
Death Toll 58 in Blasts in Damascus Shiite Neighborhood

01/02/2016



According to the NGO, the victims included 25 Syrian and foreign Shiite militia members loyal to the regime of President Bashar al Assad.

The Observatory said that the death toll might rise because some of 40 or so people hurt in the blasts were wounded very seriously.

Syria's official SANA news agency had announced earlier that at least 45 people died in the "cowardly attacks."

The agency, citing an Interior Ministry official, said that a car bomb exploded at a bus stop in the Ku Sudan zone and, later, two "terrorists" detonated their explosive belts as people gathered to help the wounded from the first attack.

The Observatory, however, said that there were two blasts, the first by a suicide bomber and the second when a car bomb exploded at a checkpoint in the Sayida Zeinab area.

The Islamic State's Damascus branch, Wilayat Dimashq, claimed responsibility for the attacks by two suicide bombers "against a nest of polytheistic apostates."

The IS said the attacks killed about 50 people and wounded another 120.

Sayida Zeinab, located 17 km (10.5 mi.) south of Damascus, is protected by Lebanon's Shiite group Hezbollah, whose leaders have said repeatedly they will guard Syrian Shiite areas and mosques from Sunni attacks.

Meanwhile, UN special mediator for Syria Staffan de Mistura made a "courtesy" visit to a Syrian opposition delegation in their Geneva hotel, his office said.

The UN assistant special envoy to Syria, and De Misturi's No. 2, Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy, made a similar visit to the Syrian government delegation, also in their separate Geneva hotel.
