Assad to leave my country and to stop killing people. That's why I joined Al-Nusra," he tells AFP.

Not much is known about Sunni Al-Nusra Front except that it is a jihadist group with roots in Iraq and has claimed some of the deadliest attacks against Assad's forces in the conflict roiling Syria.

Analysts say the group believes that the fight against Assad is a religious struggle to oust a regime dominated by members of Allawite community, an offshoot of Shiite Islam to which the president belongs. Some 80 percent of Syria's population is Sunni.

Many also believe that for months now Al-Nusra Front has been spearheading the anti-Assad rebellion even as the main rebel Free Syrian Army struggles to overcome divisions in its ranks.

Abu Hudeifa, who learnt his bomb-making skills from his older brother Ammar, says he joined the Islamist group for its adeptness at combat and not for its extremist ideology.

"Thanks to Al-Nusra, we will win the war ... only Al-Nusra is ready to fight to the death."

Ammar says his younger brother is only a fighter like him and not an extremist, like other members of Al-Nusra Front.

"My brother is much more open-minded than all the men in his group. He is no radical...He's just a fighter, like me," says Ammar, 28, who himself is a member of a mainstream rebel group and has swapped bomb-making for filming battles.

As children, Abu Hudeifa and Ammar spent long hours taking apart and then fixing remote-controlled car toys or any gadgets they could lay their hands on.

"I've always been good at fixing things," says Abu Hudeifa.



"When my mother's washing machine or fridge stopped working, or when my father's car broke down, I'd get my toolbox out and get working... Now my brother and I put our knowledge to practice in war," says Abu Hudeifa, who has sharp features and a short beard.

The brothers take great pride in their inventiveness, which however, has not been without cost. Abu Hudeifa has lost three fingers when a small plastic explosive blew up too early.

"We've made devices from scratch. I've made remote-controlled bombs that exploded as army vehicles drove past," he says.

"We've also packed pressure cookers with explosives. We close them tight with screws, heat them up for hours, then lay them on the road. When they explode, the cooker breaks up into shrapnel.

"They're very effective. We've even managed to destroy many army vehicles' armour that way," Abu Hudeifa says.

The two brothers share a raging hatred towards Assad for very personal reasons.

Ammar's wife was killed instantly when a rocket fired by regime soldiers struck the car she was travelling in.

"I'll never forget my brother's face when he heard his wife had been killed," says Abu Hudeifa.

The two also share the pain of being separated from their parents who fled their home for neighbouring Turkey when violence swept northern Syria.

"I want revenge ... I want to make Assad pay for my parents' misery in a refugee camp across the border. They are freezing to death," says Abu Hudeifa.

"I'm tired of watching friends and family being buried."





CENTCOM

27. [Law Enforcement, UAE] UAE Arrests Cell Planning Terrorist Attacks

Wednesday, December 26 2012

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/uae-arrests-cell-planning-terrorist-attacks-state-news-agency>

Security forces in the United Arab Emirates have arrested a cell of UAE and Saudi Arabian citizens which was planning to carry out militant attacks in both countries and other states, the official news agency WAM said on Wednesday.

The group had acquired materials and equipment for use in such actions, WAM said.

"The security authorities in the UAE, in coordination with the related security parties in Saudi Arabia, announced the arrest of an organised cell from the deviant group that was planning to carry out actions against national security of both countries and some sisterly states," WAM said.

The phrase "the deviant group" is often used by authorities in Saudi Arabia to describe al Qaeda members.

The UAE, a major oil exporter, regional business hub and US ally, has detaining more than 60 local Islamists this year.

Those detainees, who belong to an Islamist group called al-Islah, have confessed to setting up a secret organization with an armed force whose aim was to take power and establish an Islamic state, local media reported in September.



CENTCOM

28. [Attack, Syria] Twenty People Die In A Bomb Attack On Syrian Village

Wednesday, December 26 2012

http://www.agi.it/english-version/world/elenco-notizie/201212261333-cro-ren1029-twenty_people_die_in_a_bomb_attack_on_syrian_village

Twenty people, including eight children, have been killed in a bomb attack on a village in Syria, reported the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The activists said: "At least 20 people, including eight children and three women, were killed in the bombing by regime forces of several farms in a Kahtaniyeh village, to the west of the city of Raqa."



CENTCOM

29. [Trend, Iraq] Turkish Planes Bomb PKK Camps, Targets

Thursday, December 27 2012

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2012/12/27/Turkish-planes-bomb-PKK-camps-targets/UPI-63281356622002/

Turkish warplanes hit targets belonging to the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party in northern Iraq overnight, officials said Thursday.

The officials said the F-16s bombed camps and other targets around the Kandil and Zap regions in northern Iraq, Dogan news agency said.

The operation began after drone data indicated members of the militant group were going to previously bombed targets with the idea of resettling.

A number of shelters identified as belonging to the militants were hit overnight as well, Dogan said.

The group, known by its Kurdish acronym PKK, is fighting to establish a separate Kurd nation.



CENTCOM

30. [Attack, Ukraine] Blast In Ukrainian University Kills One, Wounds Two

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://news.yahoo.com/blast-ukrainian-university-kills-one-wounds-two-131614248.html>

An explosion tore through a medical university in the city of Chernivtsy in western Ukraine on Thursday killing one person and wounding two, local police and prosecutors said.

Police were investigating the blast and were looking into the possibility it may have been caused by a bomb, a police spokeswoman said.

Regional prosecutors said a 62-year-old man had been killed in the incident, which they said probably involved a hand grenade.

"According to preliminary information, the dead person was at odds with a staff member (of the university) over a plot of land ...," the prosecutor's office said in a statement.

The blast also wounded a university teacher and a student but their lives were not in danger, it said.

Bomb attacks are rare in the former Soviet republic of 45 million.

The most recent one, last April, wounded 30 people in the city of Dnipropetrovsk. Its alleged perpetrators are now on trial and accused of trying to extort money from the government by threatening to carry out further attacks.



CENTCOM

31. [Attack, Syria] Car Bomb In Damascus Kills Four, Injures 10

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://www.thenewstribes.com/2012/12/27/car-bomb-in-damascus-kills-4-injures-10/>

At least four people were killed and 10 others injured in a car bomb in Syrian capital of Damascus on Thursday.

The official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that four people were killed and ten were injured when a car bomb exploded in Damascus.

The report further said that the security services in the capital also seized a truck containing three tons of explosives. "The bombs have since been dismantled."





EUCOM

32. [Security, Israel] Pipe Bomb Discovered In Muslim Cemetery In Tel Aviv

Monday, December 24 2012

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/pipe-bomb-discovered-in-muslim-cemetery-in-tel-aviv/>

A pipe bomb was discovered on Monday in a Muslim cemetery in the Tel Aviv neighborhood of Tel Kabir.

Police sappers were called to the scene in order to clear the explosive device and destroy it. It was not apparent who planted the bomb.



EUCOM

33. [Security, Spain] Bomb Deactivated Outside Spanish Brothel

Tuesday, December 25 2012

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2012/12/25/Bomb-deactivated-outside-Spanish-brothel/UPI-76381356465866/

A bomb found in a car outside a La Jonquera, Spain, brothel was deactivated before it could explode, officials said.

Four men, armed with machine guns and wearing disguises, pulled up to the Paradise brothel in two cars early Tuesday morning, advised security staff of the bomb in one car and drove away in the second, a security guard said.

Motorcyclists hurled bombs at the same business two weeks ago, the website ThinkSpain reported, noting officials suspect the incidents involve settling of scores over drugs or rival prostitution outlets, rather than organized terrorist attacks.

Paradise is considered a "VIP brothel" on the France-Spain border with as many as 200 sex workers on duty, and is frequented largely by French customers, the website said.



EUCOM

34. [Security, Ireland] Pipe Bomb Discovered In Co Armagh

Wednesday, December 26 2012

<http://www.newrossstandard.ie/breaking-news/national-news/pipe-bomb-discovered-in-co-armagh-3337159.html>

A viable pipe bomb has been found during a security alert in Co Armagh.

The explosive device discovered in the Toberhewny Hall area of Lurgan was made safe by Army Technical Officers.

A number of residents were evacuated and roads closed during the alert.

People have been allowed to return to the area and the roads have been re-opened.

The device has been removed for forensic examination.





EUCOM

35. [Security, Palestine] Hamas Moves More Launchers Underground

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=78064&pageid=20&pagename=Security>

The Hamas regime has built bunkers to store and launch medium-range rockets toward Israel. A leading Israeli defense consultant asserted that Hamas and Islamic Jihad adopted methods of the Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah. The consultant, Uzi Rubin, said the Hamas regime built underground launchers to fire extended-range BM-21 Grad rockets toward Israeli cities during the latest war in November 2012.

"The Gaza fighting may also be a harbinger of wars to come," Rubin told the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Hamas military doctrine, with its focus on rockets and missiles, is a reflection of Iran's military doctrine, so any future war in the Gulf will likely unfold along similar lines."

In an address on Dec. 18, Rubin, who helped found the Israel Missile Defense Organization, asserted that Hamas and Jihad fired Grads from underground launchers located in residential areas of the Gaza Strip. He said the Grads, with a range of more than 40 kilometers, were fired from electronically-raised launchers similar to that employed by Hezbollah in its 2006 war with Israel.

[On late Dec. 23, Hamas was reported to have fired a long-range rocket from the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military said the rocket did not land in the Jewish state.]

Rubin, today a leading consultant to Western and other governments, said Hamas and its militia allies fired a range of missiles and rockets during the eight-war in November. He said Palestinian forces also employed what he termed a "more robust command-and-control structure."

"Palestinian operations featured larger numbers of more advanced rockets capable of striking population centers and economic hubs at greater ranges than before, including a few that reached as far as the outskirts of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem," Rubin said.

Rubin cited the firing of Iran's long-range Fajr-5 rocket as well as its Palestinian variant M-75. He said these rockets, with an explosive payload of 80 kilograms, were smuggled to the Gaza Strip in 2011.

In all, Palestinian gunners fired more than 1,500 rockets toward Israel. Rubin said about 10 percent landed in the Gaza Strip and 875 others fell in uninhabited areas in Israel. The rest, which comprised 32 percent of launches, was intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome missile and rocket defense system. Rubin said Iron Dome achieved an 84 percent interception rate.

"The Palestinian rocket offensive was characterized by high-tempo, concentrated fire and the ability to shift aim points and engage targets of opportunity," Rubin said. "In addition, the Palestinians took aim at Israeli troop concentrations, showing that they could fire at targets of opportunity."

Rubin said massive Israel Air Force strikes failed to stop the Palestinian missile war, which also targeted Jerusalem. He said Hamas and its allies preserved their command and control network "even in the face of intense Israeli offensive operations."



The Israel Air Force operated Iron Dome as well as launched strikes against Hamas and Jihad rocket arsenals. Rubin said the preemptive strikes on some 20 suspected weapons storage facilities reduced the pace of medium-range rocket fire.

"Attacks on launch sites were somewhat less effective, possibly due to Israel's desire to minimize civilian casualties and collateral damage in the residential areas where many launchers are located," Rubin said.





EUCOM

36. [Attack, Israel] Explosive Device Hurlled At Soldiers As Low-Level Violence Erupts In Several West Bank Hot-Spots

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/explosive-device-hurlled-at-soldiers-as-violence-erupts-throughout-west-bank/>

An explosive device was thrown by Palestinians at IDF soldiers near Bethlehem Thursday, as violence flared around the West Bank.

The device missed its target and did not cause any injuries or damage.

Since the conclusion of Operation Pillar of Defense's last month, an increasing number of small scale clashes between Palestinians and the IDF have taken place in different locations throughout the West Bank.

Thursday saw a number of Israeli vehicles and IDF troops attacked by Palestinian stone throwers. There were no injuries on the Israeli side.

In the Binyamin region, the vehicle of a security officer was stoned by rioting Palestinians near the outpost of Hara-sha. Near the outpost of Esh Kadosh, violent demonstrations took place for the second consecutive day. IDF forces dispersed the protesters with riot control gear.

Palestinians also stoned IDF forces at Givat Hashkediya, an outpost near Yitzhar. Later on, clashes between settlers and Palestinians erupted in the area. Two Palestinians were arrested in the clashes.

Earlier this week, Palestinians threw stones at a bus and a number of Israeli vehicles. Settlers also reported that Molotov cocktails had been hurled at Israeli cars.

The occurrence of violent incidents has escalated over the past couple of days.

Kadima chairman Shaul Mofaz, a former IDF chief and defense minister, warned Thursday that Israel could be on the verge of a larger round of violence with the Palestinians.

"We might find ourselves on the brink of a third intifada," said Mofaz. "The gas fumes are in the air, we must be careful not to light a spark."



EUCOM

37. [Security, Ireland] Pipe Bomb Found In Front Garden Of House Made Safe

Friday, December 28 2012

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/pipe-bomb-found-in-front-garden-of-house-made-safe-3337777.html>

Gardai believe passers-by had a lucky escape after a viable explosive device may have been picked up as it lay in the front garden of a house.

Local residents had to be evacuated after a viable improvised explosive device was found outside a house at Turvey Avenue, Inchicore, Co Dublin.

An Army bomb disposal team was called out by the gardai as the area was cordoned off and local residents were moved away from the area.

The device was made safe after a controlled explosion was carried out.

But it is believed that the explosive may have been handled or moved before the gardai were alerted and the bomb disposal team was called out.

The remains of the bomb were later handed over to gardai for forensic examination.



EUCOM

38. [Attack, Israel] Small Bomb Goes Off In South Tel Aviv Building

Friday, December 28 2012

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4325581,00.html>

A small bomb exploded in a residential building in Tel Aviv, not far from the central bus station, an area known for its high percentage of African asylum seekers and foreign workers. The device was placed in the building's stairwell and caused damage to an apartment door upon exploding; no injuries were reported.

Tel Aviv District Police's bomb squad arrived at the scene and police forces are currently investigating the event, which seems to be criminally, and not racially motivated.



PACOM

39. [Security, India] Police Seize Large Haul Of Explosive Materials

Friday, December 21 2012

<http://www.ifp.co.in/nws-11394-police-seize-large-haul-of-explosive-materials/>

Manipur police have seized large haul of explosive materials meant for the banned People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) from a house in Khurai Chingabam Leikai, Imphal East in the wee hours of Friday, a police official said.

Briefing the media at the Imphal West commando complex, S Ibomcha, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Imphal West said the seized items include three 1.5 ft long finished bombs, four 1 ft long explosive cakes (labeled as Charge Demolition M112), three transistors, two detonators with wires, eight batteries, one Bajaj Super without registration number suspected to be used to fit explosives and two demand letters of PREPAK, addressed to Dr Bilashini (Rs 10 lakh) and Dr Landhoni Rs 5 lakh).

At about 3 am today, based on a specific input, a combined team of commandos, Imphal West and Imphal East led by Inspector P John, Officer-in-charge, commando, Imphal West conducted cordon and search at the house of one Haorongbam Sharatchandra, 58, of Khurai Chingabam Leikai and recovered the above explosive materials, the DSP said.

However, the main accused namely, Haorongbam Shanker, 23, son of H Sharatchandra of Khurai Chingabam Leikai was not found at his residence, he said, adding the father of the accused, Sharatchandra was apprehended along with the explosive materials.

Sharatchandra revealed that the explosive items were brought and kept by his son and associates four days back, the DSP further said, adding the arrested also disclosed that the two bombs which exploded on December 19 near Panchayat Bhawan, Porompat was taken away from his house. The seized scooter was procured by his son recently to use in nefarious activities, Ibomcha said.

A criminal case has been registered at Porompat Police Station in connection with the seizure of the explosive items and started investigation into it, he added.



PACOM

40. [Security, India] Twenty-Three Bomb-Like Objects Found

Monday, December 24 2012

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=262332>

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered 23 bomb-like objects in Pipramari area in Dumuria upazila yesterday morning.

Rab-6 sources said, on secret information, a team raided the area and recovered the bomb-like objects in an abandon condition.

They were later handed over to Dumuria police station.

Moshiur Rahman, officer in-charge of the PS, said they informed the bomb experts to examine the objects.



PACOM

41. [Security, India] Cache Of Explosives Seized

Tuesday, December 25 2012

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-25/kolkata/35998407_1_explosives-central-forces-cache

Central forces late on Sunday seized gelatin sticks and ammonium nitrate weighing 15 kg from the Barabazar thana area, close to the Jharkhand border, in Purulia. Police are apprehending that the explosives were brought from Jharkhand for attacking the CRP as Maoists are rebuilding their base in the area.

Though the area from which the explosives were seized is not a regular route of the central forces, it could have created a major devastation, a senior officer said. The explosives were planted below a culvert. An officer said that the Maoists were trying to source in arms from Seraikela district and the Nimdih police station in Jharkhand had been alerted in this regard.



PACOM

42. [Security, Indonesia] Police Find Homemade 10Kg Bomb In Poso On Christmas

Wednesday, December 26 2012

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/12/26/police-find-homemade-10kg-bomb-poso-christmas.html>

A 10-kilogram homemade bomb was found under a bench at a police post on Jl. Pulau Sumatra in front of the central Poso market, or some 200 meters from the Poso Police headquarters, as Christians in the Central Sulawesi reGENCY celebrated Christmas on Tuesday.

Police officers found the bomb at 6:30 a.m. local time. It was placed in a jerry can and hidden inside a backpack. The police's bomb squad managed to defuse the bomb.

Poso Police chief Adj. Sr. Comr. Eko Santoso said that after dismantling the bomb, the police also found a cell phone, which appeared to function as a timer, nitrate urea powder, hundreds of 13-centimeter-long nails and two detonators.

"The timer indicated that the bomb was supposed to explode at 7:30 a.m. local time," Eko Santoso told The Jakarta Post over the phone.

He said the bomb might have been placed very early in the morning as traders were arriving at the market to start their business activities.

Based on the type and configuration of the bomb, the police suspected the perpetrator(s) belonged to the same group that targeted the police's traffic post in downtown Poso last October. The group is also thought to have killed two police officers in Tamanjeka and shot patrolling members of the police's Mobile Brigade (Brimob).

After defusing the bomb, the police swept the entire market area using metal detectors to search for other explosive devices that might have been placed in the area. They also examined all vehicles passing through the area and checked the identities of the respective drivers and passengers.

The bomb, however, did not disturb Christmas celebrations in Poso. Business ran as usual and traffic remained smooth.

Researcher Taufik Andrie of the Prasasti Indonesia Foundation said that recent acts of terrorism in Poso had been aimed at the police and not at civilians.

"It's because hardliner groups consider the police as thogut who must be fought against," said Taufik, referring to an Islamic term that describes something worshiped other than God.

The police, according to Taufik, are also seen as an obstacle for the group's terror acts. Bombings, in this case, had been carried out as a form of protest against the police's killing their fellow group members. "That's why they target the police," he said.

Sectarian conflict broke out between Muslims and Christians in Poso in 1998 and by 2000 the conflict had reportedly killed more than 2,000 people. Following the Malino peace pact in 2001, the conflict ended, but militant



groups continued to carry out acts of terror.

These groups are believed to have joined the hard-line group Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) based in Gunung Biru, Tamanjeka hamlet. The local chapter of JAT is believed to be led by long-time fugitive Santoso, who was previously affiliated with the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist group.

A few days before Christmas, for instance, tensions between Brimob officers and armed civilians resurfaced as four Brimob officers were killed in an attack in Kalora Village on Dec. 20.

The police have arrested Mutun, alias Dhani, and Solihin who were allegedly involved in recent attacks against the police.

During questioning, the two men admitted that they were members of Santoso's group, said Central Sulawesi Police spokesman Adj. Sr. Comr. Soemarno.

Mutun, who was nabbed just one day after the Dec. 20 assault, confessed that he supplied firearms for the attack.

He also claimed that Santoso was in Poso and was sick, Soemarno said. "He [Mutun], however, did not tell us Santoso's whereabouts, but he admitted that Santoso is still in Poso," said Soemarno.





PACOM

43. [Law Enforcement, Nepal] Extortion Ring Busted, Six Held With Explosives

Wednesday, December 26 2012

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Extortion+ring+busted%26sbquo%3B+6+held+with+explosives&NewsID=359297>

Sleuths from Metropolitan Police Range, Hanumandhoka raided Gongabu-based Koshi Sangam Guest House and rounded up a six-member extortion ring with a cache of bomb-making materials and literature of the underground outfit Samyukta Jatiya Mukti Morcha (SJMM) in the Capital, yesterday.

The gang was operating from an office in the guest house to extort money from businesspersons under the cloak of the outfit led by its so-called general secretary 'Muktidata'. The arrested are Madhusudan Rijal, 32, of Tanahun, Sita Devi Yadav, 60, Jitendra Prasad Sah, 50, Jageshwor Mahara, 35, of Sarlahi, Gopal Mahara, 25, of Kanchanpur and Kumar Magar, 39, of Morang. Rijal is a central member of SJMM, Yadav, the 'coordinator' of the outfit's talks team, Sah is a politburo member, and three others are secretariat members.

SP Ganesh Bahadur Thapa, MPR acting in-charge, said they were staying in the guest house owned by Magar, a so-called secretariat member for the past six months to hatch plots to extort hefty cash from businesspersons in Kathmandu. Police have seized 51 pieces of galvanised iron (GI) pipes, a khukuri, six SIM cards, 88 letters with envelopes addressed to businesspersons and industrial groups for donation, among others.

DSP Dhiraj Pratap Singh said the gang was planning to detonate bombs in various parts of the Valley. They have been charged under the Explosive Act. Meanwhile, Kathmandu District Court has remanded them to seven days custody to proceed with further probe.



NORTHCOM

44. [Law Enforcement, United States] Bomb Squad Neutralizes Possible Home-made Bomb In College Park; Man Arrested

Friday, December 21 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/fire-officials-hazardous-device-neutralized-by-bomb-squad-in-college-park/2012/12/21/26232c88-4b7d-11e2-8758-b64a2997a921_story.html

Prince George's County police have arrested a man after a possible homemade bomb was found in College Park and neutralized.

Fire department spokesman Mark Brady says authorities found the device early Friday on Edgewood Road, about a mile north of the University of Maryland campus. He says it appeared to have all the components necessary to explode.

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Comments

Weigh In
Corrections?

Personal Post

Police later in the morning arrested 28-year-old John Frank Jenkins and charged him with two counts of manufacture or possession of a destructive device.

On Monday, a small pipe bomb exploded on the porch of a home about a mile and a half from where the device was found Friday. Brady says it's possible the incidents are related.



NORTHCOM

45. [Law Enforcement, United States] Trespassers Lead Deputies To Meth Lab, Pipe Bomb

Saturday, December 22 2012

http://www.shreveporttimes.com/article/20121222/NEWS03/121222015/Trespassers-lead-deputies-meth-lab-pipe-bomb?nclick_check=1

A complaint about trespassers led Caddo deputies to a portable methamphetamine lab, illegal weapons and a pipe bomb Friday afternoon.

The incident, which began at around 4:30 p.m. and lasted into the early morning hours, started when Cpl. James Norwood began looking for the trespassers, a man and woman who had been coming onto properties at all hours and asking people to buy them Sudafed, which is commonly associated with meth.

Deputies found the alleged trespassers, Lawson Bonnette Jr., 44, and Lynne Parker, 40, afoot in a rural area.

Parker admitted there was meth under her driver's seat, Norwood said. In addition to a baggie containing the suspected drug, deputies also found hypodermic needles loaded with possible meth.

While searching Bonnette, deputies found numerous knives and 2.4 grams of meth in his front shirt pocket. In his vehicle, they found two .22-caliber rifles, one of which was modified, Norwood said. Other items found included a knife sharpener case full of syringes, some loaded with suspected meth.

"Then I picked up piece of PVC with wire wrapped around it," Norwood said, and realizing it was possibly a pipe bomb, "I sat it down very gently and we left" the area.

Shreveport Fire Department bomb squad was called out to handle the suspected bomb. Upon inspection, technicians determined the bomb to not be live and noticed a meth lab in the bed of the truck.

"It was percolating and bubbling, which means there was a good chance it could explode," Norwood said.

And once again, deputies had to back out of the area and wait for narcotics agents, who determined the lab was not in danger of exploding.

The bomb squad then disposed of the pipe bomb, and a "clean up" crew arrived and dismantled the meth lab.

"It was a dangerous situation for a while," Norwood said. "I had a good group with me."

Bonnette was arrested on charges of possession of a firearm by a felon; criminal trespass; two counts of manufacturing/distribution of Schedule II narcotics; possession of drug paraphernalia; unregistered firearm; illegal carrying of a weapon; and as a Texas fugitive.

Parker was arrested on charges of manufacturing Schedule II narcotics; possession of drug paraphernalia; criminal trespass; and possession of Schedule II narcotics.

Both were booked into Caddo Correctional Center.



NORTHCOM

46. [Trend, United States] Antioch Man Burned By Pipe Bomb Explosion In His Home

Monday, December 24 2012

<http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2012/12/24/antioch-man-burned-when-pipe-bombs-he-was-making-explodes/>

An Antioch man was arrested on Sunday afternoon after being treated for burns he suffered from an accident while making pipe bombs in his home, police said.

Antioch police and Contra Costa County firefighters responded to a report of smoke coming from a home in the 1400 block of G Street at 1:56 p.m.

Witnesses reported seeing a male resident walk out of the home with burns to his hands and leave in a car, police said.

Frank Trout, 53, of Antioch went to Sutter Delta Medical Center a short time later with burns to his hands and face and admitted to medical personnel the injuries were a results of an accident he cause while making pipe bombs, police said.

Antioch police closed the street and cleared all residents in danger. The Walnut Creek police bomb squad was called in for assistance.

Bomb technicians located and disposed of an undisclosed number of explosive devices and explosive making materials, police said.

Trout was released from the hospital and transported to the Contra Costa County Sheriff's main detention facility in Martinez.



SOUTHCOM

47. [Trend, Colombia] Colombia Military Fears 'Wave Of Terrorist Attacks' After FARC Ceasefire Ends

Thursday, December 27 2012

<http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/news/27537-colombias-top-military-officials-fear-a-wave-of-terrorist-attacks.html>

Colombia's director of the national police, the country's senior army commander and the commander of the Air Force all said that they anticipated a FARC attack when the unilateral ceasefire expires on January 20.

"According to the information we have collected, we have seen [FARC set off explosives and] acquire military equipment as insurance to prepare for a terrorist wave once the truce ends," said Jose Roberto Leon Riaño, the Director of the National Police.

The commander of the Colombian Air Force, General Tito Pinilla said that the intelligence compiled by the Armed Forces and the National Police hint at a possible terrorist attack when the two-month ceasefire ends. Pinilla said that although authorities are ready to combat a possible attack, he noted that FARC usually rely on just one or two guerrillas to carry out sabotage missions which makes detection that much more difficult. The Air Force commander said that FARC will show their true colors on January 21.

"The FARC must understand that the Colombian people [have] also been deceived for many years, so they [FARC] must demonstrate their true desire for peace," said Pinilla.

Leon Riaño, meanwhile, claimed that FARC has already not complied with their own self-declared unilateral ceasefire -- a claim backed up by Colombia's senior army commander, General Sergio Mantilla.

According to the army commander, four soldiers have been killed and another 22 wounded in separate FARC attacks since the ceasefire began. Though FARC announced a unilateral ceasefire on November 19, the declaration only pertained to offensive attacks. The rebels never claimed they would lay down their arms completely during this time in case they were pursued by government authorities. But by their own admission, they did break the truce, albeit unknowingly, in the first days of the accord.

Nevertheless, the National Police Director expressed optimism that 2013 will indeed be the year of peace, but claimed that there seems to be a disconnect between the rhetoric expressed in Havana, Cuba by senior FARC leaders, and "the actions on the battlefield."

Echoing the Minister of Defense, Leon Riaño lauded the fact that "25 leaders of the FARC...were captured or neutralized [in 2012]...[as well as] six ringleaders of the ELN [the country's second largest guerrilla group]."

"2012 is a landmark year in the fight against crime in Colombia," concluded the National Police Director.