



Weekly News Update

Volume 2, Issue 1

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The RAPID Weekly News Update is a weekly collection of unclassified 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.trancite.com> using your government (.mil or .gov) email account.



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Special Interest: **UK Soldiers Use Leaf Blowers To Search For IEDs**

[http://dialog.newsedge.com/portal.asp?site=2007100814443105593225&searchfolderid=pg2007100814522209759333&block=default&portlet=ep&nzesm=on&display=Home+Maintenance&action=sitetopics&mode=realtime&nzenb=left&criteria=\[topic%3Dhomemain\]&searchID=730071&datetime=\[t-minus%3D7\]&hdlaction=story&storyid=\[storyid=1iYkNFLyzWp2OwKGJlfkHboUDZ3cBGY0IRnCMCXfbpWM3xYpHKiC8XFrLrCekcMECAn9xa4xLARKYi6k5u9-Q**\]&rtcrdata=on&epname=USDOLLAR&](http://dialog.newsedge.com/portal.asp?site=2007100814443105593225&searchfolderid=pg2007100814522209759333&block=default&portlet=ep&nzesm=on&display=Home+Maintenance&action=sitetopics&mode=realtime&nzenb=left&criteria=[topic%3Dhomemain]&searchID=730071&datetime=[t-minus%3D7]&hdlaction=story&storyid=[storyid=1iYkNFLyzWp2OwKGJlfkHboUDZ3cBGY0IRnCMCXfbpWM3xYpHKiC8XFrLrCekcMECAn9xa4xLARKYi6k5u9-Q**]&rtcrdata=on&epname=USDOLLAR&)

Daring bomb-disposal experts risking their lives in Afghanistan are using ordinary garden leaf-blowers to uncover deadly roadside explosives.

Use of the common gardeners' tool - attached to a remote- controlled wheelbarrow - means operators no longer have to dig out the booby traps by hand

Potentially saving hundreds of lives, it works by using a powerful whoosh of air to clear sand and soil so the bomb is exposed and can be defused.

Engineer Martin Slater, one of the team that came up with the idea, said the invention would make a huge difference to the safety of British armed forces on the front line.

He explained: "The whole problem with an improvised explosive device is that it is buried. The people here thought, 'What can we do to prevent someone having to use their hands to find devices?' and came up with this.

"It's a straightforward idea and simply a case of buying a leaf- blower off the shelf then integrating it on to the current system. Now the wheelbarrow can do its job while reducing the risk to operators."

Previously, soldiers used paint brushes to sweep away dirt covering a suspected IED bomb planted by the enemy.

More than 100 British soldiers have now been killed as result of the Taliban's continued use of deadly IEDs throughout war-torn Helmand province.

Military advisor Major Chris Yates said of the new solution: "It's a commercial leaf-blower strapped to a conventional wheelbarrow.

"This kit significantly reduces the time it takes to render an improvised explosive device safe. Without it the operator has to clear the device by hand and there have been several deaths among military personnel while doing that."

A number of the modified devices are now being used by British troops in Afghanistan.

The system was developed by scientists and engineers at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Fort Halstead, Kent, to give British forces on the frontline an edge in the fight against the Taliban.

There are about 9,000 British troops currently serving in Afghanistan - most of them in Helmand province.

The total number of British military deaths in the country since 2001 stands at 394.

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1. Simulator Helps Soldiers Be On the Alert For IED Ambushes

Thursday, 04 January 2012

<http://www.ubergizmo.com/2012/01/simulator-helps-soldiers-be-on-the-alert-for-ied-ambushes/>

There is nothing quite like technology working alongside you as you engage the enemy on the battlefield – after all, isn't it a whole lot safer flying a Predator drone across dangerous enemy territory without worrying about having to eject at the right moment so that you do not end up as ashes as your plane explodes, not to mention wondering what is the backup plan should the parachute fail to open? With suicide bombers making headlines quite often these days, it can also be rather tough to figure out just what is an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) and what isn't.

Well, the US Army intends to make sure they troops are up to snuff with a new simulation exercise that is made up of mostly off-the-shelf components, where it intends to better prepare our boys and girls on the battlefield for the physical and psychological challenges of IED attacks. This simulator is located within a mounted vehicle where it is positioned right smack in front of a large display, and one is then exposed to jarring explosions, smoke, noise and poor visibility, which are all common denominators that pinpoint IED assaults. This intends to help one prepare the experience of an actual IED situation, although nothing can quite prepare one for the real thing, but every little bit helps.

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2. Marines Train To Clear Routes Of IEDs

Thursday, 05 January 2012

http://www.camplejeuneglobe.com/news/article_74f6be50-37a2-11e1-a1c3-001871e3ce6c.html

Operation Enduring Freedom has lasted from more than a decade, and more than 2,835 service members with coalition forces have given the ultimate sacrifice.

More than 50 percent of those fatalities were caused by improvised explosive devices, according to statistics published by iCasualties.org. Without essential Marines such as combat engineers, who are trained to detect and remove IED threats, the number of lives lost could possibly be greater.

Marines with Company E, 4th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Marine Corps Forces Reserve, hoped to, when deployed, minimize IED threats to help keep their brothers-in-arm safe as they started their route clearance mobile training aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, recently. This was part of their pre-deployment training, which cross trained them from their original military occupational specialty, but made them a qualified provisional engineer unit.

During training course, the Marines learned about the different types of IEDs they could encounter while deployed, and how to detect and remove them with the vehicles and devices implemented in a route clearance.

"These guys are training for 10 days straight," said Garret Czesak, a contracted instructor with Marine Corps Engineer School, MCB Camp Lejeune. "The most challenging part about this training is getting them into the engineer mindset, because these guys are not traditionally trained for this. They're tankers, so we got to teach them to think like an engineer."

Numerous practical application training missions helped the Marines learn how to utilize Huskies, Buffalos and Cougars, which all are mine-resistant ambushed-protected vehicles to support route clearance operations.

The Buffalo was fitted with an arm that could be used to dig up detected IEDs. Three Cougars had gyro-cameras with night and thermal capabilities, and could elevate to offer a better vantage point. One Cougar carried a Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle, which is essentially a remote controlled robot used to interrogate and survey areas or object that may be high risk for personnel.

"Teaching route clearance is really trying to teach a thought process," said Kevin Cassel, an instructor with Marine Corps Engineer School, MCB Camp Lejeune. "The vehicles are a small part of it, you can teach anyone how to drive the trucks. But they need to learn how to calculate risks and have a mitigation process continually (going on) in their head as they're going through all these different threats. So teaching the thought process is really hard for these guys."

It was a lot for the tankers to take-in in such a short period of time, but that was compensated by having them perform more supplementary training missions.

"This training was amazing," said Lance Cpl. Thomas Jackson, a maintenance management specialist with Company E, 4th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division. "It definitely meets the standards (for training), especially with it being outside of our MOS. The training showed us our baseline and what our (flaws) were, so we could work to improve ourselves and be ready for the mission. The hardest part about the training was being patient."

According to Czesak, the average time that it takes a unit to complete the mile-long training route on Power Line Road is three hours, which challenged them to detect more than six IEDs.

"Route clearance is an extremely slow mission," said Czesek. "They're traveling at 5 kilometers and hour. It's extremely slow and it's easy to get complacent. They're going to be literally moving three to four miles an hour, so it turns even a short route to a very very long day."

"They've made some great finds, they're pulling together and working as a team," said Kassel. "But, at the same time, they're still missing some - it's just part of the growing (process)."

After graduating from this course, the Marines will continue to Mojave Viper at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., to fully complete their route-clearance training with a sustainment course, where they'll be evaluated one last time by instructors before deploying.

"We've progressed a long way, from when we first got here," said Sgt. Michael P. Cheeseman Jr., an ammunition technician with Company E, 4th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division. "We were very eager to learn and we soaked up a lot of knowledge. The biggest challenge was just learning how to negotiate our vehicles, and keeping security at all times for our two lead Huskies. Being able to communicate and move these vehicles on the routes was challenging as well. We take the training serious and we want to improve so that we can properly execute our mission. Without route clearance, nobody can safely move down any route."

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3. Pakistani NGO Releases Security Report

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/05/islamabad-saw-four-terror-attacks-last-year.html>

Capital city saw four terrorist attacks in 2011 in which four persons were killed, including two high profile, and the same number of people injured, according to Security Report 2011 of Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) launched here on Wednesday.

An official of the PIPS, Mujtaba Rathore, told Dawn that the sources of information to collect the details for the Security Report 2011 were media, police officials and the institute's provincial and district correspondents.

The first incident of the year took place in Kohsar Market in F-6 on January 4, in which Punjab Governor Salman Taseer was assassinated by his security guard, Malik Mumtaz Qadri.

In the second incident on March 2 at I-8/4 Federal Minorities` Affairs Minister Shahbaz Bhatti was assassinated in broad daylight ambush a few yards away from his mother`s house.

The third incident, according to the report, occurred on June 13, in which a suicide bomber blew himself up in Silk Bank`s I-8 Markaz Branch. The bank is owned by former finance minister Shaukat Tarin. This was first suicide attack in capital after a gap of over 18 months.

A security guard, Mohammad Bashir, deployed at the main gate of the bank, and the suicide bomber were killed on the spot.

Besides, four staff members of the Silk Bank, operation manager, Zulqarnain Mujahid, Sales Officer Hasib Ahmad, Security Guard Maqbool, Sanitary worker Shani along with Mohammad Bashir suffered injuries.

The fourth incident was the killing of a member of Aman Jirga (peace conclaves) of Tribal Area in the capital on May 12. Makeen Shah was assassinated at Fathjhang Chowk in Tarnol.

The report further said last year 98 suspects were arrested from Islamabad for their alleged involvement in terrorism.

Mr Rathor, quoting the report, added they were affiliated with Therik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-i-Jhangavi and Therik Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Mohammadi.

Besides, scores of suicide jackets were also recovered during the period, the report said.

However, the report did not mention at least three more terrorist activities that also took place in the city last year.

On June 12, a low density remote controlled device went off in which three people were injured.

The incident happened near Red-Zone`s Third Avenue. The explosive was planted in bushes at the road divider which was exploded when a motorcyclist was negotiating a U-turn. The shock from the blast overturned a Toyota Corolla going towards Bhara Kahu.

In the incident two motorcyclists and the car`s driver were injured.

On August 1, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) carrying a kilograms explosive was detonated at Bahria Bridge near Athal Chowk, located on Murree Road.

The IED was planted at the road`s divider, which created a more than two feet deep crater, but fortunately no loss of life and injuries were reported .

Another terrorism activity was carried out near the headquarters of intelligence agency on November 22 in which a high ranking army officer of Inter Services Intelligence`s narrowly escaped, as a suicide bomber, who wanted to target the official`s motorcade, failed to detonate seven kilograms explosives due to some fault .

The attacker managed to escape from the spot and later a jacket carrying explosives, fuses and two detonators were found from Shakarparian.

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4. **British MOD Releases IED Explosion Footage**

Friday, 30 December 2011

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16364695>

Afghan police and British soldiers have destroyed nearly a tonne of explosives recovered during a major operation in Helmand Province.

The 27 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were discovered as part of Operation Winter Success, involving British troops from 1st Battalion Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex Kent, Channel Islands), 2nd Battalion The Rifles, 2nd Battalion Mercian Regiment, 5th Battalion The Rifles and 3rd Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland (Black Watch).

The images, released by the Ministry of Defence, show the explosives being piled high in the desert, before being detonated.

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5. **VBIED Disarmed By ANA**

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://www.dvidshub.net/news/82010/motorcycle-borne-improvised-explosive-device-neutralized-ana#.TwcbmnrDuAg>

Kandahar Province, Afghanistan – Soldiers with the Afghan National Army neutralized an insurgent motorcycle borne improvised explosive device, Dec. 30, denying insurgents the ability to disrupt the security and commerce of the local population.

The motorcycle borne improvised explosive device was discovered early in the morning in a local bazaar while the shopkeepers were preparing to open for the day. Suspicious, the villagers immediately reported the motorcycle to the ANA who were patrolling the area.

The ANA soldiers reacted quickly, secured the area and inspected the motorcycle to determine if it was a threat. Once the motorcycle borne improvised explosive device was identified, the ANA soldiers moved the motorcycle borne improvised explosive device to a secure location and neutralized it.

The willingness of the locals to report the motorcycle borne improvised explosive device to the ANA shows trust in the Afghan National Security Forces and the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as well as the proficiency of the ANA who were able to identify the threat, secure the location and the local population and remove the motorcycle borne improvised explosive device without incident.

This is another example of ANSF conducting independent operations in one of the most important districts in Afghanistan.

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6. ISAF Discover HME Lab In Helmand

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://www.khaama.com/isaf-discover-explosives-making-facility-in-helmand-328>

NATO-led International Security Assistance Force officials following a press release on Wednesday announced to discover Improvised Explosive Device making facility, drugs cache and arrest Taliban commanders following joint military operations with the Afghan security forces.

The press release issued by ISAF officials on Wednesday further added, a combined Afghan and coalition security force discovered an improvised explosive device making facility while conducting a routine patrol in Musa Qal' ah district, Helmand province, yesterday.

The facility housed approximately 250 pounds (115 kilograms) of ammonium nitrate, 220 feet (70 meters) of detonation cord, 36 main charges, 21 pressure plates, and 45 power sources.

Security forces destroyed all munitions and the facility without incident.

ISAF officials also said, Afghan and coalition security force captured a Taliban leader during an operation at baghlan-e-Jadi district in northern Baghlan province. The leader directed a group of insurgent fighters to construct and place roadside bombs throughout Baghlan-e Jadid district. The security force confiscated numerous weapons and bomb making material and detained multiple suspected insurgents during the operation.

Afghan and coalition security force discovered a drug cache while conducting a routine patrol in Panjwa 'i district, Kandahar province yesterday, officials said. The cache consisted of approximately 2,420 pounds (1,100 kilograms) of marijuana. Security forces destroyed all drugs on site without incident.

In Maiwand district, Kandahar province, an Afghan and coalition security force captured a Taliban leader during an operation today. The leader coordinated attacks against coalition forces, moved explosives, heavy weaponry and rockets throughout Maiwand district. Two additional suspected insurgents were detained during the operation.

ISAF officials also said, Afghan and coalition security force conducted an operation in search of a Haqqani leader in Sabari district, Khost province. The leader procures weapons and coordinates attacks throughout the region. Two suspected insurgents were detained during the operation.

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7. IED Kills Ten Police Officers In Helmand

Thursday, 29 December 2011

<http://upfrontnewswire.com/3110/roadside-bomb-in-southern-afghanistan-kills-10-police-officers/>

Ten police officers were killed in southern Afghanistan on Thursday when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle, provincial officials said.

The attack happened at around 11:30 a.m. local time when an improvised explosive device (IED) struck a vehicle carrying police officers in the Zarghoon area of Nad Ali district, which is located in the southern province of Helmand.

Governor spokesman Daud Ahmadi said the vehicle was returning from a training center when the IED exploded, killing the ten police officers on board. It represented one of the deadliest attacks on Afghan forces so far this year.

Ahmadi said the area is relatively safe, although many other parts of the province are considered to be among the worst in the violence-plagued country. Attacks are currently less frequent because of the winter, making it more difficult for insurgents to move and plant IEDs.

The victims in Thursday's attack were newly trained policemen and had not yet been deployed or stationed in a specific area. A Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack, which happened hours after a rogue Afghan soldier killed two French troops in the country's east.

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8. Triple Bombing Targets Kandahar Police

Tuesday, 03 January 2012

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/01/2012139100233679.html>

Three bomb attacks have killed at least 13 people and injured 28 others in the Afghan city of Kandahar, according to a police commander.

The first blast, which took place on Tuesday morning, was set off by a suicide bomber riding an explosive-laden motorbike in the city centre, killing four children and one police officer, General Abdul Razaq, the provincial police chief told reporters.

Sixteen others including officers and civilians were injured in the attack, which was aimed at a mobile police post, he said. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the first attack.

"The attacker was on a motorbike in a crowded bazaar in Kandahar city near the border police mobile checkpoint. When police stopped him he detonated his explosives, killing five, including four children and one police," Razaq said.

In the early evening, two more blasts went off within minutes of each other at a central Kandahar intersection.

Provincial spokesman Faisal Ahmad said five civilians were killed, including a child, and three policemen died.

The latest blast, which no one has so far claimed responsibility for, happened just minutes after a smaller explosion, likely caused by an improvised explosive device, police said.

A doctor in the city's Mirwais hospital confirmed the casualties.

There are about 130,000 international troops in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban-led insurgency, with 91,000 of them from the United States.

The Taliban, toppled in late 2001 in a US-led invasion, are fighting against the government, with an increase in incidents of roadside bomb attacks and suicide explosions in recent years.

The latest deadly bombings comes as the Taliban confirmed that it was in talks to open a liaison office in Qatar with the mission of building peace talks with the Afghan government.

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9. Explosion Injures Two In Afghan Police In Uruzgan

Tuesday, 03 January 2012

<http://www.khaama.com/explosion-injures-2-afghan-police-in-uruzgan-322>

According to local authorities in southern Afghanistan, at least 2 Afghan National Police service members were injured following a roadside bomb explosion in southern Uruzgan province.

The officials further added, the incident took place around 4:00 pm local time at Herawood district of southern Uruzgan province after an Afghan National Police vehicle struck with a roadside bomb.

Uruzgan provincial governor media office following a statement said, the two injured police members were taken to the hospital for the treatment.

No group including the Taliban militants have so far claimed responsibility behind the incident.

Taliban group frequently use Improvised Explosive Device and roadside bombs as the weapon of their choice to target Afghan and NATO troops.

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10. Child Killed In Bajaur IED Blast

Monday, 02 January 2012

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=85407&Cat=2>

A girl was killed and three others sustained injuries in a roadside blast in Salarzai tehsil in Bajaur Agency, official sources said on Sunday.

The sources said that a minor, Hajra Bibi, was killed and three other children sustained injuries when a powerful bomb planted by suspected militants on the roadside went off in Taronno village in Sarlazai tehsil.

The injured children were identified as Fazal Rabi, Gul Nabi and Ali Khan and were admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital in Timergara. The political administration launched a search operation in the area after the blast. However, there was no word about any arrest.

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11. Peshawar's Peace Shattered As Two Killed, 28 Injured In Blast

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=11470&Cat=13>

The tentative peace in the provincial capital was shattered on Tuesday when a bomb blast ripped through a trade centre on Arbab Road in University Town, killing two persons and injuring 28 others.

The apparent target were internet cafes in Azam Tower near Abdara Road and the blast destroyed a part of the plaza. People ran out of the building in panic amid fire and smoke. "When the smoke and dust settled, there were wounded people crying for help at the site," said an eyewitness.

Superintendent of Police, Cantonment Dr Mian Saeed Ahmad told The News that terrorists had attached an improvised explosive device (IED) to a motorbike and parked it in the basement of Azam Tower to target four internet clubs in the building.

Officials of the bomb disposal unit said six kilograms of explosives were used in the blast that occurred at around 02:00pm. Heavy contingents of police rushed to the spot while fire-brigade vehicles also arrived at the scene to extinguish the fire that had erupted after the explosion.

The two persons killed in the blast were identified as Wajid and Sajid, while the injured included shopkeepers, customers, internet users and passers-by. The blast in the provincial capital took place after several weeks of calm and has once again spread fear among the people of Peshawar.

The city has witnessed a break from the frequent blasts since September last year. The last major bombing took place at the Nishtarabad CD market where five people were killed and 33 others sustained injuries on September 19.

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12. Bombs Kill Two Shiite Pilgrims In Baghdad

Friday, 06 January 2012

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jrleKdrkQvAfKjQ7gYMmunmYf2hw?docId=21c40509a39a4fbd896e96f0e88cf108>

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraqi officials say roadside bombs have killed two Shiite pilgrims in Baghdad, the day after the country's deadliest sectarian violence in more than a year.

Police and health officials said that three roadside bombs exploded Friday morning in different parts of the capital, wounding 17 other pilgrims.

A wave of bombings targeting members of Iraq's Shiite Muslim majority claimed the lives of at least 78 people on Thursday.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity, as they were not authorized to brief the media.

BAGHDAD (AP) — An apparently coordinated wave of bombings targeting Shiite Muslims killed at least 78 people in Iraq on Thursday, the second large-scale assault by militants since U.S. forces pulled out last month.

The attacks, which bore the hallmarks of Sunni insurgents, come ahead of a Shiite holy day that draws hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from across Iraq, raising fears of a deepening of sectarian bloodshed. Rifts along the country's Sunni-Shiite faultline just a few years ago pushed Iraq to the brink of civil war.

The bombings in Baghdad and outside the southern city of Nasiriyah appeared to be the deadliest in Iraq in more than a year.

Thursday's blasts occurred at a particularly unstable time for Iraq's fledgling democracy. A broad-based unity government designed to include the country's main factions is mired in a political crisis pitting politicians from the Shiite majority now in power against the Sunni minority, which reigned supreme under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

Some Iraqis blame that political discord for the lethal strikes.

"We hold the government responsible for these attacks. They (the politicians) are bickering over their seats and these poor people are killed in these blasts," said Baghdad resident Ali Qassim not long after the first bomb went off.

The attacks began during Baghdad's morning rush hour when explosions struck the capital's largest Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City and another district that contains a Shiite shrine, killing at least 30 people, according to police.

Several hours later, a suicide attack hit pilgrims heading to the Shiite holy city of Karbala, killing 48, police said. The explosions took place near Nasiriyah, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast of Baghdad.

Hospital officials confirmed the casualties. Authorities spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release figures of the dead and wounded, who numbered more than 100.

The blasts occurred in the run-up to Arbaeen, a holy day that marks the end of 40 days of mourning following the anniversary of the death of Imam Hussein, a revered Shiite figure. During this time, Shiite pilgrims — many on foot — make their way across Iraq to Karbala, south of Baghdad.

Baghdad military spokesman Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi said the aim of the attacks is "to create turmoil among the Iraqi people." He said it was too early to say who was behind the bombings.

Coordinated attacks aimed at Shiites are a tactic frequently used by Sunni insurgents.

The last U.S. combat troops left Iraq on Dec. 18, ending a nearly nine-year war. Many Iraqis worry that a resurgence of Sunni and Shiite militancy could follow the Americans' withdrawal. In 2006, a Sunni attack on a Shiite shrine triggered a wave of sectarian violence that pushed the country to the brink of civil war.

"People have real fears that the cycle of violence might be revived in this country," said Tariq Annad, a 52-year-old government employee in Sadr City, after Thursday's bombings.

Attacks on Wednesday targeted the homes of police officers and a member of a government-allied militia. Those strikes, in the cities of Baqouba and Abu Ghraib outside Baghdad, killed four people, including two children, officials said.

Two weeks earlier, militants killed at least 69 people as a wave of bombs ripped through mostly Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad. An al-Qaida front group in Iraq claimed responsibility.

Iraq's political mess is providing further ammunition for extremists.

Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government issued an arrest warrant for the country's top Sunni politician last month. The Sunni official, Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi, is holed up in Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdish region in the north — effectively out of reach of state security forces.

Al-Maliki's main political rival, the Sunni-backed Iraqiya bloc, is boycotting parliament sessions and Cabinet meetings to protest what its members say are efforts by the government to consolidate power.

Gala Riani, a Middle East analyst at IHS Global Insight, said the political storm feeds into Sunni fears they could be marginalized by the Shiite-dominated government — worries that Sunni militants are trying to exploit.

"The political crisis has set up a perfect scenario for Sunni militants to re-establish themselves," she said. "It's very sectarian in nature and gives them fuel for their fire."

While the political showdown appears far from being resolved, there are tentative signs of progress.

Al-Maliki met Thursday with the Sunni speaker of parliament, Osama al-Nujaifi, a member of al-Hashemi's Iraqiya party. In televised comments afterward, they described the talks as positive and said they will work to find a way out of the crisis.

Earlier, both men condemned Thursday's bombings.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland also denounced the "terrorist violence" in Iraq and called the attacks "desperate attempts by the same kind of folk who've been active in Iraq trying to turn back the clock."

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Britain's Foreign Office minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Alistair Burt, urged Iraq's leaders to renew their efforts to break the political impasse.

Meanwhile, six Iraqiya lawmakers broke ranks with their party over the boycott by attending a parliament session. Ahmed al-Jubouri, one of the Iraqiya lawmakers who participated, said he did so to "encourage all blocs to sit together and open dialogue."

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13. Wave Of Deadly Explosions Target Shiite Districts

Thursday, 05 January 2012

http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/01/05/a_wave_of_deadly_explosions_across_iraq_target_shiite_districts

A series of four explosions in Iraq in mainly Shiite neighborhoods killed more than 50 people and injured over 100. The attacks began around 7:30 am in Baghdad, during the city's rush hour. The first bomb was strapped to a motorcycle and was detonated near a group of day laborers in Sadr City. Quickly following, two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) exploded near rescuers attending to the victims. Around 9:00 am, two car bombs exploded simultaneously in the northern neighborhood of Kadhimiya. Just hours later, in Qusay al-Abadi, in southern Iraq, a suicide bomber targeted Shiite pilgrims at a police checkpoint killing an estimated 36 people and injuring at least 72. The bombings have come a day after attacks on the homes of security forces killed four people, including two children in Baqouba and Abu Ghraib, cities outside of Baghdad. Recent attacks have raised concerns about Iraq's security and vulnerability to increased sectarian violence after the withdrawal of U.S. troops. According to Tariq Annad, who works for the Iraqi government, "People have real fears that the cycle of violence might be revived in this country." These fears were previously escalated after Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki issued an arrest warrant in December for Sunni Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi. As a result of that move, the Sunni al-Iraqiya bloc has boycotted parliament and cabinet meetings in protest.

Gaza's Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniya (C) waves next to Tunisian Prime minister Hamadi Jebali (R) upon his arrivals on January 5, 2012 in Tunis. Haniya arrived in Tunis today on the next leg of a six-country tour to a welcome from Tunisia's new leaders and a crowd of some 2,000 people. It is his first trip abroad since Hamas took power in Gaza in 2007, and according to his office is aimed at raising funds to rebuild Gaza City, devastated by an Israeli offensive three years ago (FETHI BELAID/AFP/Getty Images).

"In such a volatile environment, and with the revolution itself pulled in different directions by different groups, what seems most important is not how many people actually turn up in Tahrir, but rather, the heroes and leaders-until now sorely lacking-those protests might yet create. In the meantime, many of us are left wondering how many more of the roads leading to Tahrir will be barricaded and blocked in the three weeks remaining until the January 25 anniversary of our revolution."

"The Obama administration seems to have concluded that the Iranian regime is not ready or able to make a strategic reconciliation with the West. The regime is too divided and Khamenei, the ultimate authority, too ideologically rigid. So for now, Washington wants to build the pressure on Iran, in the hopes that it will force the regime into serious negotiations at some point. This strategy is understandable. But it also risks building up pressures that could take a course of their own -- with explosive consequences."

"Among the protesters are wealthy Egyptians and the dispossessed, liberals and Islamists. They are overwhelmingly young, but if you look closely, you can find some with gray hair. And if their detractors are correct in saying that they cannot be reasoned with, it is only because the protesters rarely speak with one voice and they refuse to listen like children to the patronizing echo of the old establishment. If any one spirit unites them, it is a justifiable anger about the establishment's mind-set."

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14. Why Boko Haram Terrorists Bombed Churches On Christmas

Sunday, 01 January 2012

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/01/01/nigeria-why-boko-haramterrorists-bombed-churches-on-christmas.html>

Eager faces filled the dingy hospital ward's windows, craning for a glimpse of the alleged terrorist. The police had brought him in a few hours earlier, saying he and a friend had been examining some explosives that detonated prematurely. The blast had killed the friend and left the 25-year-old Mohammed Ahmed too badly injured to flee the scene. Now, flanked by police officers with assault rifles, he lay on a rickety iron bed in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna, enduring the whispered taunts of strangers, blood seeping through the bandages on his deeply burned legs. He insisted he had nothing to do with bombmaking and was only keeping his friend company. The police saw it differently. "We think he was part of a team," a detective standing nearby explained, over the din of excited children. "We went into the house. We saw everything: wires, batteries, pliers, chemicals. They were making them there. This was a network ... a terrorist organization."

Until recently, few people outside Nigeria had ever heard of Boko Haram. Even among Nigerians, the terrorist group's obscure aims, together with the general incompetence of young militants like Ahmed—who got himself blown up this past April—led most people to regard it as little more than a nuisance. No longer. For the second Christmas in a row, the group unleashed a series of highly coordinated church bombings, wreaking mass carnage on holiday services. The attacks, evidently designed to provoke broader violence between the country's Christians and Muslims, left more than 50 dead and capped a year in which the ultrasecretive Islamist movement transformed itself from a local oddity into an organization capable of undermining the precarious unity of Africa's most populous nation.

Boko Haram—the name translates loosely from the Hausa language as "Western teaching is forbidden"—has been at war with police in its northeastern home states since 2009, but in the past year the group has brought its bloody attacks right to the nation's capital, Abuja. In the run-up to this past April's national elections, the militants bombed party offices and assassinated office seekers seemingly at will in the Muslim-dominated north. In June, they managed to detonate a bomb inside the heavily guarded national police headquarters, and in August, a suicide bomber plowed an explosive-laden car through two security barriers and into the lobby of the United Nations' offices in Abuja, killing 23 people and wounding more than 80. FBI experts, brought in to help with the investigation, found that the vehicle had been packed with precision shaped charges, carefully arranged to inflict maximum damage.

Boko Haram's rapid advances in terrorist technology and its use of suicide bombers, previously unheard of in Nigeria, have fed suspicions that the group may now be receiving outside support. There have long been rumored links to the Algeria-based Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and a report published by the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence late last year suggested that Boko Haram may have also begun collaborating with Somalia's Al-Shabab. "We are in a position now like the United States was in after 9/11," declared Nigeria's defense minister, Bello Haliru Mohammed, in the wake of the U.N. bombing. The comparison is now axiomatic among the country's political leaders, seeking to portray the violence as one more front in the Global War on Terror. But the violence that threatens to engulf the country has sprung from within—and that could prove even more dangerous for Nigeria and its neighbors.

Outside an Abuja courthouse, one of several suspects detained in connection with the Aug. 26 bombing of the U.N. headquarters. , Afolabi Sotunde / Reuters-Landov

As the year-end winds off the Sahara shroud the setting sun with dust, Abdurrahman Musa can only hope there will be lights tonight at the Quranic school in Kaduna where he teaches. "Electricity will come

today, I think,” he says. A few minutes later, as if in response to his indomitable optimism, a single exposed lightbulb dangling from the ceiling suddenly flickers to life. It’s a lucky night for the school. As often as not, the building is left in the dark, and his young pupils have to crowd around kerosene lamps to copy their evening verses.

A few years ago the school integrated the national certified curriculum, after nearly a century of teaching nothing but Islamic theology. Now it offers several hours of math, science, and English every day. But despite reforms that are supposed to prepare students for the modern world, Musa says the prospects for his young charges are grim. Many, he believes, will likely find their way into the ranks of criminal gangs or radical movements like Boko Haram. “This problem is not religious,” he says. “It is a social problem. All the companies have been shut down due to the lack of electricity. It’s very difficult for the youth to find jobs. They have nothing to do.”

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15. Bomb Blast Hits Northern Nigeria After Emergency Decree

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

http://www.africasia.com/services/news_africa/article.php?ID=CNG.cb60bfb608f04bd514bc2bc7718e02e3.581

A burnt police patrol pick-up truck abandoned on the side of a deserted road in Damaturu, in the Yobe State, in 2011

Three bomb blasts hit the northern Nigerian cities of Maiduguri and Damaturu on Wednesday just days after the areas were placed under a state of emergency, the military and witnesses said.

No casualties were immediately reported after the attacks, claimed by the Islamist sect Boko Haram, as its ultimatum expired for Christians living in the mainly Muslim north to move south.

Two civilians were shot dead in a separate incident, a hospital source said.

The attacks were the first incidents in the area since President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency last weekend in parts of the country hard hit by Boko Haram.

Abul Qaqa, who claims to be a spokesman for Boko Haram, said the group was behind the Damaturu and Maiduguri bomb attacks. His claims could not be independently verified.

"We are responsible for the bomb blasts in Damaturu and Maiduguri this evening," he said in a phone call made to AFP.

"This is a response to the expiration of the ultimatum we gave to southerners to leave."

On Sunday, the purported spokesman for Boko Haram warned that the group would confront soldiers and threatened Christians living in the country's north.

He gave southerners living in the north three days to leave the region in the wake of Jonathan's state of emergency decree.

Lieutenant Colonel Hassan Mohammed, spokesman for a special military taskforce in Maiduguri, told AFP Wednesday: "There were two explosions in the Mairi area... this evening. The explosives were planted in a ditch and detonated when nobody was around."

The blasts occurred not far from a customs centre, but Mohammed denied the establishment was the target.

In Damaturu a bomb went off at a popular open air drinking spot where a locally-brewed gin is normally served in a suburb named Kandahar, according to a regular patron.

"There was a loud bang... which raised dust all over the place. This was followed by pandemonium as everybody took to their heels," Henry Samuel said by phone from Damaturu.

"So I can't say whether there were casualties or not because I ran off as soon as I heard the blast."

Another resident, Mamman Jika confirmed hearing an explosion coming from Kandahar.

In a first attack since the state of emergency was declared, but outside the areas covered by the decree, gunmen attacked a police station in northern Nigeria's Jigawa state, killing a teenage girl and wounding an officer late Tuesday.

"The gunmen shot indiscriminately into the police station and engaged our men in a shootout, killing a teenage girl trying to flee and wounding a policeman," Jigawa state police commissioner Hashimu Argungu said.

He said an explosive thrown into the police station failed to detonate.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, though Boko Haram has been blamed for scores of such incidents.

A Damaturu hospital source said bodies of two civilians shot in a separate incident were brought in from an area on the outskirts of the city. It was not clear who shot them or why.

Jonathan's weekend declaration of a state of emergency in parts of four northern states hard hit by attacks blamed on Boko Haram, was in response to a wave of attacks attributed to the group.

While Boko Haram has been staging increasingly deadly attacks for months, including an August suicide bombing of UN headquarters in Abuja that left 25 dead, the Christmas bombings that killed 49 people as services ended at a Catholic church sparked intense fear and outrage.

Nigerian authorities said they did not believe militants would follow through on the ultimatum, but added that they were taking no chances.

Muslims have frequently been victims of Boko Haram attacks, most of which have occurred in northeastern Nigeria, but the Christmas Day bombings particularly targeting churches set off fears of retaliation from Christians.

Nigeria, Africa's largest oil producer and most populous nation with 160 million people, is roughly divided between a mainly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south.

Followers of the two faiths however co-exist with millions of Muslims based in the south and millions of Christians in the north.

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16. **Puntland Officials Narrowly Escape IED Attack**

Sunday, 01 January 2012

<http://somalilandpress.com/somalia-puntland-officials-narrowly-escape-ied-attack-25691>

Farah Ali Shire, the Finance Minister of Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland narrowly escaped a roadside blast on Saturday in Bosaasso, reports.

Officials said Mr Shire who was traveling at the time with the governor of Bari province, Abdulsamad Mohamed Gallan, was on his way to his house when the bomb was triggered. They added the explosive, which was remotely controlled device, did not cause any damages and an investigation was under way.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack but in the last two years, unmanned roadside bombs have become the weapon of choice for insurgents operating in Puntland with almost one planted daily.

Just this week alone at least four security forces and two civilians were killed in Puntland in similar attacks. The bomb disposal unit continue to work around the clock defusing improvised explosive devices (IED).

Locals strongly blamed the insecurity situation in Puntland on Islamic insurgency, piracy and tribal tensions in the region. There are unconfirmed reports that hundreds of al-shabaab militants are pouring into Puntland towns as they flee TFG, AU, Kenya and Ethiopian offensive in the south and central regions. Assassinations of religious scholars, tribal chiefs and officials have all become norm in the region in recent years.

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17. Fifteen Injured In Gombe Explosions

Friday, 30 December 2011

<http://www.thenationonline.net/2011/index.php/news-update/31626-15-injured-in-gombe-explosions.html>

An explosion in Gombe, the capital of Gombe State, on Wednesday night injured 15 people. No group has claimed responsibility.

The explosion occurred at a hotel located in the outskirts of the state capital.

The Manager of the hotel, Mr Ojiego Nelson, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Gombe yesterday that three persons came to the hotel at about 10.13pm on Wednesday to detonate a device.

Nelson said he was at the gate of the hotel when the men, who were allegedly carrying guns, started “manhandling” the security man.

He said when he asked what was happening, they started shooting sporadically.

Nelson said: “Our customers and everybody started running helter-skelter and the one with two gas cylinders in his hands threw them into our reception.

“He threw one into the reception and the other under the cars parked by our guests in the hotel.

“The one thrown into the reception exploded and damaged the building. So, we just managed to escape through the back fence.”

The hotel manager said the customers vacated their rooms following the incident.

He said the incident was reported to the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in Tumfure, Mr Hassan Bappa, who came to the scene with his men.

Bappa told NAN that he deployed his men to the scene when the matter was reported to him, adding that it was unfortunate the gunmen had escaped before the police arrived.

Bappa said there was no casualty and that nothing was stolen from the hotel.

“We are waiting for bomb experts to come and remove the relics from the scene of the incident,” he said.

He said no arrest has been made but added that investigations were ongoing.

There is tension in Gombe following the detonation of an improvised explosive device (IED) at a relaxation spot called Tunfure Resort in the outskirts of the capital town on Wednesday night.

Nelson said the incident occurred at 10:15pm with 15 people injured in the melee.

He said two of the six assailants started shooting.

Nelson said: “It was around 16 minutes after 10pm. I was very close to the gate when some three armed men walked in and were asking the security man at the gate to show them the manager.

“While interrogating the security man, the assailants also started manhandling him and beating him up. When I wanted to intervene, they pointed an AK 47 with police coloured magazine and shot. But I don’t know how I escaped unhurt except for this wound on my forehead and this dislocation on my arm.

“I saw a refrigerator cylinder with them also. I thought they were policemen who normally come for patrol. I saw police colour on the cartridge of their AK 47. I was, however, surprised when I wanted to know why they were beating up my security man.”

Police spokesman Ahmed K Muhammad, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), confirmed the incident.

He said the police were waiting for bomb experts from Yola to remove the remnants of the explosives.

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18. Explosives Seized In Kenya Refugee Camp

Friday, 06 January 2012

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201201060647.html>

Kenyan police seized landmines and homemade explosive devices Friday in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp and site of several attacks and blasts in recent months.

"This is a major breakthrough in our investigations because we have been looking for the source of the explosive materials used here. We conducted a raid and recovered nine landmines," said regional police chief Leo Nyongesa.

"We also recovered other improvised explosive devices," he said, adding that three women were being questioned.

The explosives were found in the Ifo section of the Dadaab complex in northern Kenya, home to some 450,000 mainly Somali refugees seeking shelter from drought, hunger and conflict.

Dadaab, some 100 kilometres (60 miles) from Somalia, is in a border region that has seen a surge in attacks since Nairobi sent troops into its neighbour in October to battle Al-Qaeda linked Shebab insurgents.

The attacks are often blamed by the authorities on sympathisers of Shebab militants, who control large parts of central and southern Somalia.

Gunmen seized two Spaniards working for Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) from Dadaab in October and are thought to have taken them to Somalia.

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19. One Killed, Three Injured In Thailand Attacks

Friday, 30 December 2011

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2011/12/30/1-killed-3-injured-in-Thailand-attacks/UPI-33241325278084/?spt=hs&or=tn

Three separate attacks in southern Thailand Friday caused one death and three injuries, police say.

Defense volunteer Kasaman Sadeemae, 23, was shot in front of his home in the Raman district of Yala province early Friday as he waited for a colleague to pick him up for duty, the Bangkok Post reported.

The gunman, riding on a motorcycle, fled the scene.

Sadeemae was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead, police said.

Later, a remote-controlled bomb was triggered also in Raman, just before two motorcycles and a truck carrying eight soldiers passed over it, police said.

One of the soldiers was slightly injured by the blast.

In the Yarang district of Pattani province Friday morning, two soldiers providing security for teachers were injured in a roadside explosion in front of the Thai Rath Witthaya 52 school, said the Bangkok Post.

Police blame southern insurgents for all three attacks.

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20. Yala Bomb Misses Main Target

Friday, 30 December 2011

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/security/273107/yala-bomb-injures-one-soldier>

A bomb went off on a road in Yala's Raman district on Friday morning, slightly injuring one soldier.

A bomb exploded on a road in the southern border province of Yala on Dec 30, 2011. One soldier was slightly injured from the blast. (Photo by Muhammad Ayub Patan)

Police said the remote controlled bomb was triggered too early, exploding just before two motorcycles and a six-wheel truck carrying a team of eight soldiers were driving over it.

A soldier's right-hand finger was slightly injured by the blast, which also punctured a one-metre-wide, 80-centimetre-deep hole in the road.

After the bomb squad officers arrived at the scene, they found a metal box believed to have contained a five-kilogramme explosive.

Police blamed southern insurgents.

About 4,800 people have been killed and around 9,000 hurt in the three southern border provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala since the separatist violence erupted afresh in January 2004.

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21. Bomb Blast Kills Two Troops In Thai South

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://news.ph.msn.com/regional/article.aspx?cp-documentid=5719147>

The men, both aged 26, were travelling to a New Year event in Pattani, one of three southern provinces where eight years of conflict has claimed the lives of thousands, both Muslims and Buddhists.

"They were invited to join a New Year party with local villagers," said an official from local Mayo district police, adding that the victims had died instantly in the blast.

According to the latest figures from Deep South Watch, which closely monitors the conflict, 4,984 people have been killed and 8,300 wounded since the unrest began in 2004.

Thailand's deep south is currently facing severe flooding caused by heavy monsoon rains.

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22. Explosion Jolts Cotabato City

Sunday, 01 January 2012

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/regions/01/01/12/explosion-jolts-cotabato-city-2012>

An improvised explosive device (IED) exploded outside an establishment along Sinsuat Avenue in Cotabato City before New Year celebrations got underway Saturday evening.

Authorities said the bomb was made out of an 81-millimeter mortar cartridge and a cellphone was used as its detonating device.

No casualty or damage to properties were reported.

The Philippine National Police and the Philippine Army's explosive ordinance disposal team will continue to conduct an investigation.

Meanwhile, the New Year celebrations in the city were generally peaceful.

Residents used firecrackers to welcome 2012. Some also used an improvised tool called "kanyon," a tube fueled with gas and lit with matchsticks.

No major injuries were reported at the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center. There were two reported cases of firecracker injuries, but they were already sent home after being given treatment.

A few cases of vehicular accidents were also recorded.

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23. Abu Sayyaf Tries To Blow Up Bridge In Sulu

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/122511/suspected-abu-sayyaf-men-bomb-sulu-bridge>

Suspected Abu Sayyaf extremists on Wednesday bombed another bridge in Sulu, barely a month after blasting a similar structure there, but failed to destroy it or inflict any casualties, the military said.

The incident came four days after Abu Sayyaf gunmen harassed military camps in Sulu.

Colonel Jose Johriel Cenabre, deputy commander for Marines Operations of the Naval Forces in Western Mindanao, said the Abu Sayyaf used an improvised explosive device in the attempt to blow up the concrete bridge in Barangay Kandayok in Panao town around 1 a.m. Wednesday.

The bridge was not seriously damaged and is still passable, Cenabre said.

“No one was hurt during the explosion,” he said.

On December 3, Abu Sayyaf gunmen also bombed the bridge in Sitio Tangan-tangan in Barangay Tiaung in Patikul town. The bridge was badly damaged and is not passable since.

The authorities said the extremists had been targeting bridges to either slow down the movement of government troops hunting them down or to train future bombers.

Since last year, four bridges in Sulu have been attacked by the Abu Sayyaf, a self-styled Islamist group linked to the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah.

Cenabre said that a few hours before the New Year, Abu Sayyaf gunmen also harassed two major Marine camps – one in Indanan and another in Patikul.

The first harassment took place around 7 p.m.

He said “intermittent firefights” between the attackers and Marines stationed in Barangay Paglayahan in Patikul lasted for almost two hours. No casualty was reported on the military side.

Cenabre said that at around 11:45 p.m. of Dec. 31, Abu Sayyaf forces also attacked the headquarters of the 2nd Marine Brigade in Barangay Bayog in Indanan.

“The exchange of fire lasted for about 15 minutes. The Marines incurred no casualties and were able to foil the attack,” he said.

Chief Supt. Bienvenido Latag, police director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the authorities had prepared for Abu Sayyaf attacks following on intelligence reports.

He said hours before the attacks took place, the authorities monitored a large number of Abu Sayyaf members converging in Camp Tambisan near Patikul.

“They were equipped with high-powered arms and some of them were carrying 40-millimeter and 60-millimeter mortar rounds. They divided themselves into two. One was lead by a certain Johoree and the other one by a certain Jihad,” Latag said.

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24. Police Disrupt RCIED In South Cotabato

Thursday, 05 January 2011

<http://www.journal.com.ph/index.php/news/provincial/20941-cotabato-bus-bombing-foiled>

Elements of Philippine National Police-Directorate for Integrated Police Operation (PNP-DIPO) Western Mindanao foiled a bus bombing attempt as they successfully disrupted improvised explosive device (IED) planted by unidentified suspect along the national highway yesterday morning in South Cotabato.

This was confirmed yesterday by PNP-DIPO-Western Mindanao chief Director Felicisimo Khu.

Khu said at around 11:50 p.m. on January 3, he received a text message regarding the alleged plan of an unidentified group to bomb a Yellow Bus Line (YBL) traveling along Tacurong City to Koronadal City highway.

Khu immediately alerted the chief of police of Tantangan Police Station in South Cotabato to secure the area and protect passing vehicles.

Combined elements of South Cotabato Provincial Police Office and PNP-DIPO scoured the area of the two suspected IEDs.

The first IED found at around 7:50 a.m. along the highway in Bgy. Magon, Tantangan, South Cotabato was a decoy.

At around 8:10 a.m., the team found the real IED a few meters away from the decoy. It was composed of 81mm IED with 3310 Nokia triggering device.

Police are now coordinating with the YBL management to find out if there was a group sending them extortion demand.

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25. Bali Bomb Suspect's Wife Sentenced

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2103619,00.html>

An Indonesian court on Wednesday sentenced the wife of the top suspect in the 2002 Bali bombings to 27 months in jail for immigration violations.

The East Jakarta District Court found Ruqayyah binti Husein Luceno, a 32-year-old Philippine national, guilty of using falsified personal data to get an Indonesian passport. (See Bali in the Top 10 Defining Moments of the Post-9/11 Era.)

Luceno and her husband, Umar Patek, were arrested in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad on Jan. 25, ending a decade-long manhunt for one of Southeast Asia's most wanted terrorist suspects. Patek is accused of making the explosives used in the Bali bombings, which killed 202 people. He is awaiting trial.

"The defendant has been proven guilty of violating the law ... by giving wrong information to the immigration office," said presiding judge Suharjono, who uses a single name.

Luceno and her husband traveled in August 2010 to Pakistan, where they were captured five months later in the same town where Osama bin Laden was killed.

Luceno and her lawyers have not yet decided whether to appeal the sentence, which was lighter than the prosecutor's demand of four years.

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26. IED Found In Passenger Vehicle

Tuesday, 03 January 2012

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-01-03/guwahati/30583696_1_vehicle-chabua-bomb

A powerful improvised explosive device (IED), weighing about 5 kg, was recovered from a Sivasagar-bound passenger vehicle at Chabua in Tinsukia district on Monday. Police said the bomb was found by security personnel inside a winger during a routine check near the Tata Tea Referral hospital gate on the NH-37, about 1 km from Chabua, at around 11.30 am. The vehicle was coming from Tinsukia.

"The object was found inside a bag wrapped in polythene sheet and later army experts confirmed that it was an IED. We've detained all seven passengers for interrogation. We're also trying to verify their antecedents from the respective police stations," said Rajib Saikia, the OC of Chabua police station. The IED was later disposed by army bomb disposal squad.

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27. 40 Kg. IED Recovered In Jharkhand

Tuesday, 03 January 2012

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/216436/40-kg-ied-recovered-jharkhand.html>

Police recovered a 40 Kg IED planted by Maoist on non tarred road in Jharkhand's Khuti district on Tuesday, police said.

The security personnel spotted wire linking to non tarred road between Bhandra-Jinlinga road in Khunt district which is around 60 Km from Ranchi on Tuesday. Police unearthed the IED and recovered around 200 meter wire connected to it.

Anti bomb disposal squad was called to defuse the bomb.

Police say that the landmine was planted by Maoist to trigger landmine blast.

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28. Colombia Bomb Attack Kills Two, Injures At Least Six

Saturday, 31 December 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/americas/bomb-blast-at-colombia-police-station-2-reported-killed/2011/12/31/gIQASpbjRP_story.html

A bomb exploded at a police station in southern Colombia, killing the wife and son of a police officer and injuring at least six other people, the authorities said Saturday.

The blast on Friday night killed the wife and 8-month-old son of the police captain in charge of the outpost in the town of Orito, about 540 kilometers (330 miles) southwest of Bogota, said Gen. Rodolfo Palomino of the National Police.

Palomino said four police officers and two other people were injured. "One of them is the captain's other son, who is just 2 years old," Palomino told the Colombian radio station RCN.

The police captain, Jose Claros Gomez, also was among the injured and was hospitalized in Bogota, Palomino said.

It was unclear whether an armed group in Colombia's long-running conflict was behind the attack. The town is located in a region where both leftist rebels and drug traffickers operate.

Mayor Argenis Velasquez said he heard the blast from his home.

"It was an explosive that they put in the police station, which ended up totally destroyed," Velasquez said in a telephone interview.

Other nearby buildings were also damaged, he said.

Velasquez said the police captain in charge of the station was new to the job. The mayor said he had met him just a few days ago.

"I told him this town was very calm," Velasquez said. "Everyone in Orito is surprised, sort of paralyzed, because this town has been very safe."

Hours after the explosion, the mayor-elect of another town in southwestern Colombia was killed early Saturday. Jaime Alberto Chazatar, who was to take office on Sunday as mayor of Santacruz de Guachaves, was shot and killed by men on a motorcycle at his home, outgoing mayor Manuel Molina said.

He said Chazatar had received threats recently. It was unclear who might have been behind the killing, but Molina said he suspects it had to do with local political conflicts. There was no apparent link with the bombing of the police station.

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29. Colombian Army Disrupts FARC IEDs

Friday, 06 January 2012

http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?hl=en&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=es&tl=en&twu=1&u=http://www.ejercito.mil.co/%3Fidcategoria%3D320702&usg=ALkJrhiz_ujxhwPH1B0qNjVJCWrSajvOig

TRANSLATION:

Dedicated soldiers of the Colombian Army explosives located and destroyed in the last hours five improvised explosive devices, installed by terrorists of the FARC.

Initially, as part of offensive operations in rural areas of the municipality of Anori, Antioquia, troops of the Fourth Brigade, succeeded in neutralizing two cylinders loaded with explosives and a landmine.

Deadly traps, scattered 36 terrorist gang, were to be activated by pressure relief system to the passage of troops or civilians living in the region.

Another explosive device was located this time in a place known as El Olivo high Valdivia municipality of the same department, Battalion No. 129 Ground Combat Antonio de La Torre 'Miranda', who advance offensive operations against terrorist factions 'Gang Mario Velez'.

On the other hand, soldiers from Infantry Battalion 21 'Batalla Pantano de Vargas' deployed in the municipality of Lejanias, Meta, reported the location and subsequent destruction of two explosive devices, installed by terrorists of the gang 53.

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30. Colombian Army Destroys FARC Explosives

Thursday, 05 January 2012

http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?hl=en&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=es&tl=en&twu=1&u=http://www.ejercito.mil.co/%3Fidcategoria%3D320679&usg=ALkJrhylqBKA5gUccAhxoReSdgUmj8caw

TRANSLATION:

Ongoing military operations carried out by troops of the Third Army Division in the department of Cauca, in the last hours allowed neutralization of two 40-pound cylinders loaded with explosives, with which members of the FARC intended to perpetrate terrorist acts.

The discovery was made in the village Cimarrona Cajibío Township, where soldiers from Infantry Battalion # 7 `General José Hilario Lopez 'advance search and control operations area.

Deadly traps, installed by terrorist gang 'Jacobo Arenas' of the FARC, were destroyed in a controlled manner by explosives experts from the unit.

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31. Colombian Army Disrupts FARC IEDs, Antipersonnel Mines

Saturday, 31 December 2012

http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?hl=en&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=es&tl=en&twu=1&u=http://www.ejercito.mil.co/%3Fidcategoria%3D320574&usg=ALkJrhiS_DImMXtD25wm1OcAbHyrhlyYTg

As a result of the operations being conducted by the Army throughout the country, in the last hours were defused several explosive devices in the departments of Putumayo, Meta, Norte de Santander and Antioquia.

The first result was presented at the White Piñuña village, municipality of Puerto Asis, Putumayo, where members of the Twenty-Seventh Jungle Brigade, located and destroyed 10 antipersonnel mines that had been set by terrorists from the Farc 48 squad.

In other action, in a rural area of the municipality of Vista Hermosa, Meta, effective EXDE group of Mobile Brigade No. 7, located and defused two explosive devices that had been planted by terrorists from the Farc squad 7.

Similarly, in the general area of the municipality of Teorama, Norte de Santander, terrorist gang 'Arturo Ruiz' of the FARC, installed two antipersonnel mines were detected and destroyed by explosion-proof soldiers from the Mobile Brigade No. 23.

Finally, in the department of Antioquia, troops from Mobile Brigade No. 25 landmines defused two terrorists belonging to the FARC.

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32. **Small And Light, Starbucks Bottles As Containers For Bomb**

Tuesday, 03 January 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/04/nyregion/starbucks-frappuccino-bottles-as-firebombers-tool.html?_r=1

Mason jelly jars, whiskey quarts, wine and beer bottles — all have been among history's vessels of choice for a homemade gasoline bomb.

Now, a less likely vehicle has come forth: the dainty, 9.5-ounce glass container used by Starbucks to house its popular Frappuccino drinks.

Investigators believe that in a rash of firebombings Sunday near the Queens-Nassau border, a Frappuccino bottle was the incendiary component of choice in most of the attacks.

In one attack, broken bits of glass were found in a living room, but, "we can't positively say it was a Starbucks Frap bottle," a law enforcement official said.

Starbucks is often in the cross hairs of anarchists for its success as a multinational coffee giant, so it is somewhat of a twist that one of its products finds itself on the other end of violence.

Starbucks did not immediately reply to inquiries Tuesday about the use of Frappuccino bottles in the firebombings.

By one measure, the Starbucks bottles can serve as the "perfect containers" for a Molotov cocktail, said Kevin B. Barry, a retired New York Police Department Bomb Squad technician who analyzes how explosives are used in conflicts around the world.

"They are excellent for what you need, because it is a weak-sided bottle with a screw-on cap," Mr. Barry said. "It is small enough to be concealed in your pocket and it fits in your hand, so you can throw it almost like a Nerf football. It's a small projectile you can get a good grip on and you can toss it."

Generally speaking, any bottle will do, said Barney T. Villa, a retired bomb technician from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

"They're very easy to make, very cheap to make and made from readily available resources that can be utilized on any given day or night," he said. Nonetheless, he added: "You don't want a wide-mouth, Mickey beer. You want a small opening."

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33. Investigators Looking Into HME Explosion

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

<http://www.onlinesentinel.com/news/investigators-looking-into-homemade-bomb-explosion-2012-01-03.html>

A homemade explosive was detonated on a remote road Monday night, scaring a nearby resident and prompting an investigation by state and federal law enforcement officials, police said.

A woman who lives on Bailey Hill Road was on her porch when she heard male voices in the distance, followed by a loud explosion around 8:30 p.m., according to police Chief Jack Peck.

The woman got on her all-terrain vehicle and started to follow a car driving away after the explosion. She then watched as a small item, which appeared to be on fire, was thrown from the car, Peck said.

The woman drove her four-wheeler home and called police to report the incident, Peck said. He would not identify the woman.

A town police officer found what appeared to be an explosive device in the roadway, closed the street to traffic and called in the Maine State Police bomb squad, which removed the explosive, Peck said. The road was reopened later that night.

No one was hurt in the explosion that startled the resident, which happened near where Davis Road connects to Bailey Hill Road, he said.

Peck described the item found in the road as a homemade explosive device. Peck referred questions seeking further details to the state fire marshal's office, which is handling the investigation along with state police.

Investigators are working to identify the device that detonated and have no suspects, Sgt. Ken Grimes of the fire marshal's office said Tuesday morning.

Debris from the device that exploded was collected at the scene and is being analyzed at the Portland office of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, according to Grimes and a Maine Department of Public Safety statement.

The investigation is seeking to find out the design and materials used for the bomb to determine the next step, Grimes said.

Grimes said there is a wide range of things it could have been from "an actual explosive device classified as a pipe bomb" to a pyrotechnic device, in other words, fireworks.

Grimes would not describe the materials used in the device that detonated or discuss other details of the investigation. Investigators believe whoever is behind the incident was not specifically targeting any people or property.

The device that detonated was tossed into the street from a car driving down the road, he said. Grimes did not mention the discovery of the second device and could not be reached later in the day after a reporter spoke to Peck.

In general, materials used in an explosive device and the specific design are important in determining what the person intended to accomplish, Grimes said.

The woman said the car leaving the scene was a dark color, but she was unable to give other details about it or the incident, Peck said.

Grimes said anyone with information about the incident should contact the Farmington Police Department at 778-6311.

Although a new law that makes the sale and personal use of fireworks legal in Maine just took effect Sunday, Peck said that he does not believe the incident Monday night is tied to commercial fireworks.

Farmington is not among the several communities statewide that have already passed local ordinances banning fireworks despite the new law, he said.

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34. Corpsman Arrested With Bomb Materials

Wednesday, 04 January 2012

http://www.fox43tv.com/dpps/news/local/explosive-device-found-in-jcc_4030108

The James City County Fire Marshal's Office assisted the police department on a call on Dec. 31 when officers discovered the possible presence of bomb making materials.

Police were responding to a domestic assault at 845 Vail Ridge in the Seasons Trace subdivision in James City County.

Shortly after police arrived, the James City County Fire Marshal's Office requested the help of Naval Weapons Station Yorktown explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) personnel. Together, the crews discovered materials to make bombs, and one partially completed improvised explosive device. The EOD removed all materials and devices.

According to District Chief Robert S. Ryalls with James City County says the materials found included: smokeless gun powder, military heat tablets, multiple pieces of 6-inch-long iron pipe with endcaps and copper wire. A timing device and wiring was connected to the partially completed IED.

The James City County Fire Marshal's Office obtained a felony warrant for 37-year-old Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (EXW) Joseph Robert Yengel. He was charged with manufacturing and possession of an explosive device, a felony, as well as domestic assault. Yengel is a decorated active member of the US Navy. He is being held at Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail.

NCIS is also assisting with the investigation.

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35. Colorado Springs House Cleared Of Explosives

Saturday, 31 December 2011

http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_19650062

A man arrested Thursday night in Colorado Springs on suspicion of unlawful possession and use of explosive devices has been identified as 57-year-old Edward Kiley.

Police arrested Kiley after neighbors reported hearing several loud explosions coming from a house Thursday night. Kiley is being held on \$250,000 bail.

About eight homes were evacuated Friday morning as about 50 law enforcement officials, including a bomb squad and federal Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosive agents, cleared explosives from the house on the northwest corner of Vermijo Avenue and Prospect Street.

As of 4 p.m. Friday, the Colorado Springs Police Department said in a statement that law enforcement has been able to remove numerous improvised explosive devices, but still has more work to complete.

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36. Suicide Bomber Kills 26 In Syria

Friday, 06 January 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/06/us-syria-idUSTRE8041A820120106>

A suicide bomber killed 26 people and wounded 63 in Damascus on Friday, Syria's interior minister said, vowing an "iron fist" response to the carnage in the heart of the Syrian capital after similar attacks two weeks ago.

The blast came two days before an Arab League committee was due to discuss an initial report by Arab observers who are checking Syria's compliance with an Arab plan to halt President Bashar al-Assad's crackdown on nearly 10 months of unrest.

The meeting may decide whether to continue the mission or to refer Syria to the United Nations Security Council, perhaps paving the way for some form of international action, a scenario that many Arab countries are keen to avoid.

Arab League chief Nabil Elaraby said he was sending a message with Khaled Meshaal, the Damascus-based leader of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, asking the Syrian government to work "with integrity" to halt the violence.

Interior Minister Ibrahim al-Shaar, quoted by state television, said 26 people had been killed in the blast in the Maidan district of Damascus, including 15 who could not be identified because their bodies had been shredded in the blast.

"We will strike back with an iron fist at anyone tempted to tamper with the security of the country or its citizens," he said. He said that about 63 people had been wounded.

Some in the opposition said the government itself had staged the attack to try to show that it is fighting blind violence rather than a pro-democracy movement.

State television showed body parts, bloodstains and broken glass from the explosion. Several riot police shields were shown near a wrecked bus that was among several damaged vehicles.

On December 23 at least 44 people were killed by what Syrian authorities said were two suicide bombings that targeted security buildings in the Syrian capital, one day before the head of the Arab League observer mission arrived there.

Syrian television footage of Friday's blast showed yellow caution tape stretched around the wrecked bus and cars with smashed windows in a street. People collected body parts on blue plastic sheets amid pools of blood and scattered shoes.

Arab monitors in white baseball caps and orange vests inspected the area, taking notes and filming. A local police station was visible, apparently untouched by the explosion.

The TV showed crowds of angry locals gathered at the scene, chanting "God, Syria and Bashar only" and "God protect the army" and "With blood and soul we sacrifice for you Bashar."

The monitors confirmed they had visited the scene. "We are only here to observe and document," one of them told Reuters by telephone.

Syria bars most independent journalists from the country, making first-hand reporting impossible.

However, a BBC Arabic service reporter was able to accompany three Arab monitors on a five-hour visit to the town of Irbine, on the outskirts of Damascus, the BBC reported.

It was the first time foreign media were known to have been able to cover the activities of the monitors directly, although media access was a condition stipulated by the Arab League.

The BBC said it had been able to film, unhindered by the security forces, an anti-Assad protest in Irbine.

Protesters and residents told the observers, all Algerian diplomats, of harsh treatment at the hands of the security forces. The observers then witnessed a demonstration in which the crowd demanded Assad's execution, the BBC said.

The League's special committee on Syria is due to meet in Cairo on Sunday to debate the initial findings of the observer mission, which has been criticized by Syrian activists who question its ability to assess violence on the ground.

Arab states are wary of instability in Syria, which the Arab League has suspended for failing to honor its first peace plan. Syria has been a major regional player, allied with Iran and the Lebanese Shi'ite Hezbollah group.

Hezbollah, a political and militant group that fought a war with Israel in 2006, blamed the United States for the blast.

"This is a second step in the plan by evil American forces and those under its control in our region to punish Syria for its firm support of resistance forces against the Zionist enemy (Israel) and the West," it said on its website.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said that, as with previous attacks, Syria had blamed "just about everybody" - the opposition, al Qaeda and the United States - while the opposition, including the Free Syrian Army (FSA), had denied being behind the attacks and accused the authorities.

"At the present time we can't say one way or the other how this happened but what we can say is that, obviously, we condemn the attack," she said.

The United Nations says more than 5,000 people have been killed in the popular uprising against Assad. The government says "terrorists" have killed 2,000 members of the security forces during the revolt.

The monitors began work on the streets on December 26 to try to verify whether the government was keeping its promise to pull troops and tanks out of cities and free thousands of detainees.

The FSA, an armed opposition force composed mainly of army deserters, condemned the attack and blamed the authorities.

"This is planned and systematic state terrorism by the security forces of President Bashar al-Assad," FSA spokesman Major Maher al-Naimi said.

An opposition activist, who asked not to be named, said Islamist militants were taking hold in Syria and may have been behind the blast. "I think we will be seeing more of these attacks in the coming days, I am sorry to say," he said.

One Damascus resident, who gave her name only as Dima, said the city had been tense even before the blast. "Some friends who work in the security forces were warning my family since yesterday to stay at home," she said. "The streets were empty."

The violence in Syria has raged unabated since the Arab monitors arrived, with scores of people reported killed.

Security forces killed four protesters in Hama on Friday when they shot at people shouting anti-Assad slogans after weekly prayers, activists said.

Pro-Assad forces also wounded at least three protesters when they fired at a crowd at a Damascus mosque in a district where a security headquarters is located, a witness said.

The witness said pro-Assad militiamen and secret police agents fired water cannon and then assault rifles after the protesters in the Kfar Souseh district refused to disperse.

"I saw three people on the ground and I do not know if they are dead or alive," said the witness, who lives nearby.

Arab government sources said on Thursday the League monitors would pursue their mission in Syria, despite criticism from Qatar's prime minister that they had made mistakes.

Syrian activists say the Arab monitors have had inadequate access to trouble spots, a charge denied by Damascus.

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37. Irish Army EOD Call-Outs At 32-Year High

Saturday, 31 December 2011

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/republic-of-ireland/bomb-team-callouts-at-32year-high-16097650.html>

Irish Army bomb experts have experienced their highest number of call-outs for more than three decades.

In the latest incident, they have made an improvised explosive device safe in Dublin.

The Defence Forces team were called to the scene at a private home on Kilcronan Avenue, Clondalkin, at around 2pm.

The device, described as viable, was made safe without any need for a controlled explosion.

"The device has been removed to a military installation for further examination, following which it will be handed over to the gardai," said a Defence Forces spokesman. The scene was declared safe at 3.15pm.

The incident marked the 236th call-out for the Defence Forces bomb disposal experts this year.

It was the 55th viable explosive device made safe.

The past year was the highest annual number of call-outs for the bomb disposal teams since 1979, the Defence Forces spokesman said.

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38. Militia Captures Loyalists Planning To Destroy Tripoli's Power Grid

Sunday, 01 January 2012

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/01/libyan-militia-captures-gaddafi-loyalists>

A Libyan militia has captured nine Gaddafi loyalists who had been plotting to blow up Tripoli's power grid on New Year's Eve, its leader has said.

"We captured explosives with them that they bought from the black market and now we're interrogating them," the commander of Tripoli's Revolutionist Council, Abdullah Naker, said.

Militia groups who helped overthrow Muammar Gaddafi last year still hold considerable power in Libya, and have taken the law into their hands in several areas, setting up road blocks and arresting suspects, despite the presence of an official police force.

Naker said the men had been funded by a group of businessmen affiliated to the former leader who was killed in October after militias overran his home town of Sirte.

He also accused them of trying to relaunch Gaddafi's official television station Al Jamahiriya.

State media, quoting Libya's electricity and renewable energy authority, reported that the men had been planning to set off a number of explosions in Tripoli.

Libya's interim government is trying to persuade thousands of militia fighters to join the military, police and civil service and to break up the forces controlled by rival commanders with regional allegiances. It set a deadline of 20 December for militias to leave Tripoli and most withdrew their fighters and dismantled checkpoints last week.

Naker said some returned to the capital on Saturday in a show of strength to Gaddafi supporters that he said were still at large, threatening the country.

He and other militia chiefs have said they want guarantees that their fighters will be paid well by the government before letting them go.

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39. Three Explosives Disrupted In Banke

Friday, 06 January 2012

<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=3+explosives+diffused+in+Banke&NewsID=315456>

A Nepal Army bomb disposal team diffused three explosives - a time bomb and two socket bombs - placed by an armed outfit - at Rajachowk along the Nepalgunj- Kohalpur road section in Banke on Friday morning.

The transportation had been halted for few hours owing to the bombs placed on the highway.

Flyers bearing the signature of Bagat Singh along with flags recovered from the site suggest that the bombs must have been planted by Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha, an underground armed outfit, said a member of the disposal team.

The police are investigating the incident.

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40. Irish Army Disrupts IED In Dublin

Tuesday, 03 January 2012

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/explosive-device-made-safe-in-dublin-534425.html>

An Army bomb disposal team has made safe a viable Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Dublin this afternoon.

The Defence Forces deployed the team to a private residence in Finglas following a request from the gardaí.

The team arrived on scene at 2.50pm and made safe the viable IED which was found outside the building. No controlled explosion was carried out and the scene was declared safe at 4pm.

"The device has been removed to a military installation for further examination, following which it will be handed over to the gardaí," a statement said.

Today's call out is the first of 2012 for the Defence Forces bomb disposal team.

There were 236 call outs last year and 55 viable IEDs made safe.

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41. Northern Ireland Recover Bomb In Belfast

Friday, 06 January 2012

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-01-06/northern-ireland-police-say-bomb-found-in-car-in-belfast.html>

Northern Ireland police said the British Army carried out a controlled explosion on a bomb found inside a car in north Belfast late yesterday.

The device has been taken away for further examination, a police spokesman said in a recorded message, without giving further details.

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42. **Two Palestinians Held In Connection With Sidon Bomb Plot**

Friday, 06 January 2012

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Jan-06/159001-2-palestinians-held-in-connection-with-sidon-bomb-plot.ashx#axzz1ihQjCJyo>

Two Palestinians were arrested Thursday for allegedly planting a bomb in a commercial residential complex in Sidon that targeted the head of a Hezbollah-linked group, security sources said.

A third Palestinian who allegedly provided the bomb is hiding in the nearby Palestinian refugee camp of Ain al-Hilweh, while authorities are searching for a fourth accomplice, the sources said.

The plot, which had the potential to inflict dozens of casualties, was thwarted after army disposal experts dismantled the device, which was ready to detonate, shortly after it was discovered around 10 p.m. Wednesday in the parking lot of the Hijazi complex in Sidon's Quds Square.

"A military intelligence patrol dismantled the bomb containing 1 kilogram of explosives in Sidon's Quds Square at 10:30 p.m. [Wednesday]," the Lebanese Army said in a statement. Military experts defused the bomb, which was set to explode wirelessly, the statement added.

The two Palestinians, identified as Khalil Abdel-Razzaq and Khaled Shaar, were arrested by members of the Internal Security Forces' Information Branch about 200 meters away from the center.

Preliminary investigations with Abdel-Razzaq and Shaar indicated that the motive behind the incident was personal, as Abdel-Razzaq used to work for Sheikh Saheeb Habli, the head of the Olfa Society, which has its offices in the complex and is close to Hezbollah, the sources said.

According to the sources, Abdel-Razzaq wanted to take revenge against Habli for firing him from the Lebanese Resistance Brigades, a mixed-sectarian resistance group established by Hezbollah before Israel withdrew its troops from south Lebanon in 2000.

Preliminary investigations also indicated that Abdel-Razzaq, with Shaar's assistance, got the bomb from Mohammad Douwakhi, a Palestinian who belongs to the Fatah al-Islam group in Ain al-Hilweh, for \$220, the sources said. The authorities are searching for a fourth accomplice who is still at large.

"Yes, I was targeted," Habli told The Daily Star, "because we speak the truth, we belong to the resistance, we fight strife, we call for national unity and we call for renouncing hatred."

He blamed agents "of the Zionist enemy and America, and the enemies of unity" as being behind the incident.

Habli acknowledged his links with Hezbollah, saying that he remains the head of the Sidon branch of the "Resistance Battalions," a multi-confessional group formed by the party in the 1990s.

A 500-meter area around the Hijazi complex, which contains between 40 and 50 apartments in addition to shops, offices and medical clinics, was sealed off. Small pieces of iron and aluminum had been mixed with the bomb, which was attached to a detonator linked to a cellphone that was primed to explode the device remotely, added the sources.

"If detonated properly, the bomb would have killed or wounded several people and caused extensive damage to buildings where the explosive was planted," one security source said.

UNCLASSIFIED

The city's security situation was discussed later in the day by security officials at a meeting chaired by South Lebanon Governor Nicolas Bou Daher. Participants agreed to step up joint patrols by the Lebanese Army and ISF and other security agencies, to reassure the public.

On Thursday morning, the nearby Chouf town of Barja experienced a false alarm after a bomb threat sent by SMS.

The principal of La Cite Nationale School, Salah Abdel-Samad, told The Daily Star that the school's secretary received a text message on her cell phone at 6:40 a.m. Thursday.

"There is a bomb outside school. I'm just a helpful person that has nothing to do with this," the SMS said, according to Abdel-Samad.

The school was evacuated and students were sent home, and security personnel found no trace of explosives.

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43. One Year Later, No Answers To Egypt Church Bombing

Thursday, 05 January 2012

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5ixDBMPg9fY7uZIN9z8zo52sIG91Q?docId=5796f342d3904786ad2bc1d2a9a5dd02>

Just over a year ago, Amira Maurice was attending a New Year's Eve Mass in the Saints Church in Egypt's Mediterranean coastal city of Alexandria with her parents and fiance, their marriage set for only a few months away. Then the bomb blast ripped through the church.

Now, the 28-year-old pharmacist is in Germany undergoing the latest in a string of surgeries to save her leg and deal with her burns. Her fiance is dead, one of the 21 people killed in the suicide bombing targeting the church.

Another New Year's has passed since, and there are still no answers in Egypt's most dramatic anti-Christian attack. The investigation was halted 11 months ago and never picked up again. The only suspects ever detained were released, and it's not clear they had any role in it. No new suspects have ever been named.

"Nothing. Nothing at all has happened with the investigation," said Maurice's father, Nabil Roman. "It is ridiculous."

Roman suspects that the Interior Ministry, which is in charge of the police, is dragging its feet in going after the case, but he doesn't know why.

"Something is not clear. All I can say is that God will deal with them," Roman said.

The attack was soon overshadowed by the massive popular uprising against Hosni Mubarak that began soon after and that eventually led to his Feb. 11 ouster. But the failure to answer who was behind the blast has fueled resentment among Egypt's Christian minority that the state does little to protect them. This sentiment has bred numerous conspiracy theories.

The failure highlights the deep problems that ailed Egypt's police forces during Mubarak's nearly 30-year rule and only worsened after his fall.

Police were notorious for doing little investigation of crimes — instead, their modus operandi was usually to detain possible suspects and torture them into confessions, rights groups and former police officials say. After the fall of Mubarak's regime, the police have been in disarray and resisting reform in their ranks.

An Interior Ministry official told The Associated Press that the delay in investigating the church bombing is because of the turmoil after Mubarak's ouster and the inability of police to arrest and interrogate people like before. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the case.

Egypt's feared security forces long had near unlimited power to arrest people under emergency laws. The laws are still in place, but police have become more hesitant to use them in some cases for fear of eventual retribution.

Joseph Malak, the chief lawyer for families who lost relatives in the attack, said he's been pressing the chief prosecutor's office for months to proceed with an investigation, but prosecutors are legally bound to

wait for the Interior Ministry to hand over its initial findings, which it never has. This, he says, has left the case in limbo.

He said he does not know why the case is still with the police.

Prominent human rights activist Hossam Bahgat said the Interior Ministry "has been and remains broken."

"It is not just abuse and corruption, but also inefficiency," said Bahgat, head of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. Under Mubarak, police had more of a role in monitoring opponents and preserving the regime than investigating crime, and that "had a detrimental effect," he said.

He pointed out that no suspects were ever tried in two of Egypt's previous most prominent terror attacks — suicide bombings in two Sinai resorts, Sharm el-Sheikh in 2005 and Dahab in 2006. In the 2004 bombing of another resort, Taba, three men were sentenced to death, but Bahgat said it was "abundantly clear" they had confessed under torture.

The investigation into the church bombing appears to have been marred by the same methods. One man detained over the attack died in custody after witnesses said he was tortured. Police say his death is being investigated.

Police arrested around 40 men in the wake of the Saints Church bombing, all of whom had been previously detained in 2006 for alleged ties to militants in Iraq, though none were charged at the time and none were subsequently charged in the church bombing. Most belonged to the ultraconservative Islamic Salafi movement.

The men were all released in April when the military, which took power after Mubarak's fall, released political prisoners.

Several of those detained told AP they were tortured during detention, saying they were doused in gasoline, given electric shocks and beaten repeatedly, including on their genitals.

"We were arrested for being arrested before. We had done nothing wrong, but that never mattered under Mubarak," said one of the former suspects, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation has not been formally closed.

He said he was among those tortured, and he denied any of those detained was involved in the attack. "We want this case solved more than anyone because it's our right to know who did this and who tried to blame us for it," he said.

Ahmed Amin, a lawyer who was detained in connection with the attack, said the police told the detainees to fabricate scenarios of how the attack was planned. "The officers interrogating us told us we either accept this case nicely or they will force it on us," he told the AP.

In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, Mubarak blamed foreign terrorists and Alexandria's governor accused al-Qaida, pointing to threats against Christians by the terror network's branch in Iraq. Officials then said a Palestinian militant group based in the Gaza Strip, the Army of Islam, was behind the attack, though they also said they were looking at possible involvement by Egyptian extremists inspired by al-Qaida.

Last weekend, several hundred protesters — most of them Coptic Christians — held a vigil outside Cairo's main courthouse to remember the victims of the attack. Some held posters demanding the

resignation of the attorney general and others demanded Habib el-Adly, the interior minister at the time, be investigated as a suspect.

After Mubarak's fall, some speculated that el-Adly organized the bombing to bolster Mubarak's claims that he was needed to keep stability. No evidence has ever been put forward, and the rights activist Bahgat said the scenario was unlikely.

Roman is among those who suspects el-Adly had a role and he feels justice has been served, in its own way, with the ongoing trial of Mubarak and el-Adly on charges of complicity in the killing of over 800 protesters in last year's revolt.

"God got us our justice and more when the revolt happened on Jan. 25 and all these men went to jail," he said. "God stood with us."

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