

Beat: Local

4 UN staff, IMF representative and 2 Canadians among 14 dead in Kabul attack

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USPA News - Four United Nations (UN) personnel, one IMF representative and two Canadian nationals were among at least fourteen people killed in the Afghan capital of Kabul on late Friday during a coordinated assault on an upscale restaurant popular with foreigners, officials said. UN spokesman Martin Nesirky said late Friday that a UN staff member reported unaccounted-for earlier had been confirmed dead, raising the number of UN personnel killed in the attack to four.

It followed the confirmation of the deaths of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) representative and two Canadian nationals. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack, in which a suicide bomber detonated his explosives outside the gate of the heavily-fortified restaurant before two gunmen entered the restaurant and opened fire. "Mujahideen (Muslim fighters) of the Islamic Emirate (Taliban) have attacked a restaurant in Kabul city frequented by foreigners," he said. "[UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon] condemns in the strongest terms the horrific attack at a restaurant in central Kabul," his spokesman Martin Nesirky said in a statement. "Four United Nations personnel, along with a number of those from other international organizations, are now confirmed dead." "Such targeted attacks against civilians are completely unacceptable and are in flagrant breach of international humanitarian law. They must stop immediately," Nesirky added. "The Secretary-General sends his deepest condolences to the families and colleagues of those killed and his hopes for a swift recovery to those injured." Earlier, the IMF confirmed its resident representative in Afghanistan was also among those killed. "We have just learned that our dear colleague and friend Wabel Abdallah, our Resident Representative in Afghanistan, was killed in an attack at a restaurant in Kabul," said IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde. "This is tragic news, and we at the Fund are all devastated." Lagarde added: "Our hearts go out to Wabel's family and friends, as well as the other victims of this attack." Wabel Abdallah, 60, was a Lebanese national who was appointed Resident Representative in June 2008. He joined the Fund from the Central Bank of Lebanon in 1993, and has held various IMF positions, particularly posts relating to IMF activities and operations in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Rick Roth, a spokesman for Canadian foreign affairs minister John Baird, confirmed two Canadian nationals were also among those killed. "We won't be releasing further details [on the victims]," Roth said, refusing to say whether the Canadian nationals are among the UN casualties. "Canada condemns in the strongest possible terms the targeted, cowardly terrorist attack today on a restaurant in Kabul," Baird said in a statement. "Acts of brutal terror cannot be allowed to go unpunished. Those who perpetrated this act of violence and those who support the Taliban, who have claimed responsibility for the attack, must be held accountable." The UN Security Council, which is composed of five permanent members and ten non-permanent members, strongly condemned Friday's attack. "The members of the Security Council underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice," the Council said in a press statement. It added: "The members of the Security Council reiterated that no terrorist act can reverse the path towards Afghan-led peace, democracy and stability in Afghanistan, which is supported by the people and the Government of Afghanistan and the international community."

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