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The Advertiser (Australia)

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1 - State Edition

## Jihadi killers stalk victims in 10 **Mumbai attacks**

**BYLINE:** MILES KEMP, RAMOLA TALWAR BADAM**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 2**LENGTH:** 1077 words

TERRORISM took a new and devastating twist yesterday as suspected jihadi extremists waged war on the Indian financial capital of Mumbai.

More than 100 people were massacred, some executed at point-blank range in the streets, and 314 injured, as teams of gunmen rampaged through the city at up to 10 strategic targets.

Witnesses reported chilling scenes of civilian-clothed executioners hunting Westerners, moving methodically in and around key targets after the initial bomb blasts.

Last night, police and gunmen were exchanging gunfire at two luxury hotels and dozens of people were believed held hostage or trapped inside the besieged buildings.

Australian man Braid Gilbert Taylor, 49, was dead on arrival at hospital and Townsville couple Kate Anstee, 24, and David Coker, 23, were shot and wounded at a cafe.

Other terrorists staged random hit-and-run attacks. At the Chhatrapati Shivaji Railway Station, one of Mumbai's two main rail terminuses, commuters and travellers were sprayed with bullets.

``Four boys rushed in. They wore black T-shirts and blue jeans. They were carrying big guns," said sobbing and shaking witness Nasim Inam. ``They just fired randomly at people and then ran away. In seconds, people fell to the ground."

The killers, believed to be motivated or inspired by al-Qaida, blasted their way through South Mumbai with assault rifles, grenades, car bombs and ammunition-laden backpacks.

The main targets were two five-star hotels, the century-old Taj Mahal Palace Hotel - home of the Australian cricket team when in the city - and the Oberoi Trident.

Initially, ill-equipped policemen armed with bolt-action rifles struggled to deal with the crisis. The main police headquarters was under attack and chief of the police anti-terrorist squad, Hemant Karkare, and two other senior officers were early victims.

Leopold's Cafe, popular with Westerners, was another target, riddled with bullets and strewn with the blood and belongings of fleeing tourists.

Before heavily armed commandos massed in the area, police seemed helpless to bring the chaos

under control. Gunmen walked up to cowering unarmed groups, asking for Western passports and shooting at point-blank range without fear of resistance.

British citizen Alex Chamberlain escaped after being herded into a hotel stairway, with 30 to 40 others, where terrorists singled out Americans and Britons as hostages.

“I thought, ‘they’re going to shoot me if they ask me anything’ - and thank God they didn’t,” he said.

Merciless terrorists targeted the Cama and Alless Hospital and G.T. Hospital as the injured and dying arrived.

Manish Tripathi was at a police cordon near the first hospital when terrorists sped up in a stolen police van, guns blazing. “Some were shot in the leg, some on the shoulder or hand,” he said.

Another British tourist described a six-hour ordeal as Westerners huddled silent and in the darkness of their hotel rooms as hell raged in the corridors and streets outside.

“There were about 20 or 30 people in each room. The doors were locked very quickly, the lights turned off, and everybody just lay very still on the floor,” she said.

The head office of a Jewish group was overrun by four gunmen who police said fired indiscriminately from the building throughout the night.

Stray bullets killed a couple in their home and a 16-year-old boy on the street, police said.

Rescue workers braved the gunfire to save victims from the burning Taj, firefighters on extension ladders plucking people to safety from window ledges and balconies.

By dawn, a column of smoke billowed from the building, backlit by flames as the city's most famous landmark - struck by bombs at midnight - burned.

Eight terrorists were dead, nine injured and an unknown number still at large.

The two five-star hotels became the focus of the attacks during the day when terrorists held dozens of hostages and troops ringed the buildings.

The previously unknown Deccan Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the well

co-ordinated destruction, and Maharashtra state Home Minister R.R. Patil issued orders for the terrorists to be captured “dead or alive” and the nation's stock exchange was closed for trading. Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra.

Western leaders reacted with immediate support and defiance, the White House issuing a statement that: “The United States condemns this terrorist attack and we will continue to stand with the people of India in this time of tragedy”.

United States intelligence cautiously agreed Islamic terrorists were most likely responsible for the brazen attacks.

Mumbai has been a favoured target for Islamic extremists, including a series of bombings in July, 2006, that killed 187 people.

Since May, a militant group calling itself the Indian Mujahideen has taken credit for a string of blasts that killed more than 130 people. The most recent was in September, when a series of explosions struck a park and crowded shopping areas in the capital, New Delhi, killing 21 people and wounding about 100.

The news of the tragic bombings at the burning Taj sent shockwaves through Australian cricket team members as they prepared for the second Test against New Zealand in Adelaide yesterday.

“It has hit pretty close to home for us,” said Australian captain Ricky Ponting.

Cricket Australia halted the departures to India of the Western Australian and Victorian state teams, along with Test stars Mike Hussey, Matthew Hayden and Shane Watson, who were to play for Indian teams in next week's Champions Twenty20 League.

SPORT: World cricket in crisis

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Editorial

THE TOLL

\* DEATHS: At least 101, including one Australian.

\* INJURIES: 314 last night.

\* HOSTAGES: 40-50 last night.

\* Anyone worried about family or friends in Mumbai should call the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 1800 002 214.

\* Australians overseas needing consular assistance can call the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on +61 2 6261 3305.

EYEWITNESS

ACCOUNT

"We stayed on

the floor, many

were lying

under tables,

under furniture,

and the hotel

staff told us to

be quiet"

- BRITISH TOURIST

CHERYL ROBINSON

"They just fired randomly at people and then ran - WITNESS NASIM INAM AT THE CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI RAIL STATION.

"Terrorists killed a man at point-blank range about 10m from us - ADELAIDE RESTAURATEUR NICK PAPAZHARIAKIS.

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Audio: Adelaide's Nick

Papazahariakis speaks

about his ordeal

Picture gallery:

Carnage and chaos:

A city under siege

INTERACTIVE:

MUMBAI MAP OF

TERROR STRIKES

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