

Spot Report of International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research

Attack on Army Public School in Peshawar

On 16 December 2014, seven Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Movement of the Pakistani Taliban, TTP) militants attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar the provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). At least 132 people, including women and children, have been killed, and another 84 people have been injured in the attack.

Location:

The attack took place in the Army Public School located on Warsak Road near Army Housing Colony in the city of Peshawar.¹ It is believed that at least 500 students and teachers were in the school when the attack took place.

Details:

In terms of the death toll, this incident is the most high profile attack in Pakistan this year, after the suicide bomb blast on 2 November 2014 at Wagha Border in Lahore. The attack comes just a day after the lone-wolf, hostage taker, Man Haron Monis, carried out a 16-hour long siege in the Lindt Chocolate Café in Australia. Moreover, the attack was carried out on the anniversary of the separation of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, which took place on 16 December 1971.

The attack began in the morning at 11:00 am, when six militants entered the school from the backdoor, dressed in Frontier Corps uniforms shooting at the students and

¹ “Live updates: Over 80 killed in attack on Peshawar school, says K-P CM,” Express Tribune, Pakistan, 12 December 2014

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/807564/gunmen-target-school-in-peshawar/>

teachers at random.² Pakistan Army commandoes arrived at the location and exchanged fire with the militants. A few of the militants that entered the school were also wearing suicide vests. One of the vests was detonated, resulting in an explosion that killed 12.³

TTP has taken responsibility for the attack, and the spokesman, Omar Khorasani publicly stated: “Our people (have) successfully entered the army school in Peshawar this morning. We are giving them direct instructions to not harm minors.”⁴ After taking control of the school, the militants spread out, locating themselves in the principal’s office and the examination room. However, reports by the army indicate that many hostages have been rescued, and the rescue operation is underway with full force. Out of six militants, three have been killed and the army is searching for the other three.⁵

Emergency has been declared in the public hospitals located within Peshawar. Most of the patients have been transferred to Lady Reading Hospital and Combined Military Hospital.⁶

The TTP has also stated that the attack is a revenge for the military operation *Zarb-e-Azb* that began on 15 June 2014 in the North Waziristan Agency (NWA).⁷ According to media reports, Pakistan Army Chief Raheel Sharif, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan are headed to Peshawar in the lieu of the attack.

² “Dozens of children believed killed in Taliban attack on Pakistan school,” The Guardian, 12 December 2014 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/16/taliban-attack-army-public-school-pakistan-peshawar>

³ “Peshawar siege live: Suicide bombers blows himself up in school, 12 dead,” First Post, 12 December 2014 <http://www.firstpost.com/world/peshawar-siege-live-suicide-bombers-blows-himself-up-in-school-12-dead-1852007.html>

⁴ “Live updates: Over 80 killed in attack on Peshawar school, says K-P CM,” Express Tribune, Pakistan, 12 December 2014 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/807564/gunmen-target-school-in-peshawar/>

⁵ News Bulletin, Dunya News, 12 December 2014 http://dunyanews.tv/newsite/live_stream/new1_live_tv.php

⁶ “Live updates: Over 80 killed in attack on Peshawar school, says K-P CM,” Express Tribune, Pakistan, 12 December 2014 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/807564/gunmen-target-school-in-peshawar/>

⁷ “Pakistan school attack updates,” BBC News, 12 December 2014 <http://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-asia-30491113>

Images:



A soldier escorts school children after they were rescued from the Army Public School.

Image source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/807564/gunmen-target-school-in-peshawar/>



A soldier takes position above a road near the school that is under attack.

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