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## Moroccan minister: Casablanca attacks linked to "international terrorism"

Published May 20th, 2003 - 02:00 GMT

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The suicide bombers who killed at least 29 people in Casablanca last week were linked to international terrorism, Morocco said on Tuesday.

A day after FBI agents joined the investigation into the five almost simultaneous blasts, the Kingdom's Interior Minister Mustapha Sahel said the interrogation of two would-be attackers who survived the blasts had established the link.

"The arrest of the two terrorists still alive has led to considerable progress in terms of information," he said in a statement carried by the official MAP news agency.

"This allows us today to confirm the link with international terrorism".

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Sahel said 12 Casablanca attackers died by blowing themselves up, not 13 as initially reported, when they struck mainly Jewish and Spanish targets and a Kuwaiti-owned hotel.

"One terrorist was apprehended that same night and security services arrested a 14th one on Sunday night," he said.

Foreign Minister Mohamed Benaissa said authorities did not know precisely who was behind the bombings but "similarities of the action (and) the nature of the terrorist act lead us to believe that there is a foreign hand behind it."

Benaissa, who was speaking at a news conference in London after talks with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, said in Morocco one would not find "an organization of this magnitude which would carry out such acts in Casablanca...if it's not been backed by experienced organisations outside Morocco".

Earlier, a Moroccan politician told *Al Bawaba* that the investigation into the blast that rocked Casablanca last Friday are now almost complete, and that the results would be announced within the next day or so. He said that there has been no evidence so far of al Qaeda involvement in the terror attacks, however their timing and similarity to the Riyadh attacks is raising suspicion.

"Investigations are going on very quickly and the results will be known soon as the identities of eight suicide attackers has been identified. Also, more than 30 people associated with the bombers have been arrested," said the member of the Moroccan Democratic Socialist party politburo, Tale' Saud al Atlasi.

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Atlasi pointed out that the organization was founded two years ago, and has sprung as a result of the rifts between the various Islamic movements in Morocco namely the Islamic Youth, Tawhid, al Adel and al Ehsan.

The party official did not confirm any evidence implicating al Qaeda in the attacks and said such links remain speculative. "The similarity in the manner of execution and the synchronicity with the Riyadh bombings justified implicating al Qaeda in the Casablanca attacks," Atlasi said. (Albawaba.com)

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