



Death Toll in Moscow Terrorist Attack Rises To 137

Description

WORLD : Russian authorities said on Sunday that the death toll in the terrorist attack on a music hall outside of Moscow that took place on Friday has risen to 137.

“The identification of those dead continues. As of now, as many as 137 bodies have been found. Three of them are children,” the Russian Investigative Committee said, according to the Russian news agency TASS.

Russia has said it detained 11 people over the attack, including four people directly involved in the shooting. A video published by Russian media showed one man being interrogated who said he was paid 500,000 rubles (\$5,400) to carry out the attack.

The four men suspected of carrying out the shooting were all citizens of Tajikistan, and three of them pleaded guilty during a court appearance on Sunday night. They will all be held in pre-trial custody until May 22.

ISIS claimed it was responsible for the shooting, and the US has backed the claim, but Russia has not formally attributed blame for the massacre. The US publicly warned two weeks ago that “extremists have imminent plans to target large gatherings in Moscow, to include concerts.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin hinted at potential Ukrainian involvement by saying the attackers attempted to flee to Ukraine and that the Ukrainian side created a “gap” in the border for them to escape into. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the US was trying to “bail out” Ukraine by blaming the attack on ISIS.

Both the US and Ukraine denied there was any Ukrainian involvement in the attack. “ISIS bears sole responsibility for this attack. There was no Ukrainian involvement whatsoever,” said National Security Council spokeswoman Adrienne Watson.

US officials pointed to ISIS-K, the Islamic State's affiliate that's based in Afghanistan, which recently took credit for a bombing in Kerman, Iran, that killed 84 people. Earlier this month, Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said it thwarted a planned ISIS attack on a Moscow Synagogue.

by Dave DeCamp

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