

## **Witnesses tell of Mumbai violence**

BBC, 27 November 2008, 01:31 GMT

Some of the people caught up in the Mumbai attacks, which targeted two of the Indian city's top hotels, a railway station and other sites, have been describing their experiences.

Police say at least 100 people have been killed and more than 200 injured.

### **ANDREAS LIVERAS**

Andreas Liveras visited the Taj Palace Hotel for a curry on Wednesday evening, having heard that the hotel served the best food in Mumbai. But he quickly became caught up in the violence.

"I think it's got the best restaurant here. But as soon as we sat at the table we heard the machine gun fire outside in the corridor," he told BBC News.

"We hid ourselves under the table and then they switched all the lights off. But the machine guns kept going, and they took us into the kitchen, and from there into a basement, before we came up into a salon where we are now.

"There must be more than 1,000 people here. 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.

"Hotel staff are helping us a lot providing water and sandwiches - but nobody is eating really, people are frightened.

"At this moment it's very quiet. The last bomb exploded about 45 minutes ago and it shook the hotel up. Nobody comes in this room and nobody goes out, and we don't really know.

"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."

Note 1905 GMT 27 November: After this account was published it was confirmed that Mr Liveras had been killed in the violence at the hotel. We have reported his death here:

### **ALAN JONES**

Alan Jones was in Mumbai on business, and was at the Trident Hotel, which adjoins the Oberoi Hotel, with a colleague when the attacks happened.

"We took the lift to the lobby and heard bangs as the door opened. A Japanese man, one of four men in the lift, was shot and wounded at that precise moment," he told BBC News.

"I frantically pressed the "close door" button but had to move the shot man's foot for the doors to close.

"We headed back to our rooms on the 28th floor of the hotel but were quickly instructed by staff to go to a "safe" room in the basement.

"There, we met many residents, but nowhere near all of them. After approximately an hour, we were escorted from the hotel, and, with the help of our local office, made our way back to the office we've been working at.

"It's still near the affected area but feels more secure.

"We're under the impression that there are still gunmen in the Oberoi -Trident complex, with many residents still inside."

#### ALEX CHAMBERLAIN

Alex Chamberlain, a British man in Mumbai on business, said he had escaped from the Oberoi hotel which was on fire.

He told the British television broadcaster, Sky, that when he was in the hotel a gunman ordered people upstairs.

"They told everybody to stop and put their hands up and asked if there were any British or Americans. My friend said to me, 'don't be a hero, don't say you are British'.

"I am sure that is what this is all about. They were talking about British and Americans specifically."

Fearing that he would be asphyxiated by smoke in the stairwell, Mr Chamberlain said he had managed to escape through a fire exit with another person.

But his Indian friend was "still on the roof of that hotel somewhere" while armed police surrounded the building.

#### SANVAR OBEROI

Mumbai resident Sanvar Oberoi said he was near the Chhatrapati Shivaji railway station - one of the targets - when the attacks began.

"On hearing two loud distinct bomb sounds we rushed back home," he told BBC News.

"On our way back at Marine Drive, a long stretch of sea-facing road, we saw the deployment of a large police personnel and safety measures being carried out such as evacuations.

"We saw a team of ambulances and police vehicles racing past on the other side of the road.

"Even in the posh area of Nepeansea Road and Malabar Hill all apartment buildings' gates were tight shut and police check posts set up.

"Colleges and offices have announced that they are shut for tomorrow. The entire city is in panic and shock.

"Cell phone networks are down, slow, congested.

"Mumbai indeed has seen its share of terrorism but never in the past 18 years to such a large and bold extent."