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## Indian Commandos Storm Jewish Center

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MUMBAI, India — Indian commandos slid down ropes from a hovering army helicopter Friday morning as they stormed a Jewish community center that had been seized by terrorists during bloody and widespread attacks on Mumbai, India's commercial capital.

More than a hundred shots were heard from inside Nariman House, home to the Orthodox Jewish group Chabad Lubavitch, after a number of the blue-uniformed commandos landed on the roof and then made their way inside at 9:20 a.m.

Army sharpshooters, positioned across from the five-story building, scanned the lower floors as the firing continued from inside.

Elsewhere in the city, Indian army and paramilitary commandos scoured through two charred luxury hotels, searching for survivors of the bands of gunmen who unleashed a day and a half of chaos here.

Indian authorities appeared to be gaining control of the crisis, but amid early indications that the sieges were ending, fears were growing that the toll would rise past the 119 known dead. Late Thursday, smoke was still rising from one of the hotels, and people who escaped reported stepping around bodies. Dozens of people, perhaps many more, remained trapped in the hotels, though it was uncertain if any were being held hostage. The wounded numbered some 300.

There remained much mystery around the group behind the attack, unusual in its scale, its almost theatrical boldness and its targeting of locales frequented by wealthy Indians and foreigners.

Two men who claimed to be among the gunmen called local television stations, demanding to speak with the government. They complained about the treatment of Muslims in India and about Kashmir, the disputed territory over which India and Pakistan have

fought two wars.

“Are you aware how many people have been killed in Kashmir?” a caller who identified himself as Imran asked. “Are you aware how your army has killed Muslims?”

The men said they were Indian, but the attacks appeared to ratchet up tensions in an already volatile region. In a televised speech, India’s prime minister, [Manmohan Singh](#), blamed forces “based outside this country” in a thinly veiled accusation that Pakistan was involved.

The attacks could threaten recent American efforts to reduce the overall enmity between Pakistan and India, which were meant to enable Pakistan to focus more military resources against the rising threat of the [Taliban](#) in its lawless tribal areas.

Mr. Singh issued a warning that seemed clearly aimed at Pakistan, which India has often accused of allowing terrorist groups to plot anti-Indian attacks.

“The group which carried out these attacks, based outside the country, had come with single-minded determination to create havoc in the commercial capital of the country,” he said. “We will take up strongly with our neighbors that the use of their territory for launching attacks on us will not be tolerated, and that there would be a cost if suitable measures are not taken by them.”

While many of the targets seemed to indicate a focus on tourists and Westerners, most of the victims were Indians, who had packed into the banquet halls and restaurants in the hotels, according to witnesses and officials; even street vendors in Mumbai’s main train station were sprayed with bullets.

The chief minister of Maharashtra State, Vilasrao Deshmukh, told [CNN-IBN](#), a private television channel, that six foreigners had been killed and seven wounded. Mumbai, formerly Bombay, is the capital of [Maharashtra](#).

Hisashi Tsuda, 38, a businessman and father of two from Tokyo, was killed, his company announced Thursday. Brett Taylor, 49, a timber merchant from Sydney, Australia, had been staying at one of the besieged hotels, the [Oberoi](#), and was confirmed dead. Antonio de Lorenzo, a businessman from Livorno, Italy, was killed at the Oberoi, according to reports quoting Italy’s foreign minister, Franco Frattini.

A German, Ralph Burkei, 51, was fatally injured when he jumped out of the other hotel under assault, the [Taj Mahal Palace & Tower Hotel](#). According to several reports citing the Munich newspaper Abendzeitung, Mr. Burkei, a co-owner of an independent television production company in Munich, called a friend from his cellphone and said: "I have broken every bone in my body. If no one helps me now, I'm finished." He died on the way to the hospital.

The British authorities said one Briton had been killed and seven wounded.

The [American Embassy](#) said it was unaware of any American casualties, though at least three wounded Americans were at Bombay Hospital, one of several hospitals where the injured were being taken.

Several high-ranking law enforcement officials were reported killed, including the chief of the antiterrorism squad and a police commissioner.

Throughout Thursday, Indian soldiers and paramilitary forces fanned out across the southern tip of the city, where the attacks were focused. Normally bustling, it was deserted. Stores were shuttered. Cars sailed along the empty streets. Most offices were closed, along with the Bombay Stock Exchange.

Near Leopold Cafe, a popular restaurant that was among the first places struck Wednesday night, a bloodied shoe lay on the ground beneath a car with smashed windows.

For most of the day, smoke billowed out of the Taj hotel, one of the city's most famous landmarks. Loud explosions could be heard throughout the afternoon from inside the Oberoi hotel, also known as the Trident, which is also in South Mumbai, near the Arabian Sea. After sundown, a fire broke out on its fourth floor.

The state's highest-ranking police official, A. N. Roy, told [NDTV](#), a private news channel, that National Security Guards commandos, aided by the police and army and navy troops, had scoured the Taj hotel, room by room, for remaining civilians and were moving cautiously through the Oberoi because of the likelihood of hostages there. The police said 14 police officers had been killed in the city, along with seven gunmen. Nine suspects were taken into custody, they said.

"We are not negotiating at all," Mr. Roy told the channel. "We will get them and get them soon. We have some definite clues and leads. It

was a very well-planned and very well-executed operation.”

It was impossible to know precisely what was going on inside the two hotels, except that intense firefights occurred between security forces and an apparently audacious band of gunmen.

Occasionally, a curtain would part, a window would open and the figure of a guest would become visible.

Hospitals were mobbed with men and women searching for their kin, and morgues received a steady stream of bodies. Doctors said the wounded had been shot. On the shaded steps of the Regal Cinema near the main train station, the [Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus](#), sat a handful of dazed spectators. The cinema was closed; “A Quantum of Solace” would not be playing Thursday.

The gunmen appear to have come ashore at the Sassoon Docks, not far from the Leopold. They moved on to the train station, the old Victoria Terminus, and then opened fire on Cama and Albless Hospital — where some of their earlier victims encountered a second round of gunfire. At one point, the gunmen hijacked a police vehicle and opened fire on journalists and spectators gathered near a famous theater, the Metro Cinema.

Witnesses and security camera video of the gunmen built a portrait of them as young men dressed in jeans and trendy T-shirts, bearing rucksacks and guns. It remained unclear who they were, what they wanted, or how many survived.

Earlier on Thursday, Indian news channels received a claim of responsibility from a group called Deccan Mujahedeen; the name may refer to the Deccan Plateau, which dominates central and southern India. But security experts said the group might not exist.

The casualties ran the gamut of Mumbai society. A street vendor was shot and killed near the main train station, where he sold a popular snack known as bhel puri. A manager at the Oberoi survived a bullet wound to his leg but was taken to the Cama and Albless Hospital, where a shootout erupted; he died after being transferred to a second hospital.

A chef at the Taj who had been hiding under a kitchen table for most of the night was discovered by four gunmen, made to stand up and shot from behind.

Escape attempts took place sporadically at the hotels. Before dawn on Thursday, several guests and workers managed to leave the Taj, but

as gunmen opened fire on them, some fled back inside.

In the late afternoon, about 10 hostages left the Oberoi, waving and looking relieved, but answering no questions.

The director general of the paramilitary National Security Guards, J. K. Dutt, told CNN-IBN television that troops were trying to coax frightened people out of the Oberoi.

“They are in their rooms,” he told the station. “They are not prepared to open their doors. As far as terrorists are concerned, we know exactly where they are.”

Reuters quoted the state’s deputy chief minister, R. R. Patil, as saying 100 to 200 people could be inside the Oberoi. “We cannot give you the exact figure, as many people have locked themselves inside their rooms,” he said.

The sole British citizen confirmed dead in the Mumbai attacks spoke with the BBC a few hours before his death. The interview gives an idea of how terrifying and confusing his final moments must have been.

Andreas Liveras, a 72-year-old self-made millionaire born in Cyprus, was in Mumbai for a yacht show, family members told a Cyprus-based television station.

The BBC reached him by cell phone as he cowered in the Taj Mahal hotel, where he had gone for dinner. As the gunmen entered, he hid under a table, then moved to a salon with hundreds of other guests. Gunfire and blasts echoed through the building.

“There must be more than 1,000 people here,” he said. “There are residents and tourists and locals. We are not hiding, we are locked in here - nobody tells us anything, the doors are locked and we are inside,” he said.

“All we know is the bombs are next door and the hotel is shaking every time a bomb goes off. Everybody is just living on their nerves.”

The British Foreign Office in London confirmed that one Briton was among the dead in Mumbai and that it was in contact with the victim’s family. Reuters reached the Cypriot Foreign Ministry, which confirmed Mr. Liveras’s death on Thursday. He had been shot multiple times, the Times of London reported.

Air France issued a statement saying that 15 of its flight crew members had been unable to get out of a hotel in Mumbai. The company spokeswoman did not name the hotel or provide any details, except to say that the Paris-bound flight they were due to work on was canceled. Many international flight crews stay at the Oberoi.

The suspicions raised by the attack seemed a blow to relations between India and Pakistan, which had been recovering from a low earlier this year after India blamed the Pakistani intelligence agency for abetting the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Afghanistan. India has frequently accused Pakistan-based militant groups of fueling terrorist attacks on Indian soil, though lately it has also acknowledged the presence of homegrown Muslim and Hindu militant organizations.

*Reporting was contributed by Jeremy Kahn from Mumbai, Mark McDonald from Hong Kong, Heather Timmons and Hari Kumar from New Delhi and Liz Robbins from New York.*

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