Bombings: President Obama pledged to help Belgian authorities seek justice

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'Acts of war'

"We are at war," French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said after a crisis meeting in Paris. "We have been subjected for the last few months in Europe to acts of war."

Added French President Francois Hollande: "Terrorists struck Brussels, but it was Europe that was targeted, and it is all the world which is concerned by this."

European security officials have been bracing for a major attack for weeks, and warned that the Islamic State group was actively preparing to strike. The arrest Friday of Salah Abdeslam, a key suspect in the November attacks in Paris, heightened those fears, as investigators said many more people were involved than originally thought and that some are still on the loose.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the Brussels attacks, saying in a posting on the group's Amaq news agency that its extremists opened fire in the airport and "several of them" detonated suicide belts. It said another suicide attacker struck in the subway.

The posting claimed the attack was in response to Belgium's support of the international coalition arrayed against the group.

Police found and neutralized a third bomb at the airport once the chaos after the two initial blasts had eased, said Florence Muls, a spokeswoman for the airport told The Associated Press. Bomb squads also detonated suspicious objects found in at least two locations elsewhere in the capital, but neither contained explosives, authorities said.

Michel said there was no immediate evidence linking the attacks with Abdeslam. After his arrest, Abdeslam told authorities he had created a new network and was planning new attacks.

'We are at war. We have been subjected for the last few months in Europe to acts of war.'

Manuel Valls
French prime minister

'Stand in solidarity'

U.S. President Barack Obama pledged to "do whatever is necessary" to help Belgian authorities seek justice.

"We stand in solidarity with them in condemning these outrageous attacks against innocent people," Obama said in Havana, where he was closing a three-day visit.

Western Europe has lived for decades under the threat of violence from homegrown nationalist and revolutionary movements. Muslim extremists from North Africa and the Middle East have attacked civilian targets without warning, ranging from France's 1960s war in Algeria through Libya's 1988 downing of an airline over Scotland to the 2004-05 attacks on the public transportation systems of London and Madrid.

Certain neighborhoods in Brussels, like the Molenbeek quarter, have bred extremists and supplied foreign fighters. Plotters linked to the Paris attacks and others have either moved through or lived in parts of the city.

Airport explosions

Tuesday's explosions at the airport in the Brussels suburb of Zaventem came shortly after 8 a.m., Belgium time, one of its busiest periods. Belgian Health Minister Maggie de Block said 11 people were killed and 81 wounded. Eleven people had serious injuries, Marc Decramer of the Gasthuisberg hospital in Leuven told broadcaster VTM. The nails apparently came from one of the bombs.

Zach Mouzoun, who arrived on a flight from Geneva about 10 minutes before the first blast, told BFM television that the second, louder explosion brought down ceilings and ruptured pipes, mixing water with victims' blood.

"It was atrocious. The ceilings collapsed," he said. "There was blood everywhere, injured people, bags everywhere."

"We were walking in the debris. It was a war scene," he said.

Video taken moments after the explosions showed travelers huddled next to airport check-in counters and lying near luggage and trolleys as dust and the cries of the wounded filled the air. Dazed people stumbled from the scene, some with clothes and shoes blown off.

Anthony Deloos, an airport worker for Swissport, which handles check-in and baggage services, said the first explosion took place near the Swissport counters where customers pay for overweight baggage. He and a colleague said the second blast hit near a Starbucks cafe.

"I jumped into a luggage chute to be safe," Deloos said.

Subway bombing

The subway bombing came after 9 a.m., killing 20 people and wounding more than 100, Mayor Yvan Majeur said.

"The metro was leaving Maelbeek station for Schuman when there was a really loud explosion," said Alexandre Brans, 32, wiping blood from his face. "It was panic everywhere. There were a lot of people in the metro."

Near the entrance to the station, rescue workers set up a makeshift medical treatment center in a pub. Dazed and shocked morning commuters streamed from the metro entrances as police tried to set up a security cordon.

The airport was ordered closed for the rest of the day and CEO Arnaud Feist said the facility would be closed all of Wednesday and perhaps even longer. More than 200 flights to Brussels were diverted or canceled, according to flight tracking service Flightradar24.

The metro also was ordered closed as the city was locked down. By the end of the workday, city officials said residents could begin moving around on the streets of the capital and train stations were reopening. But Peter Mertens of the Belgian crisis center said the threat of more attacks "is still real and serious."

Travelers fled

At least one and possibly two Kalashnikovs were found in the departure lounge at the airport, according to a European security official in contact with a Belgian police official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk about the ongoing investigation. It was not immediately clear whether the firearms were used in the attacks.

Travelers fled the airport as quickly as they could. In video shown on France's i-Tele television, men, women and children dashed from the terminal in different directions. Security officers patrolled a hall with blown-out paneling and ceiling panels covering the floor.

Marc Noel, 63, was about to board a Delta flight to Atlanta, to return to his home in Raleigh, North Carolina. A Belgian native, Noel said he was in an airport shop buying automotive magazines when the first blast struck about 50 yards away.

"People were crying, shouting — children. It was a horrible experience," he said, adding that his decision to shop might have saved his life. "I would probably have been in that place when the bomb went off."

Tower: Council's unanimous vote was a lifeline after several years of frustration

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Verizon will seek a one-year extension of a lease at Coxcomb Hill that is set to expire in August to give the company time to identify a site. A second one-year extension might be necessary.

"I think that's a pretty good deal," Sandstrom said of the terms.

A lifeline

While the city and Verizon must work out lease arrangements at Reservoir Ridge for a new tower that could attract interest — and revenue — from other tenants, the City Council's unanimous vote was a lifeline after several years of frustration.

Police Chief Brad Johnston, who has led the negotiations for the city, said partnering with Verizon on a new tower can help the city reduce costs.

"From the very beginning of this project, we've been trying to convince a private company to do something that benefits the city," Johnston said. "That's been one of those overarching things in this. We're trying to compel them to do things for us, to save us money.

"We're tying our wagon to their horse, if you would, to make sure that we can get to where we want to go."

In the middle

City staff has been caught between the City Council, Verizon and the Friends of the Astoria Column, the influential private benefactors who have raised money to preserve the historic landmark and tourist attraction.

The City Council directed city staff in 2013 to move the overburdened communications tower off Coxcomb Hill after the Friends objected to a new pole.

A master plan at Coxcomb Hill, according to the Friends, will not get completed unless the tower is removed. "It can't be done with those facilities there. It simply can't," said David Olson, a Portland telecommunications expert who serves on the board of directors for the Friends of the Astoria Column.

Working with the Friends and Converge Communications, a private telecommunications consultant in Portland, the city had reached an agreement last year with Verizon on new towers at Reservoir Ridge and Shively Park. The Historic Landmarks Commission and the Planning Commission approved the monopole at Shively Park.

On appeal

But Ron Zilli, a forester who lives near Shively Park, appealed the approvals to the City Council, arguing that the monopole was incompatible with the historic park.

Zilli demonstrated that the monopole would have been much more visible than the city and Verizon had originally described, convincing a majority on the council to uphold his appeals and reject the monopole.

City Councilor Drew Herzig, who sided with Zilli, said Monday night that it would have been better had the public been involved sooner in the negotiation process.

Herzig had pressed the city last year to itemize the roughly $70,000 the city spent to reimburse the Friends of the Astoria Column for the nonprofit's behind-the-scenes work with Converge Communications and Verizon.

"I think what we've learned is that, as much as possible, from here on in, we need to keep it as public, as transparent, as possible," he said.

School: It seeks to settle into a permanent site south of town

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Sixteen first-graders were enrolled as of March 1.

The academy did not provide information on how many prospective kindergarten students were planning to attend.

Dougherty and Roley said without enough students, the district would be unable to make necessary adjustments in programs, class size and staffing.

Cannon Beach Academy met the condition of providing a Common Core instructional plan. However, it lacked a state-approved English language learners program, the letter read. The program the school proposed to use was outdated. All charter schools are required to use programs approved by the state.

Cannon Beach Elementary closed in 2013 for financial reasons and fears for student safety. The building, now shuttered, lies in the tsunami inundation zone.

The vision

In 2013, community residents sought to bring a charter school to Cannon Beach, with the goal of hosting kindergarteners through fifth-graders.

The school planned to open in fall at a temporary location at 171 Sunset Blvd., in a vacated space that once housed the Cannon Beach Athletic Club.

Last week, the Cannon Beach Design Review Board approved the academy's application for "major modifications" to the existing building, to convert the space into a charter school.

The school seeks to eventually settle into a permanent site south of town and east of U.S. Highway 101.

The district has denied the academy's proposal several times, citing lack of an adequate location and not enough startup funds.

In October, the Seaside School District board of directors unanimously approved a three-year contract with Cannon Beach Academy. Under the district's conditions, the charter school would serve at least 44 kindergarten and first-grade students its first year. More grades could be added over time.

Hull was unavailable for comment Monday.

In October, Hull said none of the conditions were unreasonable.

"I think we can achieve every condition imposed," he said at the time.