

Indonesian police struggle to identify suicide bombers

Indonesian authorities struggled Sunday to identify two suicide bombers in the deadly attacks at two luxury US hotels, as they suspected a Malaysian-born terrorist fugitive of masterminding the blasts.

National police spokesman Nanan Sukarna said officials were trying to identify two bodies of the suspected perpetrators, while as many as 35 witnesses had been questioned.

He said the search by a special team from the Disaster Victim Identification unit for missing body parts continued after a severed head did not match with either of the two bodies being examined at Jakarta police hospital.

'We are still working to reconstruct all of the damaged bodies,' said another police official, I. Ketut Yoga Anna.

The spokesman raised the death toll from the twin blasts to nine, including four foreigners.

At least 53 others, including eight Americans, were injured in the blasts, the first terrorist attack in three years after the country experienced no bombing incident since 2005.

Terrorist experts said Friday's bombings at the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta were masterminded by Noordin Mohammed Top, Indonesia's most-wanted man for his alleged role in a series of bombings since early 2000s.

The head of the security ministry's anti-terrorism desk, Ansyad Mbai, said officials were coordinating the manhunt with authorities in neighbouring Malaysia.

'At this stage the area of the manhunt for Noordin was also widened not only in areas that were indicated as the location of his network's hideout, such as Java and Sumatra, but also the other territory in Indonesia,' he was quoted as saying by the state-run Antara news agency.

Looking at the modus operandi, Mbai Saturday said the blasts were the work of the notorious Malaysian bomb-maker, who leads a breakaway faction of Jemaah Islamiyah and is believed to be the mastermind behind all the bombings since 2000.

Police said they suspected Friday's attacks were carried out by suicide bombers who checked into the hotels as guests and assembled the bombs in one of the hotel rooms.

Footage from security cameras showed one of the suspects with a wheeled bag walking toward Marriott's restaurant where top local and foreign business executives were holding a breakfast meeting.

It was the second bombing of the Jakarta Marriott. In August 2003, a militant drove a bomb-laden truck into the lobby of the hotel and detonated it, killing 12 people and injuring 150.

Until Friday, Indonesia, the world's most-populous Muslim country, had not had a major attack since October 2005, when suicide bombers blew up three restaurants in Bali, killing 20 people.

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