



People stand for a minute of silence at the Gare de Lyon train station in Paris, Monday, three days after the Paris attacks. AP Photo/Jerome Delay

# Stadium massacre averted

SAINT-DENIS, France (AP) — The suicide bombers' explosive belts, packed with shrapnel, had been designed to kill and maim the crowds at the national stadium.

But while their terrorist associates in the city center of Paris killed 128 people in gun and suicide bomb attacks, the three assailants who blew themselves up outside the Stade de France added just one more body to the overall count of 129.

A combination of solid security at the huge arena, quick thinking in a crisis, modern stadium infrastructure and apparent mistakes in the attackers' planning appears to have averted a massacre. That suggests the host of next year's European soccer championships, which are expected to draw millions of fans from far and wide, is as well-equipped as any nation can be against such viciousness.

The stadium, much loved because it was there that the national team won the World Cup in 1998, was the first target hit on Friday night. It was packed with 79,000 people watching France beat Germany at soccer. Had the suicide attackers gotten inside or, failing that, blown up outside among crowds before and after the game, they would have been more murderous and caused even more panic, further overloading Paris hospitals and rescue services scrambling to treat hundreds of casualties with battlefield wounds from the city center.

Instead they exploded outside, during the match, when the stadium surrounds were less crowded. One of the explosions was in a lonely dead-end street 500 meters away. Only the first blast was deadly, killing a bystander. There also were several dozen injuries.

At least one of the attackers tried to get in, despite not having a ticket, but was turned away, said an official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to publicly discuss the complex and fast-evolving investigation.

One police theory is that the attackers never expected to get inside, knowing they likely wouldn't get past security pat-downs with their suicide vests, and instead planned to detonate as people filed in before kick-off or filed out after France's 2-0 victory.

But their timing may have been off, officials say. When they triggered their vests — two during the first half of the match, the third at half-time — the bulk of the crowd was safely inside, enjoying itself.

"We think this operation failed," a police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because French law doesn't allow the release of details from ongoing investigations. "Badly organized."

Still, as chaos unfolded, authorities decided spectators would be safer kept inside and the match went on. That decision was taken by President Francois Hollande, in consultation with French Football Federation officials, the presidential Elysee Palace says.

Bley Bilal Mokono, who arrived late at the game with his 13-year-old son Ryan and a friend, believes he saw one of the attackers — "a man with a beard and a gaunt face" — in the toilets of a restaurant opposite the stadium's Gate D.

"His face was sweaty, he looked distressed, staring at the mirror in front of him with his hands on the sink," Mokono told French broadcaster BFM. He saw him again outside, where Mokono had stopped to buy a sandwich. Then came a powerful blast. Mokono was hospitalized with a collarbone injury and damaged hearing.

That first blast, which also killed the bystander, sent shrapnel and flesh whizzing through the restaurant and left a large shattered dent in its frontage of triple-layered toughened glass.

Jeremy, a stadium security guard who would only give his first name for fear of losing his job, said he'd just arrived to help with the aftermath when the second blast went off minutes later, 200 yards away outside Gate H.

"Everyone was stepping on each other," he said. "It was a mess."

# Obama rejects calls for shift in ISIS fight

By JULIE PACE  
AP White House Correspondent

ANTALYA, Turkey — President Barack Obama on Monday firmly rejected calls for a shift in U.S. strategy against the Islamic State following the Paris attacks, saying Republicans who want to send ground troops into the volatile region are "talking as if they're tough" but fail to understand the potentially grave consequences.

"Folks want to pop off and have opinions about what they think they would do," Obama said in a news conference wrapping up a two-day summit of world leaders in Turkey. "If they think that somehow their advisers are better than the chairman of my Joint Chiefs of Staff and the folks who are actually on the ground, I want to meet them. And we can have that debate."



Obama

In a stinging rebuke, the president condemned Republicans who have suggested U.S. assistance to refugees fleeing the Middle East should focus on Christians, not Muslims. GOP presidential candidates Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz have made such suggestions, while some Republican governors want to ban all Syrian refugees from their states.

"That's shameful," he said. "That's not American. It's not who we are."

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus called Obama's statements "excuse-laden and defensive."

Even before the Paris attacks, Obama was under pressure from allies and his own administration to show progress in the campaign against the Islamic State. The assault in the heart of Western Europe was part of a troubling pattern showing the group focusing new attention on targets outside its base in Iraq and Syria.

Obama conceded that the attacks in France marked a "terrible and sickening setback" in the anti-Islamic State campaign. But he insisted his strategy of building an international coalition to launch airstrikes, while training and equipping more moderate forces on the ground, is the best approach.

"The strategy that we are putting forward is the strategy that ultimately is going to work," Obama said. "It's going to take time."

The president has deployed more than 3,000 U.S. troops to Iraq to assist local security forces, and he recently announced plans to send 50 special operations forces to Syria. But he's vowed to avoid the kind of large-scale ground combat that U.S. troops engaged in for years in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Obama appeared emotional as he spoke of the consequences of war, referencing the injured troops he visits at Walter Reed, a military hospital near the White House.

"Some of those are people I've ordered into battle," he said.

He said the U.S. would have to be prepared for a permanent occupation in Syria or Iraq if he sent in ground forces.

"What happens when there's a terrorist attack generated from Yemen?" Obama asked. "Do we then send more troops into there? Or Libya, perhaps? Or if there's a terrorist network that's operating anywhere else — in North Africa, or in Southeast Asia?"

# As world mourns Paris, many in Mideast see double-standard

BAGHDAD (AP) — Within hours of last week's Paris attacks, as outrage and sympathy flooded his social media feeds and filled the airwaves, Baghdad resident Ali al-Makhzomy updated his Facebook cover photo to read "solidarity" — and his friends were shocked.

"Everyone was like why are you posting about Paris and not about the attacks in Baghdad every day," the recent law school graduate said. "A lot of my friends said, 'OK, so you care more about them than you care about us?'"

He had unintentionally tapped into frustration in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria with what many see as a double-standard: The world unites in outrage and sympathy when the Islamic State group kills Westerners, but pays little attention to the near-daily atrocities it carries out in the Middle East.

The day before the Paris attacks, twin suicide bombers struck a southern Beirut suburb, killing at least 43 people, and on Friday a suicide bomber struck a funeral in Iraq, killing at least 21. Both attacks were claimed by the IS group and reported by major media outlets, but generated little interest outside the region, where the turmoil of recent years has made such events seem like a sadly regular occurrence.

Baghdad has seen near-daily attacks in recent years, mainly targeting the security forces and the country's Shiite majority. Bombings killed an average of more than 90 civilians a month last year, according to Iraq Body Count, a U.K.-based group that documents civilian deaths in Iraq.

The civil war in neighboring Syria has killed 250,000 people since 2011. There, government warplanes regularly carry out raids using so-called barrel bombs that demolish entire apartment blocks and insurgent groups shell govern-

ment-held neighborhoods. Lebanon, however, had been relatively calm for the past year, leading many to feel that last week's tragedy was unfairly neglected. Many were angered by Facebook's deployment of a new feature in the wake of the Paris attacks that allowed users to check in and say they were safe. The feature was not available for the Beirut attacks.

"We don't get a safe button on Facebook," Lebanese blogger Joey Ayoub wrote. "We don't get late night statements from the most powerful men and women alive and millions of online users."

Facebook released a statement saying it had previously only used the Safety Check feature after natural disasters and said it would be used for "other serious and tragic incidents in the future."

But it added that "during an ongoing crisis, like war or epidemic, Safety Check

in its current form is not that useful for people: because there isn't a clear start or end point and, unfortunately, it's impossible to know when someone is truly 'safe.'"

Al-Makhzomy said the feature wouldn't be quite as useful in Iraq. "In Baghdad it's not just like one attack," he said. "You would need to have a date on the safety check, like I'm safe from this one or that one. ... There are too many for just 'I'm Safe.'"

In the U.S., social media shaming also played out on Facebook, Twitter and other channels in the aftermath of Paris over the use of a tool that shades profile photos to resemble the French flag. Other social media users object to a sea of vacation selfies at the Eiffel Tower being posted as a show of solidarity and an expression of "slacktivism," rather than true social justice commitment.

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Ages 2-6, 7-10 & 11-14

Deadline December 11, 2015  
Winner announced December 19, 2015

Bring us an ornament decorated by your child by December 11<sup>th</sup>, the form below with your signature and your child for a photo. The winner will be announced Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> in the East Oregonian.

For more information, call Paula at 1-800-522-0255

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Age \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I give permission to include photos of my child with ornament in the East Oregonian

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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