Beat: News

Twin bomb blasts kill 57 at market in northwestern Pakistan

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USPA News - Two suicide bombers blew themselves up Friday at a busy market in northwestern Pakistan, killing at least 57 people and injuring more than 180 others, officials said on Saturday, making it the country`s deadliest attack during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. The attack happened at a bazaar in Parachinar, the largest city of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and located close to the border with neighboring Afghanistan.

It happened when an estimated 400 people were shopping for their evening meal during the Ramadan. Police said the attack was carried out by two young suicide bombers, one of them believed to have been a young teenager. The bombers were riding motorcycles and detonated their explosives about a minute apart in different parts of the city`s market, where mostly Shia Muslims were shopping. The powerful explosions destroyed and damaged several vehicles and nearby shops, causing panic among local residents who feared more attacks. Most of the victims were taken to the city`s Agency Headquarters Hospital, where an emergency was declared and extra staff was called in. "Twelve people who were critically injured in yesterday`s explosions have succumbed to their injuries overnight and today. As of now, we have a total of 57 people killed and 183 others were injured, many of them critically," a district official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "The death toll could still rise." It was not immediately clear who carried out Friday`s deadly attack, but an apparently new militant group claimed responsibility in a statement to Pakistani TV channel Dawn News. The group identified themselves as Ansarul Mujahideen and said the attack in Parachinar marked their first action outside of Pakistan`s mountainous Waziristan region. Abu Baseer, a spokesman for the militant group, told Dawn News that it was fighting against U.S. drone strikes in the region. "With each drone attack, we will be responding with a suicide attack. We have done it and shown it," Baseer was quoted by Dawn News, although the claims could not be independently verified. However, attacks in the Pakistani border city of Parachinar are not uncommon, although they rarely result in so many casualties as on Friday. The area has a significant Shia population, which is a minority group that has been frequently targeted by Sunni militants in recent years.

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