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<http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/29/europe/turkey-istanbul-ataturk-airport-attack/index.html>

## Istanbul terror attack: 41 killed; airport resumes flights

6/29/2016

Just five hours after terrorists killed 41 people at an Istanbul airport, travelers returned to the site of the carnage -- much to the surprise of some critics.

"I find this totally astonishing," said Professor Larry Kobilinsky of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "I've never seen such a massive crime scene looked at for five hours. It's just impossible. You're going to compromise, you're going to contaminate evidence. ... They should not have turned this open to the public."

Passengers walked over shards of glass as workers tried to wash away blood. The stench of smoke still lingered in the air after three gunmen opened fire and detonated explosives at Ataturk Airport, wounding 239 people.

But the airport's operator defended its actions and its security, saying it exceeds international standards.

And unlike many American and European airports, "We have security checkpoints at the entrance of the terminal building," TAV Airports CEO Sani Sener said.

Those extra measures didn't stop the trio of suicide bombers, who started firing high-powered rifles immediately after getting out of a taxi, Sener said.

Despite the horror and carnage, "Everything's quite calm right now, which is a little surreal as opposed to the scenes we saw here last night," witness Laurence Cameron said.

"I was in the airport this morning looking for my lost luggage," he said. "They were sweeping up debris, and someone had hung up a big Turkish flag, pretty much right at the spot where (a) bomb had gone off -- sort of an act of defiance, which was quite moving."

### **Victims from around the world**

Many of the 41 dead were Turkish, including 10 airport staff members, Sener said. The attack killed six Saudis and wounded 27 more, the Saudi Arabian foreign ministry said. The other victims included two Iraqis, one Tunisian, one Chinese, one Iranian, one Ukrainian, one Jordanian and one person from Uzbekistan, a Turkish official said. Three of the foreigners had dual Turkish citizenship. Of the 239 people wounded Tuesday night, 128 remained hospitalized Wednesday, officials said.

### **Who's responsible?**

While no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, "all information and evidence" points to ISIS, Interior Minister Efkan Ala said. "But nothing is for certain." And Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said initial findings "suggest all three attackers first opened fire then detonated themselves." That method is similar to the mass shooting and suicide bombings at Paris' Bataclan concert hall last November. ISIS claimed responsibility for that massacre, which left 89 people dead.

### **Anatomy of an explosion 01:11**

ISIS has a history of airport attacks. In March, it claimed responsibility for dual suicide bombings at the main airport in Brussels, Belgium. At least 10 people died in those blasts. And just like the Brussels attack, the terrorists in Istanbul took a taxi to the airport. The Istanbul taxi driver was interviewed by police and later released, the Turkish state news agency Anadolu reported. The director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, using another acronym for the Islamic State, said he thinks the terror attack "certainly bears the hallmarks of ISIL's depravity." John Brennan said he wasn't surprised that ISIS hasn't said it was responsible. The group rarely takes credit for attacks in Turkey. "I think what they do is they carry out these attacks to gain the benefits from it in terms of sending a signal to our Turkish partners," he told an audience at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, "(and at) the same time not wanting to potentially maybe alienate some of those individuals inside of Turkey that they may still be trying to gain the support of."

### **Lots of blood, broken glass**

The cacophony of gunfire Tuesday night was quickly followed by the deafening blows of three explosions. Witness Sue Savage said about 30 people were herded into a women's prayer room until authorities led them out and down an escalator into the main terminal hall. Coverage from CNN Turk

"There was a lot of blood," she said. "There was so much glass on the floor, they were scuffing it aside so we didn't slip.

Video from inside the terminal shows the bright orange flash of fire from one of the explosions. Victims stagger. Some fall on the slippery, blood-covered floor.

Another video shows a gunman dropping his weapon when he's apparently shot by a security officer. The man slumps to the ground, and the officer briefly stands over him before running.

About 10 seconds later, a bomb detonates.

### **The three terrorists**

The assailants have not been identified, but there is a "strong suggestion that they are foreign," a senior Turkish government source told CNN.

Experts say Turkey is especially vulnerable due to the variety of terrorists operating there.

"You cannot protect these airports 100% ... especially in a place like Turkey, where ISIS has cells everywhere," said retired Lt. Col. Rick Francona, a former U.S. military attaché in Syria.

Even though Ataturk Airport is "one of the most secure airports in the world," CNN senior law enforcement analyst Tom Fuentes said, the airport has been "very overwhelmed for several decades with terrorism from PKK."

ISIS promised an uptick in attacks during the holy month of Ramadan, which is nearing its end.

And the terror group has reason to detest Turkey: The country is helping the U.S.-led coalition attack ISIS targets in neighboring Iraq and Syria. Turkey allows coalition planes to fly raids from its territory. Adding to the instability: Last year, Turkey resumed hostilities with the PKK, Kurdish militant separatists, after a two-year cease fire broke down.

But over the last few months, "the Turks have really changed their focus from only the PKK to going after ISIS as well," Francona said.